Coping withCrisis: Perspectives from Buddhist Philosophy

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Abstract : A *Crisis* is a time of pause and reflection, a time of taking stock of thingsat an individual level andalso atthe level of the collective.Pause and reflection arevital for us to make sense of the *crisis*and to move forward because one of the consequences of a *crisis* is the loss of meaning in life and existence. This paper examines the role of Buddhism as a religious tradition and as a humanistic philosophy in coping witha *crisis*like the covid-19 pandemic and its *aftermath*. It argues that the Buddhistcore metaphysical doctrines such as interdependent arising, dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), emptiness (*śūnyatā*), *no-self* (*anātma*), and the four noble truths offer ways, and means to cope withthe *crises*. Buddhist ethics of compassion combined withtranscendental wisdom and dependent originationcan act as powerful tools to bring about transformationand social change during atime of *crisis*.

Keywords: Crisis, dependent origination, emptiness, no-self, compassion, wisdom, responsibility.

Introduction

'Crisis' is an inescapable aspect of human existence. We are met with crisis all the time, at a personal level and also collectively. We experience a crisis at different points of time and to varying degrees in our lives. 'Crisis' represents a sudden 'breakdown' or 'disruption' to a specific order or structure, or way of doing things. History is full of examples of such crises; a historical understanding of *crises* is important to understand how people have coped with the crisis through the ages. Philosophy is also born out of the crisis, and so also religion and politics through revolution. Buddhism itself is argued to be born out of a crisis, a crisis of faith. For instance, Walpola Rahula says, "*Buddhism arose in India as a*

spiritual force against social injustices, against degrading superstitious rites, ceremonies and sacrifices; it denounced the tyranny of the caste system and advocated the equality of all men; it emancipated woman and gave her complete spiritual freedom." So, a *crisis* always entails great transformation and change. It awakens us from our slumber and offers an excellent opportunity to change the course of history and that of mankind.

Today, in the *aftermath* of the pandemic, we are facing a whole range of after-effects, from massive economic losses to political unrest to food crises to climate crises. Once in a few centuries, we have such watershed moments that completely change the course of our life and that of the planet. To cope with such a mammoth crisis, we would each of us needs to be responsible agents of change and transformation.

Definition of crisis

From a very general common-sense understanding of the *crisis*, and from the many definitions, a widely accepted definition is that *crisis* is any event that is, or is expected to lead to, an unstable and dangerous situation affecting individuals, groups, communities, or a whole society. Another way in which *crisis* is defined is in terms of the steps involved, a *crisis* may involve a) a stage in a sequence of events, at which the trends of all future events, especially for better or worse, is a more or less determined turning point. b) A condition of instability or danger, as appearing in social, economic, political, or international affairs, leading to decisive changes. c) A dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person's life (Brecher and Wilkenfeld). Therefore, from the above definition, a *crisis* is not a single thing or one thing leading to another it is an interplay between various causes and conditions coming together to produce a certain *outcome* or *outcomes*. It has psychological, social, metaphysical, and epistemological aspects to it, and its consequence can be positive in the sense one can overcome a crisis by taking small incremental steps to change the situation or it can be negative in the sense that massive changes would need to be made abruptly to overcome the crisis (Karabatzaki et al. 24-30). The classical definition of *crisis,* in Greek thought, the origin of the term is medical in nature (Koselleck and Richter), it was used in the

context of disease crises. It is defined as a situation where (the crisis is called either a rapid(worsening) change of a disease, or only the improvement, or the pre-existing turmoil, or even the entire outcome of the disease, or only the benign one) (Karabatzaki et al.). During the classical period, *the crisis* came to be associated with political turmoil and unrest and was deemed necessary for the smooth functioning of a democracy. A *crisis* requires the use of reason (logos) to lead one to make the right decisions, while a wrong decision would be motivated not by reason but by emotion and passion. Philosophically, the use of reason to cope with a *crisis* was essential to overcoming it because philosophy always prioritizes reason over emotions.

Role of Buddhism in coping with, learning from, and overcomingcrisis

Unlike in the West where modernity is characterized by the phenomena of science overthrowing the dominance of religion post enlightenment, it is not necessarily the case with Eastern religious traditions. Modern Buddhism like traditional Buddhism is closely intertwined with science and medicine.Not just Buddhist doctrines, but Buddhist practices as well for over two millennia offerpractical, this worldlyadvice for disease, sickness and ailments within the context of religion (Salguero). This paper attempts to study and understand how core Buddhist metaphysical and ethical doctrines provides ways and means of dealing with and alleviating sickness and suffering (mental and physical) and hence coping with crises.

Buddhism religion or philosophy?

One of the remarkable features of Buddhism is its ability to be and mean many different things simultaneously to different people. You don't have to be a Buddhist to follow the path of Buddha. There is the mystical aspect, the religious, the philosophical, and the ethical aspect of Buddhism, and one can choose which aspect one wants to follow, which is also one of the reasons that Buddhism has survived changes throughout history and

transformed itself. Hence, we have many different forms of Buddhism in the contemporary period, such as Humanistic Buddhism, Secular Buddhism, Engaged Buddhism, and Navayāna; just like there were many different forms in the ancient and medieval period, Buddhism has constantly reinvented itself and therefore is a living tradition. Also, as argued by Stephen Batchelor, those who wish to follow traditional Buddhism they can do so through performing practices and meditation, so also for those who wish to use an academic approach to understand and analyze Buddhism can do so (Batchelor and Calthorpe Blofeld). These mark the two main chasms within western Buddhism, those who follow a traditional route and those that are interested in the liberal or philosophical aspects of Buddhism.

Per the definition of religion according to social scientists, Religion is a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (Durkheim). Religion may be associated with places of worship, practices such as meditations, rituals, etc, or a set of governing principles like the *Dhamma*. In that sense, Buddhism is a religion because it consists of both the mystical or sacred symbols and the profane or everyday, as reflected through its practices.

On the other hand, if we consider the definition of philosophy, it is as a systematic study of the most general questions about existence, truth, reason, knowledge, and values, then Buddhism is also philosophy. Since Buddhism answers and provides solutions to the human condition-life, death, suffering, questions about knowledge, what is that which constitutes valid knowledge, what causes ignorance, and the inability to understand the true nature of reality, questions about values, and how does one embody the highest ethical ideals. The basic tenets of Buddhism are philosophical (Siderits), even though the context may be religious. Philosophy also teaches skills about critical argumentation, properly stating one's position, constructing arguments in support of one's position, evaluating arguments, and raising objections to others' positions (Siderits). Buddhism, in that sense, is a philosophy since its numerous texts and commentaries reflect its rich argumentative tradition, where positions are stated, arguments evaluated, and objections to the opponent's position are raised.

Buddhism also has a scientific aspect to it, since everything that is proposed or claimed needs to be examined and verified, so the scientific method is compatible with Buddhist thought. This paper advances the view that Buddhism is a philosophical enterprise concerned with the analysis of the human condition, and its central doctrines, such as impermanence, dependent origination, and interdependence, are the basis for understanding and coping with crisis.

Buddhism and the Human Condition

Unlike other religious traditions, Buddhism is not centred around God. With no God, the Buddhist philosophical inquiry starts with the analysis of the human condition and the actualization of the potential of the being. The Buddhist method for analysis of the human condition is not in the 'being' *per se*, but in the process of 'becoming' and of change. Buddha began by going to the roots of human existence, by understanding that the connecting line of all humanity is suffering. Hence, after his enlightenment, in his first sermon, he spoke about the four noble truths.

The Four Noble Truths are a consequence of the diagnosis, analysis, and prognosis of the human condition. There is suffering (*dukkha*), there is a cause to the suffering, there is the end of suffering (by following the eight-fold path), and there is a path out of suffering are the four noble truths, the understanding of which can lead to enlightenment. The more extended version of it is represented by the twelve-link cycle of *dependent origination* or *pratītyasamutpāda*, which is the theory of causation that provides a detailed analysis of the causes of suffering and the course of events in human life such as birth, illness, ageing, and death. Ignorance of understanding the true nature of this "suffering" leads to more suffering and mental and physical bondage.

Nothing happens by accident, there is a cause behind every event, thing, or action.

The core principle of Buddhist philosophy is the theory of causes and effects, according to which things and events are a result of causes and conditions, a dynamic

interplay between numerous causes and conditions which come together to produce an event or thing. Similarly, a *crisis* is a result of countless causes and conditions coming together to produce a *breakdown* or a condition of instability. The first step to overcoming a *crisis* is to accept it. One of the stark reminders of the pandemic is that life is suffering is an inevitable truth, particularly for those who cannot accept death as part of life, but Buddhism teaches this fundamental truth of existence. There is *Dukkha*, which is suffering, which includes a range of things illness, poverty, hunger, war-like situations, death, mental and physical suffering. This realization leads to the second aspect of existence which is *impermanence* (*anicca*), nothing lasts forever, and neither good fortune nor bad luck lasts forever. In situations such as a pandemic causing large-scale mortality, suffering, loss, and pain, one can take comfort from the fact that things change, so the bad times don't last forever. Psychologically, when we internalize the fact that change or impermanence is the only truth, then we don't feel anxious or threatened by change and uncertainty (Chodron). Anxiety is a feeling, which comes from the fear of losing our security, when we understand like Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist, and Holocaust survivor, in his much-celebrated work "Man's Search for Meaning", writes "Everything can be taken from man" (Frankl et al.), there is always the possibility that one may lose everything at any given point of time, nowhere is this realization more pertinent that in the time of the pandemic crisis and its aftermath. When we lose everything, our false sense of security comes crashing down, then we attempt to recreate another safety zone until that also falls apart, this repetitive continuation to keep recreating false security zones is referred to as *saṃsāra* - which is the cycle of suffering comes from seeking security or happiness in all the wrong places (Chodron, 24). The process continues until we realize the truth of existence, that there is nothing that lasts forever, everything is in a constant state of flux. This realization leads to *non-attachment*, and *non-attachment* leads to release.

Another closely related concept to *impermanence* is the *no-self* (*anatta*) doctrine unique to Buddhist philosophy contrasted with the concept of an eternal self or soul. *Anatta*, as a doctrine and philosophy as expressed by Peter Harvey, describes *anatta* as "no

permanent, substantial, independent, metaphysical self which can be found" what we call a person "is a collection of rapidly changing mental and physical processes" (Harvey,23-4). The *no-self* does not mean that one does not exist, but that one does not have an independent existence. One exists in a constantly changing way and is dependent on other things, people and events. Everything, including people, is characterized by emptiness or *Śūnyatā*. This understanding allows for *compassion* (*karuna*) and *love* for ourselves and others.

Causes(hetu) and conditions (pratyaya) of Suffering

Once we accept suffering as an inevitable truth of our existence, we understand that there is a cause for it, multiple causes, which lead to further causes and conditions which can be used to bring about change. So, according to the Buddhist theory of causation, *pratītyasamutpāda*, nothing happens randomly or due to some divine intervention or punishment but is due to a result of factors that can be changed. Nothing is fixed, or predetermined new causes and conditions can be produced, which likely would produce other causes and conditions which would produce the outcome we desire. The twelve-link chain of dependent origination traces everything to ignorance and craving. It is ordered in the following sequence ignorance, volition, consciousness, name and form, six-sense basis, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, existence, birth, ageing-and-death. The clinging and the craving leads to suffering and repeated rebirths.

The Buddhist term for causes is *hetu*, it is the direct cause while conditions are the auxiliary causes, and the term used is *pratyaya* in Sanskrit or *paccaya* in Pāli. Every event is an interplay of causes and conditions. The twelve-link chain of causes (*nidānas*, 'causes') determines how each preceding event determines the course of other succeeding events. While this twelve-link chain of causes may not be exhaustive, it does identify the most critical mental and psychological elements of human existence that lead to suffering, and the proper understanding of the interplay between the multiple causes and auxiliary conditions leads to emancipation from suffering.

Similarly, in the context of the pandemic, once we have isolated the multiple causes and conditions concerning the origin of the present crisis, which can be traced to a multiplicity of factors of which human greed, hatred, inability to understand true human nature, and also of nature, in general, are just one set of factors that have contributed to the pandemic *crisis*, then we can take steps to cope with it. When the factors are changed, the outcome changes.

Mind also plays a vital role in creating either more suffering for us or more happiness. Even in difficult situations, we can choose to reduce suffering for *ourselves* and *others*. Hence, mind control, or achieving a certain state of mind through meditative practices, is important to ensure that we reduce the overall burden of suffering for all.

Taking responsibility for oneself and others

Buddhist ethics lays a lot of importance on the concept of responsibility for *oneself* and *others*. From the perspective of interdependence and interconnectedness, which follows from the theory of causation or dependent origination, is the view that everything is connected to everything else. According to dependent origination and interdependence, which is expressed in the following passage from the *Majjhima Nikāya*, states that the interdependent nature is the true nature of all reality, it states "*When there is this, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When there is not this, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases*" (Bodhi, and Ñanamoli, pp. 655). The arising of all things is conditioned on the arising of another, e.g., the cause of the existence of a tree is the seed, but that is not sufficient. There must be other causes and conditions which need to be satisfied for the growth of a tree which bears fruits, like proper climate, enough sunshine, healthy soil with enough nutrients and so on. If any one condition does not satisfy one may not get the desired result.

Taken in the context of human beings and their interdependence, it implies that duty towards *oneself* is also a duty towards others because the 'self' and 'other' duality does not exist, the 'self' exists only in relation to the 'other'. During a time of *crisis* or uncertainty, when your entire existence is put on hold where situations are beyond our control, the only thing that we can be in control of is our response to the situation, we have the freedom to choose how we respond to the situation. So, while external circumstances might not be under our control, the way to respond to them is certainly in our control. Psychologist Rollo May defines freedom writes "Freedom is the capacity to pause in the face of stimuli from many directions at once and, in this pause, to throw one's weight toward this response rather than that one." (May, pp.54) This quote from May describes freedom as the capacity to pause, reset, and readjust our lives in the face of uncertainties, events, or situations beyond our control. In the Buddhist context, this power to pause is the ability to still our minds through meditation from external distractions.

In Buddhism too, responsibility is an important concept, there is a whole list of responsibilities from moral, social, and metaphysical for both layman and the monks, towards *oneself*, towards others including other sentient beings, and the universe at large also called *dhamma* (Mukherjee), which is also based on a certain underlying cosmic order. So, being responsible for *oneself* and *others* is integral to following the path of *Buddhahood*. Unlike in Hinduism, where there is no duty towards one caste status also called *varnasrama dharma* or duty as a sentient being or *sadharana dharma*, in Buddhism, no such duty exists since Buddhism is primarily a renouncer religion (Gombrich), which does not mean that there are no duties or responsibilities for the layman. However, the larger goal of all Buddhists is *salvation* and the means of *salvation*. Individual salvation and collective emancipation are not two different things. There is a relationship between transcendent individual salvation and collective social emancipation. An *arhat* is one who has realized the true nature of existence and achieved individual salvation, while a *bodhisattva* is an embodiment and symbolic of collective emancipation or social liberation. The *bodhisattva* prolongs his own enlightenment

for the sake of others. The task of awakening oneself without awakening others is considered selfish. Also, awakening others without awakening self is powerlessness.

In the context of the *crisis*, it is not individual transcendental or transhuman salvation we are concerned with but the collective emancipation and liberation, liberation from suffering and pain in the *here and the now*, and not in some transcendental time or space. The recognition of the transience of nature is particularly important in a time of *crisis*, and mindfulness is askill to be developed while navigating through difficult times. Coping with a *crisis*, of such a large magnitude as the *covid-19* pandemic, and its aftermath followed by numerous other *crises* requires practical thinking but also action motivated by *selflessness*, compassion, and love for other beings which includes responsibility towards *oneself* and *others*. Buddhism offers that solution as a religion and as a philosophy. Buddhism as a religion offers succour for the soul, and also pragmatic solutions to coping with and surviving the crisis.

Buddhism, Responsibility, and Social Action

Compassion and wisdom are central to Buddhist ethics and their conception of social responsibility. Compassion (*karuna*) comes from the understanding that we are but part of the whole, and we are interdependent and connected to the whole. Compassion comes as a result of practised meditations, and it is connected to wisdom (*prajna*), which is the ability to see beyond outward appearances and go to the root cause of suffering. The *Bodhisattva*, who is symbolic of the coming together of compassion and transcendental wisdom, who plays a significant role in the awakening of others, takes the following four great *bodhisattva* vows, which are often chanted after each prayer session,

Sentient beings, limitless in number, I vow to ferry over.

Passions (klesa) which are numberless, I vow to extinguish.

The Dharma-gates without end (in number), I vow to know.

The supreme Buddha Way, I vow to actualize.(Rhodes)

The first vow speaks about the innumerable sentient beings and pledges to free them from suffering. The second and third vow speaks of the inexhaustible list of delusions that we as human beings are under, it pertains to *dharmas* and passions, and the fourth vow speaks of the importance of one's own awakening.

So, from a Buddhist perspective, an event like the pandemic crisis provides an opportunity forsocial change and action.Buddhism through its emphasis on social responsibility, action, and meditative practices attempts to reconcile the social and the spiritual, the inner with the outer. Buddhism is a pragmatic tradition based on the fundamental premise about how we experience the world and act in it. It teaches us that it is possible to transcend negative experiences, pain, and suffering into one of peace, and happiness through wisdom and practice. The Buddhist discourses were concerned with the social conditions which would lead to the cultivation of Buddhist values. Social actions in Buddhism are centered around building humanistic values through relieving suffering and improving humanwell-being. An example of Buddhist social action during the pandemic was that many countries with significant Buddhist populations such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar recorded very low infection rates and also very low mortality rates. The reason that Buddhist attribute this success is to the Buddhist way of living and their core beliefs which insists on caring for others, cooperation, strictly obeying prohibition orders like wearing masks, avoiding large gatherings, etcfor the common good of all.

Fear to Fearlessness

The Pandemic and the ensuing restrictions on movements, restrictions on people's freedom, and the untold misery of millions of people caused first and foremost fear in the people's minds. Fear can be exploitative; it can be harmful, and fear can lead to self-centeredness and ego, but sometimes fear is needed to protect ourselves in the face of danger

in fact Buddhists recognize fear as something natural. Buddhism, like with dependent origination, takes something negative, such as suffering, goes to its root causes, analyses it, and then transforms it into something positive.

'Fear' as amental affliction is not mentioned in the *Abhidhamma* while being free is a quality appreciated in the*Buddha dharma* (Thurman), of the three major types of giving, protection from fear is one. The gesture of the Buddha, where he holds his palm out called the *abhaya* mudra, is symbolic of *fearlessness*, meaning that when one becomes Buddha one becomes *fearless.*Suffering is also a form of fear, which can be of many types such as fear of death, of old age, of our realitycrumbling, so the first noble truth speaks of the existence of fear, and the other truths speak of ways to recognize and overcome it. According to Kyabgon Rinpoche, the very act of dealing with fear is fearlessness. But this fearlessness is not blind it is rooted in stability and insight, which requires a profound self-reflection, which means Buddhism asks us to face our fear head-on, go to the **root cause**of fear, **recognize**and then **disassociate** or **non-attaching**from it.This method is comparable to the method of science and psychoanalysis, the only difference being that both science and psychology start by taking 'self' to be existing, while in Buddhism 'self' is an illusion. In Buddhism, 'fear' is a temporary state of mind, and hence, it can be changed by facing it, then transforming itinto 'fearlessness'. Being fearless allows us to achieve great things and history is full of examples of fearless people doing extraordinary things in the face of oppression, crisis, injustices, etc.

Concluding Remarks

If there is one religion or philosophy that can help us better understand *crises* situations and make sense or meaning of it, it is Buddhism, because there are very few religions that are centred around the human condition and Buddhism is one of them. As a religion, it provides both succours to human beings and practical solutions and methods for coping with difficult, crisis-like situations. The doctrines of interdependent

arising, dependent origination, *no-self*, emptiness, and the four noble truths are all ways to emancipate human beings from suffering and lead them to the path of spiritual development. At the core of Buddhist philosophy is a proper understanding of human nature. A proper account of human nature provides the *basis* for positing ethics centred around the well-being of all sentient creatures rooted in compassion, wisdom, and *selflessness*. Buddhism's emphasis on training the mind and developing a solid inner core through meditation and insistence on the proper understanding of the true essence of human nature, and reality, would only be beneficial in dealing with *crisis* and uncertainty.

In conclusion, while Buddhism may not offer political or economic solutions to dealing with crises of such a large magnitude, it nonetheless offers the spiritual ground and conditions for an awakened self, which is inextricably connected with the welfare and spiritual progress of all *other* beings. Buddhism reconciles the spiritual with the social, individual liberation with collective social emancipation.

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Building Bridges: Eurocentric to Intercultural Information Ethics

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Misguided use, manipulation, misappropriation, disruption and mismanagement of Information deeply affects the infosphere as well as the social and moral fabric of a society. Information ethics is an attempt to bring the creation, organization, dissemination, and use of information within the ambit of ethical standards and moral codes. The diverse and inherently pluralistic nature of societies however puts forth an additional demand on us - to come up with an intercultural information ethics. An intercultural ethics which is other-centric, context sensitive and workable without being homogenizing, patronizing and colonizing. An endeavor in that direction has already been made by proponents of intercultural information ethics like: Charles M. Ess, Fay Sudweeks, Rafael Capurro, Pak-Hang Wong, Soraj Hongladarom et al. In our paper, we propose that the kind of ethical pluralism being sought in the domain of information ethics can be attained by having a reappraisal of the current methodological strategies, by casting a critical relook at the Eurocentric ethical model. This paper analyses the current framework of Intercultural Information Ethics. And in an endeavour to move towards an all-encompassing, other-centric, workable, intercultural, harmonious and compassionate model of 'Pluralistic Information Ethics', it proposes the Indian / Asian philosophical method of 'Samvāda' to the current inventory which includes methods like: 'parrhesia/free speech' and 'interpretive phronēsis.

Keywords: Information Ethics (IE), Intercultural Information Ethics (IIE), Samvād, Infosphere, Dialogue, Parrhesía, Eurocentrism, phronēsis

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1. Introduction

We live in the information age where societies are evolving through the mediation of information technology. And, with that is evolving the way in which we interact, relate with, and understand each other. In its ambit this paper discusses how misappropriation, manipulation, disruption and mismanagement of information deeply affects the infosphere as well as the social and moral fabric of society. Information Ethics (IE) is an attempt to bring the creation, organization, dissemination, and use of information within the purview of ethical standards and moral codes. In contrast to the traditional ethical frameworks which were designed to evaluate the agent and their actions, IE was devised to evaluate the various aspects of information. The diverse and inherently pluralistic nature of societies however, puts forth an additional demand on us - to come up with an Intercultural Information Ethics (IIE). An IE which is other-centric, context sensitive and workable without being homogenizing, patronizing and colonizing.

In the following sections we look at the Eurocentric bias in IE, move to IIE and forward the Dialogical method of *Samvād* as a bridge between Eurocentric and other Inter-cultural approaches to IE. In *section 2,* we discuss the nature of information, infosphere, information entities and how the challenges arising from these gave rise to IE. In *section 3,* we dig deeper into the methodology of IE and uncover an inextricable Eurocentric influence which we show as an ethically fraught and neo-colonial approach. In *section 4*, we proceed from the problematization of IE to discussing how IIE offers significant improvement over IE. We find *Dialogue* to be a string which runs through the different IIE frameworks, such as *Charles Ess's Phronēsis* and *Rafael Cappuro's Parrhesía.* This leads us to *section 5,* where this paper elaborates upon the different Dialogical Methods in the IIE framework. In *section 6*, we forward our own *Dialogical Method* rooted in the Indian *Nyāya* Philosophy — *Samvād; and* how it offers a holistic and methodical ethical approach towards *intercultural dialogue* through its unwavering focus on *other-centrism.* In section 7, we bring forward in detail how the method of *Samvād* could offer us a pluralistic framework to build bridges between different intercultural positions thus, joining us all in a continuum. Conclusively, in *section 8,* we sum up the key features of the method of *Samvād* and try to summarily argue why it deserves more serious attention as a way forward.

2. Emergence of IE

It is often maintained that information is objective and value-neutral. Therefore, an objective and universalisable approach of IE will be an apt framework for evaluation. However, information arises in contexts and bears indelible impressions of its origins and circumstances throughout its life cycle. Any framework which proceeds with the misconstrual that information is value neutral, and independent of its context, will prove to be inherently problematic, unethical and insufficient. The scientific - *view from nowhere* (Nagel, 1986) - approach with its aloofness from context and lack of consideration for granular — day to day — moral challenges, fails to stand the test for a holistic ethical theory. Therefore, this paper proposes a global move of the

'information societies' from the current dominant, mono-cultural, Eurocentric discourse of IE frameworks, towards more nuanced, non-homogenizing, context sensitive IIE frameworks. To that end, this paper forwards *'Samvād'* as a tool for building intercultural bridges. *Samvād*, as forwarded in this paper is both an ethical framework as well as *praxis*.

Any discourse on IE will be incomplete without a deliberation on the imports and nuances of the term *'information'*. The common sense understanding of the word *information* would be any piece of knowledge which answers our queries and resolves our dilemmas. *Luciano Floridi* uses the term *'information'* in a strongly semantic sense. He refers to information as *''syntactically well-formed, semantically meaningful and veridical data.''* (Floridi, 2010, p. 265) *Deborah Johnson* highlights the pragmatic function of information by detailing its role as a facilitator of our inter-relationships (Bowie, 1985). *Robert Herritt and Floridi* surmise that we as individuals cannot be segregated from our information – "from our data, to particles in our body, to our medical history, to the story of our life" (Bielby, 2016, p. 239), we are intertwined with our information. *Paul Sturges* underscores that there has been a shift in information discourse; technicalities have made way for richer and more ethics-oriented discussions (Sturges, 2009).

In thinking about information as networked data and as facilitator of inter-relationships, it is inevitable to think about it locationally as existing in 'space'. It is here that the concept *"infosphere"* (Floridi, 1999, 2001, 2010) is of note. Akin to hydro, atmo, litho and bio, *infosphere* is any environment which is populated by information entities or 'inforgs' (Floridi, 2008). One of the ramifications of the information age has been our absolute dependence on our access to information through the internet. The complexities and challenges of understanding the interactions and inter-relationships between different digital selves makes the digital ontological understanding especially relevant. In his unpacking of digital ontology, *Capurro* reformulates *Berkeley's 'to be is to be perceived'* as — "*to be is to be digital*" (Capurro, 2006, p. 178). *Floridi* comes up with an alternate framework in the form of *'Informational Structural Realism (ISR)'*. According to ISR, *'being'* of the entire existing physical universe can be understood in terms of informational structure. But scholars like *Bruce Long* contend that ISR is essentially not very different from digital ontology (Long, 2020).

Traditional ethical theories emanating from normative and applied ethics have proven inadequate in dealing with the challenges of the information age. "The question of how ethics can maintain universal claims without turning into moral imperialism (Beck, 1998) is a central one for all modern ethicists" (Stahl, 2008, p. 98). IE emerged as a specialised branch which could be applied to not just packets of information or aggregates, but to the entire information cycle (Floridi, 2010). In normative ethics, the focal point is the rationally thinking human agent. IE took a step forward and shifted the focus of ethics from an atomistic anthropocentrism to information-centric paradigm, where agency was conferred upon information entities and the infosphere. For example: In the *RPT Model*, Information gets treated as Resource [R], Product [P] as well as Target [T]. (Floridi, 2010). This model considers information to be intrinsically valuable and believes that entropy of information is to be prevented at any cost. As an alternative

to the RPT model, the *Information Flow Model / IFM* (al-Fedaghi, 2010), tries to explain the life of information by enumerating the different stages through which the information moves throughout its lifecycle. Yet another alternative to the RPT and IFM models is the *Flourishing Ethics (FE)* model of *Terrell Ward Bynum* (Bynum, 2006). *FE* has deep *Aristotelian* roots and includes ideas similar to those in Eastern philosophies of *Taoism* and *Buddhism*. Bynum's *FE* sees an intricate relationship between human *telos* and our information processing nature. Our overall purpose according to FE is to *flourish*, and in order to do that we need to engage with a plethora of information (assessing, retrieving, organizing, evaluating, acting upon etc).

Scholars of information claim that IE leads to a paradigm shift of the discourse from *epistemology to ontology.* This claim however needs to be carefully analysed. We assert this because, if one were to evaluate the infosphere, one would still end up assessing and analysing actions of the epistemic agent only. It is so because the toolkit of this inquiry lends itself to asking typically agent-centric questions. For example: a). Was the agent informed enough to make rational choices? b). If the question of consent was involved, was it informed consent? c). Were choices made by the agent in the infosphere in accordance with ethical principles such as The Principle of Non-Injury, General Good etc.? d). Was the action by the agent in an information environment a product of their free will? e). Whether an action by a rational agent used another agent as a means to an end because of information asymmetry? If such are the quintessential enquiries of this toolkit, can it still be asserted that the paradigm has shifted? This paper questions the stance of IE scholars who claim that IE veritably led to a paradigm shift by mere inclusion of the information environment.

3. Eurocentrism and The Redundancy of The IE Framework

3.1 IE methodology

Norbert Wiener's methodology of *computer ethics* is considered to be the precursor of the IE methodology (Bynum, 2004). It is similar to that of other empirical sciences; we start with a hypothesis pertaining to the ethical question at hand. The ethical question necessarily has to be about the integration of information technology in society. Since the aim is to resolve the ethical problem at hand, any ambiguous idea needs to be first clarified. The given hypothesis is to be then verified by testing its applicability in light of acceptable principles, laws and practices. Inspired by Weiner's methodology, logical positivism and developments in natural sciences, different models of IE also opted for empirical verification in order to attain universality, objectivity and certitude. *Techno-solutionism* (Morozov, 2013) as an upshot of empirical verification has come to be seen as a solution to any and every problem in our world.

3.2 Eurocentric influence on IE methodology

The *Eurocentric* influence on the models, theories and methods of IE discourse is anything but apparent. *Eurocentrism* can be defined as a cultural phenomenon which views the histories, life-worlds, cultures of non-western societies from the lens of the *Western perspective*. *Eurocentrism* projects Western Europe, Americas and Australasia or 'the West' as a universal

signifier, and advocates for the application of a 'Western model' based on *'Western values'* rooted in *Enlightenment* like: rationality, certitude, objectivity, verifiability, individuality, human rights, equality, democracy, free markets etc. (Pokhrel, 2011). In the *Eurocentric* framework of ethics, the *othering* of different cultures has been a recurring theme. *Hegel*, for instance, has been criticized for finding within Chinese thought "only poor morals". He gives a low rank to the teachings of *Confucius*, as they contain a lot of "commonsense and a mainly popular morality", but no "speculative philosophy" (Kimmerle, 2016, p. 103). Most frameworks of IE have been designed from the western perspective and have been superimposed on the non-western societies, leading to *Information Injustice;* which can range from being subtle to being deeply entrenched. Information Injustice in today's infosphere is rampant, and can be seen in the form of marginalized access and representation, information asymmetry / unfair distribution of information, violation of human rights [like right to equality, right to freedom (of speech, expression, thought), cultural and educational rights, right against exploitation], infringement of rights to information (which helps to make informed choices and give informed consent), infringement of privacy, illegal access and manipulation of information (e.g. hacking), information excess and deficit, cultural imperialism (via imposition of monocultures, bias in datasets and flawed algorithmic models) etc. In this context, Nikita Aggarwal aptly remarks, "the ethical norms and values designed into these technologies collide with those of the communities in which they are delivered and deployed" (Ess, 2020, p. 553).

Though it is extremely disconcerting to look back at human history and find it looked at through Eurocentric lenses, it remains an inescapable fact. The western Eurocentric frameworks of ethics have been unable to capture the values, ideals and aspirations of non-western societies. They are formalistic and have been devised keeping in mind ideal, utopian scenarios wherein humans are presumed to possess extraordinary abilities, but the fact is that it is our contingencies and limitations which make us human. If the moral standards are too high, then they become far-fetched, impractical and inaccessible (Prasad, 1989). Thus, the pieces — of how Eurocentrism came to be a powerful approach which influenced the entire world — fall into place. The predominant European power centres spread Eurocentric frameworks and unilaterally imposed them on other cultures as being superior, rational, objective and universalizable. It was a hallmark of imperialism impressed indiscriminately upon all societies which were subjugated and colonized. Continuing the same thread, some scholars believe that a 'computer mediated colonization' (Ess, 2002) is well underway. It is happening via "Big Data, Algorithmic processes, Surveillance and the emerging IoT" (Ess, 2020, p. 554). Often subtle and subliminal, Eurocentrism came to be superimposed due to colossal power asymmetries that lay in the very foundations of the building of our modern world. In light of these facts, to still continue the use of the traditional *Eurocentric* frameworks as the only models available — when there clearly are several other pluralistic, contextual, local frameworks — is ethically wrong. Therefore, the promulgation of an intercultural model based on an empathetic, cross-cultural, other-centric understanding seems to be the logical next step.

4. From IE to IIE

IE is several decades old, but there is no consensus on a universal understanding of it due to lack of contextual sensitivity. Paving the way forward therefore, several localized approaches to IE emerged thus giving rise to the discourse on *Intercultural Information Ethics (IIE)*. IIE according to *Jared Bielby*, is pertinent to and rooted in all cultures (Bielby, 2008). Capurro is of the view that without the intercultural bend, the richness of tradition and human morality will be lost. (Capurro, 2008) It is only through intercultural dialogue that the IIE discourse can become all encompassing, other-centric, harmonious and compassionate, asserts Capurro. He is critical of Floridi's approach and has argued that IE should not merely engage with the biocentric questions about moral status of the infosphere and its entities, but should also address questions pertaining to the intersection of the infosphere with ecological, political, economic, and socio-cultural horizons. *Pak-hang Wong* has opined that the current discussions in IE are dominated by ethical contexts unique to *Western* culture. In the name of making space for context, there is little admissibility of *Non-western* cultures. As per Johannes Britz, there are uncritical assumptions under which we have been operating in IE (Britz, 2013). Capurro points out how the three interpretations of freedom (freedom of speech, access to information, and freedom of press) have their roots in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). UDHR* presents itself as a universal and globally enforceable framework, but at its core it is an Eurocentric framework (Capurro, 2006).

Hongladarom and Britz have also drawn attention towards the debate on Western monopoly branded as *universalism*, by raising the *universalism vs. particularism* debate (Hongladarom, & Britz, 2009). They question the promotion of western values and ideals as universally acceptable, by questioning the nature and basis of such a promotion. If we consider the Western conception of privacy, it is all about the individual; their choices, and autonomy. By contrast, in Asian cultures (viz. India), privacy is a diffused concept, more collective, relative, and group oriented. For instance, in their paper *Ponnurangam Kumaraguru, Lorrie Faith Cranor and Elaine Newton* have provided us a preliminary glance into differences in perceptions of the notion of privacy between Indians and Americans. They state that, "The subjects in India mostly related privacy to personal space and subjects in the US mostly related privacy to information privacy. Most of the US subjects related privacy to some form of control of information or data protection. On the other hand, Indian subjects related privacy to physical, home and living space" (Kumaraguru et al., 2005, p.11). It may however be noted, that even in the same larger, undivided social set-up like India, where there is vast diversity in terms of culture, class, caste, geography, education etc., privacy may be interpreted differently depending upon one's situatedness.

Concepts like privacy, security, consent and identity have deep ramifications on the formulation of ethical frameworks. To drive our point we briefly consider the conceptual notion and definition of *privacy* in the *Draft Data Protection Bill (India), 2018*. The document establishes *privacy* as a right of a *natural person* by guarding the *data principal* against any conceivable or real harm, and by taking due cognisance of the interest of the *data principal* at different stages of the *data life-cycle*. A parallel can be drawn between Chapter 3 (Articles 12-23) of GDPR (which elaborates upon the rights of the *data subject*) and Draft Data Protection Bill (India). At this point an important question would be — Is blanket adoption of principles like consent, privacy, security etc. as in their western understanding (as in the GDPR framework)

judicious, considering the vastly different socio-cultural and economic tapestry of India? Notably, there existed a precedent to GDPR in Europe in the form of the Data Protection Directive, 1995. India can claim no such precedent which could have helped ease the transition of the society towards the said direction (Burman, 2019).

Concepts do not arise in vacuum. They develop as a layer upon an intricate mesh of social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual contexts. We can see this particularly by noticing how *privacy* is connected with concepts like *freedom*. We believe that *freedom* cannot be reduced to merely the three formulations from the UDHR framework. Clinton Rositer states, "Privacy (....) can be understood as an attempt to secure autonomy (....)." (Westin, 1967, p. 34). Freedom can also be understood in terms of liberty from any and every form of coercion or control (Hayek, 1960). In the Indian moral and religious philosophy, *freedom* has spiritual meaning; it also means liberation from the cycle of birth and death. In the realm of the infosphere, freedom would entail having control over what gets concealed or revealed about oneself. Thus, it can be concluded that the Eurocentric paradigm does not fully capture these (and possibly many other) multitudinal dimensions in its notion of freedom. The same inference can be drawn for other ethical principles as well.

Charles Ess's 'Global Information Ethics' seeks to avoid imperialistic homogenization while simultaneously preserving the irreducible differences between cultures and peoples (Ess, 2006). Ess propounds Interpretive *pros hen* ('towards one') ethical pluralism as a common denominator in Eastern as well as Western conceptions of privacy. This kind of pluralism goes beyond purely *modus vivendi* pluralism which leaves tensions and conflicts unresolved and gives rise to a cycle of violence by claiming that different cultures with varying values and life-styles can coexist in a practical world by reaching a rational consensus regarding the best way of life. Interpretive *pros hen* ('towards one') ethical pluralism promotes "positive engagements across our cultural differences that do not require identity that risks suppressing our defining differences" (Ess, 2020, p. 552).

Dialogue is an important tool in the IIE framework. It enables the discourse to answer the challenges of cultural differences and diversity. Such a dialogue is not limited to individuals or collectives interculturally, but can be upscaled interculturally (Elberfeld, 2000). According to *Capurro*, any meaningful, presupposition-less intercultural dialogue on governance and administration of the infosphere can only take place with "*frankness instead of persuasion*" (Capurro, 2006, p. 175). Any attempt of reaching universality sans outreach and engagement with local moral sensibilities is to be done away with.

5. Dialogical Methods In The Current IIE Framework

Dialogue can be engaged in through different ways. In the IIE framework, we come across two foundational approaches. One of them is *Charles Melvin Ess's phronēsis*. According to him, the method of interpretive pluralism and phronēsis can be used to engage in positive dialogue with cultures very different from us, without suppressing the differences which define us. The method

of *phronēsis* or practical wisdom as a prerequisite demands cultivation of values that have the potential to bridge deepest cultural divides through open engagements. *Phronēsis* enables the interlocutors to comprehend their commitment to fundamental norms, values, and guidelines irrespective of differences in context and interpretation or application of norms (Ess, 2020). The other method is that of *parrhesía* or free speech, as advanced by Capurro. We think Capurro's notion of free speech *(parrhesía)* can be compared with Buddhist notion of *Right Speech (samyak vaçan)* as it appears in Buddha's *Doctrine of Eight Fold Path or Ashtāngamārga.* From a Buddhist perspective, right speech would mean abstention from falsehood, harsh speech, boastfulness and vain verbal indulgences etc. It is one of the right paths through which an individual can attain *nirvāna* (liberation) from the cycle of birth and death. It can also be considered as another tool under the dialogical method.

"According to *Foucault*, dialogue is a major *parrhesiastic* technique in opposition to a rhetorical or sophistical speech. It is a form of criticism in which the speaker is in a position of inferiority with regard to his interlocutor. The aim of such verbal truth-telling activity is to help other people (or himself) by choosing frankness instead of persuasion." (Capurro, 2006, p. 175). *Parrhesía* owes its origins to the Greek city-states which were direct democracies and allowed open debates. The methodology presumed the speaker's inferiority and bequeathed citizenship rights only upon adult males. Women, foreigners and slaves were excluded from citizenship rights, and could not partake in the open discourses held in the agora. In this respect, we would like to question the context behind the method of *Parrhesía*. Any method which precludes more than half of a society's population as invalid cannot be universalised. Such an exclusionary framework is unethical by design. Dialogue is an engagement between equals, *a parrhesíastic method* on the other hand, "emerges in the context of asymmetrical power relations" (Weiskopf & Tobias-Miersch, 2016, p. 4). Therefore, how Parrhesía transcends the pitfalls of its origin to become a universalisable and other-centric framework remains an unanswered question.

The advent of information technology led to a systemic *digital divide.* It thus became an imperative to develop a praxis which could bridge the digital divide between the digitally empowered and the digitally marginalized ('*Other*'). Such a method has to be inclusive, other-centric, empathetic, and interculturally informed. This leads us to *Samvād*; as a concept and *praxis*.

6. *Samvād* and the *'Other'*; Concept as *Praxis*

In the Indian tradition, building *Samvāda ('sam' = equal + 'vāda' = dialogue)* between one's own position and that of the others before reaching any conclusion, has been the most fundamental style of philosophising. According to *Vātsyāyana,* the commentator of *Nyāya Sūtra*, any inquiry is initiated because of the existence of *samsaya* or doubt. The reason behind the origin of doubt is the presence of two adversarial positions; thesis or '*pakṣa*' and antithesis or *pūrvapakṣa'*. The doubt leads to ascertaining the strengths and limitations of both positions, to arrive at a solution for the problem at hand. In a well conducted philosophical inquiry, initial uncertainty paves way for ascertainment of the properties of the things or concepts under consideration. The investigation sanctions the use of data which are irrefutable or are accepted

by all the parties (Ganeri, 2001). *Nyāya* school developed a very systematic approach for elucidating *Pūrvapaksa.* As per *Vātsyāyana's Nyāyabhāsya*, the *Nyāya* system follows a three-fold procedure of – *enumeration (uddésa), definition (lakṣaṇa)* and *examination (parīkṣā)*. Herein, 'enumeration' means the act of referring to an object by its name, 'definition' denotes any characteristics of the said object which distinguish it from all other objects and 'examination' involves verifying the distinguishing feature with the help of pramānās (source of knowledge)."The play of the *pakṣa* of self and the other's *pakṣa (pūrvapakṣa)* is inescapable amidst the *diversity of Indian societies"* (Ali, 2018, p. 451). It is imperative upon those engaging in *Samvād* to remain honest throughout the process. Honest representation of one's own *Paksa* as well as of all possible formulations of *Pūrvapaksa*, — concealed and revealed — ensures equality during *Samvād*. *Samvād* offers the holders' of contrary views; an opponent or the *'Other'* — the dignity of acknowledgement, and through it, ascription of validation. In doing so, *Samvād* paves way for mutual assurance of validity and respect. It is only after such an understanding, on the foundation of trust and commutuality, that the differences can be addressed and bridged upon through dialogue or *Samvād*.

It is important to stress that cosmetic uniformity or erasure of differences is not the goal of *Samvād*. Instead, it is about acknowledging differences, positionalities and situatedness of both the *'Self'* and the *'Other',* the *'paksa'* and the *'pūrvapaksa',* with the understanding that co-existence in face of differences is the way forward. And in order to do that, *Samvād* needs to be built. "If we dare to extend the steps in the method to the multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-religious, multi-gender, or multi-ethnic frameworks of Indian societies, we find that every individual has a *pūrvapakṣa* to consider. The *pūrvapakṣa* in actually existing societies is what we call the *'Other'"* (Ali, 2018, p. 451).

6.1 *Samvād*; the other-centric ethical method

"The presence of the *'Other'* whether as a person or in the form of contradictory thought is normal to the living and thinking of any society" (Thapar, 2020, p.14). *Samvād* bridges the gap between *'Self'* and the *'Other'* through understanding and openness at its core. It is here that we would like to bring in *Emanuel Levinas's* Other-centric approach to ethics. According to him, moral responsibility can be understood in terms of one's endeavor to reach out and understand the *'Other.'* For *Levinas* the *'Other'* is irreducible. Dialogue for him becomes an ethical tool through which we can reach out and understand the *'Other'*.

It may be noted that the concept of *Samvāda* and the dialogical method of *Levinas* are very different from each other. The difference which is being spoken about is not only that of foundational questions — which they try to resolve — but also of the method. According to *Levinas,* the relevance of the dialogical method can be understood in terms of its ethical ramifications. It is our moral responsibility to participate in dialogue. *'Genuine freedom'* as per *Levinas* lies in our moral responsibility and obligation towards *'Other'* and can be achieved by engaging in dialogue with one's interlocutors. *Samvāda* on the other hand, is essentially an intellectual device and framework which is rule-governed and makes use of the various tools

from *(Nyāya)* logic to resolve not only complex philosophical problems but also our day to day predicaments. *Muzaffar Ali* states that it is in the dialogical method that a real encounter with the *'Other'* takes place and even if one uses the method for the sake of method, it will still have a moral import. Though the dialogical method of *Samvād* emerged as an intellectual logical tool to resolve epistemological issues, it also went on to offer an ethical framework grounded in care and concern for the *'Other'*. According to Debīprasād Chattopādhyāya, other-centric ethical perspective of *Samvād* comes out very clearly in the following two preconditions of *Samvād*: "b) An imperative necessity to know, elaborate, and remain honest while conveying (or understanding) the contents of a rival position or one's 'Other.' c) Need to add more arguments in favor of the 'Other' by the 'Self' sometimes more than its ('Other's') actual representatives. However, it has to be done while adhering to (b)" (Ali, 2018, p. 451).

7. Of Big Picture and Bridges Through *Samvād*

In the prominent discourses of Ethics, promotion of hegemonic values as universal and fit-for-all, displacement and marginalisation of local frameworks and value systems has been a recurring theme. Consequently, leading to a feeling of alienation and voicelessness among the non hegemonic voices. The *'building of bridges'* commences with the simple acknowledgement that the global value system is not a *monolith*. This simple fact could prove effective in fostering intercultural wilfulness to come together and lend an ear to each other, initiating a spark and paving a way forward towards *Samvād*. We would like to emphasise here that *Samvād* is not to be taken as a praxis meant for diluting the irreducible differences between the different cultures, or as a framework which unilaterally imposes one system as a universal standard.

The question that arises next is — do we need to completely do away with universalistic frameworks in favour of more context-specific and workable models? Given the pluralistic nature of our society, there cannot be a blanket generalisation about the ultimate nature of reality. But in our endeavour to keep the irreducible difference between the different cultures intact, is it justifiable to side with a cultural relativist framework? The issue with cultural relativism is that it forecloses any further possibilities including that of *Samvād*. *Modus vivendi pluralism, liberal pluralism and pros hen interpretive pluralism*, on the other hand, enable us to secure irreducible differences between different cultures, but at the cost of assuming a priori presumptions about shared *norms, standards, identities, principles, beliefs, points of reference, points of origin, relations of complementarity,* etc. We assert that every apriori presumption is necessarily grounded in a plethora of metaphysical assumptions. And an open-minded *Samvād* can never truly be undertaken with so much metaphysical baggage at hand.

In our version of ethical pluralism, irreducible differences can be bridged not by taking recourse of shared common grounds but by engaging in honest, empathetic, other-centric *Samvād* which flows and decides its own course. Why do we need to incorporate assumptions about what is shared between two systems in the first place, even before starting the dialogue? Why can't two value systems — hypothetically speaking — coexist side by side with continuous flow of dialogue *(Samvād)* between them? Our ideas embodied in the framework of *Samvād* take a unique approach in that *Samvād* circumvents the need for finding common denominators as

mutually assured shared grounds to foster pluralism. *Samvād* instead proposes an open minded acknowledgement and acceptance of the differences and moving forward nevertheless.

In order to make sure that all the relevant features of varying contexts are taken into consideration, it becomes incumbent upon all parties to undertake *Samvād* at multiple levels before reaching any conclusive decision. Instead of a top down approach to *Samvād*, a bottom up approach can yield better results. Undertaking a local rather than global or a more generalised approach is ideal as it is more rooted in the context and closer to small, local communities. In this very context, Jonathan Dancy's work on *moral particularism* offers useful insights. According to *Dancy*, the moral status of a conceptual schema or an action cannot be determined by absolute or relative moral principles; it can be determined only by evaluating the relevant features of the context which is being deliberated upon. *Dancy* aptly points out that "every consideration is capable of having its practical polarity reversed by changes in context" (Dancy, 2015, p. 325). One cannot thereby construe the ultimate nature of reality as either being digital, informational, structural, material etc. by merely casting a prima facie glance. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that such an analysis can be applicable all over any society because there always are local contexts, and fragmented cultural tapestries which oppose wide-scale generalisations.

A fair *pūrvapaksa* to *Samvād* would be about its scale. After all, it is perplexing to think about how to bring different contextual understandings, regional affiliations and diverse interest groups together in a richly diverse democracy like India, for instance? We believe, in India, the ease with which comparative — social, cultural, political — dialogues happen between diverse ethnicities, religious and interest groups, owes its origin to the ancient Indian *(Nyāya)* philosophical tradition of *Samvād*. It has been an intrinsic and abiding force, powering the Indian socio-cultural ethos for centuries. *Muzaffar Ali* asserts that *Samvād* in its true form is clearly palpable in the realm of inter-religious dialogues in India (Ali, 2018).

However, we would like to note that the framework of *Samvād* as it exists today — at the national level — is strained because of the abandonment of values like: honesty, mutual respect, good faith and an open-minded, empathetic understanding of each other. These values serve as the ground on which the superstructure of *Samvād* takes root and sustains itself. To further understand the vulnerabilities which could lead *Samvād* to breakage, we bring in two pertinent case studies from India. Through these examples, we analyse the digital *Samvād*; its unfolding, factors causing *fractures*, and what could possibly be done to *repair* the process.

Since antiquity, India has been known as a tolerant society, where citizens have been free to voice their concerns and have conducted *Samvād* with both the State (or equivalent overarching power structures) and their fellow citizens, especially in matters of public interest. However, very recently we witnessed a scenario wherein every possible attempt was made to fracture *Samvād* between its netizens by disrupting and stalling the internet services for five hundred and fifty days in Kashmir ('Statement on long overdue 4G mobile internet restoration in Jammu & Kashmir after 550 days #KeepItOn', 2021). A similar shutdown was imposed near the

borders of Delhi and in Haryana to suppress farmers' protests (Sinha, 2021) It can be argued that communication breakdown in any form leads to *distributive epistemic injustice* and is a gross violation of the *right to freedom* (freedom of expression), *access to information and democratic participation*. These instances of communication shutdown are clearly not in conformity with values and practices of *Samvād*. When faced with any *samsaya* or doubt, *Samvād* has to be carried out by ascertaining the strengths and limitations of *paksa* as well as *pūrvapaksa*. One of the greatest advantages of *Samvād* is that none of the parties engaged in the dialogue feel victimised and aggrieved as the very method has transparency, accountability, empathy and equity embedded in it.

In another recent case, *Whatsapp* decided to change its *Terms of Service (ToS)* in India, in February, 2021. This change would have allowed data sharing of users' metadata between Whatsapp and Facebook. It is worth noting that Facebook acquired Whatsapp in 2014. This decision and the unilateral manner in which it was imposing the new ToS, did not go down well with its Indian users. Whatsapp gave users only two choices; a) to agree, or, b) to discontinue services of the highly popular messaging app. This one sided, unethical and aggressive move led to a mass exodus of users to other messaging apps such as Signal and Telegram. Whatsapp has since delayed the move by three months in order to better communicate its terms with the users. It also posted a blogpost answering FAQs to address the backlash against its privacy policy. At present, it can be said that our data constitutes who we are, at least in the eyes of the power structures which facilitate collection, storage, maintenance and retrieval of data on us and about us. So, when systems/people/entities have so much power that they have unfettered access to our personal data, we inadvertently end up jeopardizing our freedom to act and think freely. Power and information asymmetries in democratic processes lead to one upmanship by governments.

In both the above cases, there are some common denominators such as: lack of transparency, secrecy, mistrust, unilateral decision making without the involvement of all stakeholders, miscommunication, unilateral impositions of decisions, and the digital nature of these issues. If we hypothetically apply *Samvād* to these cases in retrospect, the parties presenting the *paksa* should have started out by considering an entire range of arguments against theirs (pūrvapaksa) which would involve the very difficult task of assuming all possible positions and standpoints of stakeholders. In addition, *they* would need to scrutinize the validity and rigour of the arguments of the *paksa* against their counter arguments (*pūrvapaksa*), to arrive at the final thesis or *siddhānt*. More so, we identify two levels at which *Samvād* should have happened in these two cases, beginning with (a). *Concealed* - at the level of policy framing wherein, the counter arguers are absent both physically and digitally. The *Paksa* would also need to adhere to strict self-discipline so as to not undermine the process of *Samvād* and follow the process with integrity, empathy, compassion and humility. And then (b). *Revealed* - at the level of policy implementation and in the presence (physical and / or digital) of the *pūrvapaksa* proponents. *Samvād* at the revealed level can be carried out in both real as well as virtual space.

8. Concluding Remarks

One of the constraints of *Samvāda* is that it expects the enquirer to represent their own position or *paksa* as well as that of all *pūrvapaksa* with utmost integrity, but the expectation of ideal moral conduct in its adherence is a weak point of Samvada. Akin to any conceptual framework, *Samvād* has its limitations too. Nevertheless, *Samvād* can enable us "to cope with dynamism in the world knowledge,...to facilitate better reasoning and inferences over the represented knowledge,...to adapt to addition of necessary information with change in the specification or conceptualization" (Mahalakshmi & Geetha, 2010, p. 14).

Samvād is an uncomplicated framework which can be practiced at any scale. An individual could choose it to form more inclusive, enabling, compassionate, other-centric worldviews. A society could choose it as a framework to conduct an inter-regional or intercultural dialogue to promote amity, understanding and inclusion. A nation could choose the framework in policy formulation, implementation as well as, post implementation feedback mechanism. An intercultural *Samvād* — inter or intra nationally — would foster better cultural and contextual awareness. An interdisciplinary *Samvād* could greatly alter our processes of knowledge-making, make us more informed of our differences, and perhaps more considerate towards the *'Other(s)'* as well as more accommodating in our inferences and conclusions.

Diversity as a default of our world - is a fact. Diverse groups have peacefully co-existed in India for millenia. It is a question worth asking - if this commutuality exists in the Indian ethos because of shared norms or our mutual understanding despite irreducible differences? Moral relativism fails to capture the essence of what mutual understanding as part of the social fabric is capable of accomplishing. Relativism's singular focus on differences and their irreducibility prevents it from giving a holistic view. In *Samvād*, we let our irreducible differences stand. The process of *Samvād* is a living one, it never ceases to be. It at no point tries to dwell on the differences — irreducible or otherwise — from the perspective of reducing or levelling them up to create common grounds. *Samvād* allows us to see our differences and yet come together. In light of our differences, we continue our *Samvād* to figure out ways of coming together and contributing towards our common future. Instead of getting fixated upon a set of apriori principles, we let the context organically decide the mechanics of our inter-relationships as *Samvād* progresses in the due course.

Samvād ultimately aims to bridge the divide between *'Self'* and the *'Other'* rather than blurring or erasing our differences. Differences are intrinsic to *Samvād*. *Samvād* is neither an ultimate nor the only framework of its kind, nor does it downplay, oppose or consider itself superior to others. In fact, any such assumptions would be against its very spirit. This paper analyses and proposes *Samvād* because our analysis finds that in addition to the already discussed positives, it is inclusive by design. It advocates for those on the margins, fights erasure, challenges established/dominant narratives and shakes us out of our comfort zones into acceptance, humility and co-existence. It not just acknowledges but also syncretizes and mainstreams the '*Other'* before the *'Self'*. And in doing so it heralds a new approach to conducting both *Philosophy* and *Dialogue*. *Samvād* with its abiding commitment to mutual co-existence in face of all differences, perseveres to build bridges through open-minded, honest,

flexible, fluidic, and other-centric dialogue. Cutting across geographies and intellectual traditions, it makes no claims of superiority at any juncture and remains resolutely devoted to looking beyond troublesome dichotomous thinking with either/or choices. And in doing this, *Samvād* departs from colonising, mono-cultural, patronizing, generalising, non-pluralistic and dogmatic approaches and frameworks.

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Abstract

Extended Commentary

Extended Commentary: Pandemic, Paradigm, and Philosophy in Social Science Research

Authors: Narmada Poojari,   Jyoti Bania

Abstract

A *paradigm* is also known as worldview, a description of the world indicates ways to find answers to any given phenomena. Crisis occurs in the social system when a paradigm can't provide us with ways of producing knowledge due to some anomalies. The Covid-19 pandemic is one such anomaly, that neither ended nor has completely disappeared from our social world, posing a serious epistemic challenge to our research paradigms, be it scientific or social. *Ontology*, a (philosophical) inquiry of the '*nature of the reality*' has itself changed due to the pandemic as the virtual and real worlds collide and the distinction between the two realities become ambiguous. *Epistemology,* a branch of philosophy that determines "*how and what realities can be known?*" is determined by ontological assumptions. It must be noted that the methodology, which is the philosophical justification of employing particular types of research methods and techniques, is based on the philosophical branches of ontology and epistemology. A catastrophe like the Covid-19 pandemic is predetermined, given that pandemic and devastating catastrophes are the watershed moments of human history. Hence, the paper argues for a new *paradigm* to understand the changing social realities while recognizing the limitations of the existing (research) paradigms to seek answers to the challenges posed by the pandemic. The recognition of the limitations in the existing research *paradigms* is necessary toward formulation of a new *paradigm* for newer ways of understanding and knowing changed social realities.
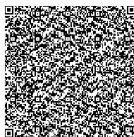
SOURCE OF MORAL KNOWLEDGE

Ayesha Gautam[*]

Abstract:

One cannot deny the fact that we all have some understanding of moral issues. There is a sense that every one of us has regarding right and wrong, good and bad, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. This moral understanding can be in the form of some vague idea, notion, or simply a gut feeling. No matter who the person is, from which culture or community the person belongs to, everybody faces a moral quandary sometime or other in one's life. Essentially, this assumes that a fundamental sense of right or wrong exists. There seems to be some consensus about what is right and what is wrong when it comes to actions. Some actions, for instance, torturing babies just for fun, killing an innocent person, raping, etc. are exemplars of morally wrong and culpable actions. Assisting a person in need, giving to famine relief, etc. on the other hand are examples of morally right and praiseworthy actions. This essay is an attempt to undertake an inquiry into the source of moral knowledge. Three sources, experience, reason, and intuition have been identified. Views of philosophers like G.E Moore, WD Ross, Immanuel Kant, JS Mill, Plato, Samuel Clarke, Aristotle, Hume, and Anthony Ashley Cooper have been discussed to gain clarity about the issue.

Keywords: Source, Knowledge, reason, experience, intuition

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1. Introduction

Moral epistemology has been a matter of concern for centuries, and the question pertaining to the source of moral knowledge is one of the most significant and intriguing questions in the domain of moral epistemology which has perturbed philosophers as well as the commoner. There are different senses in which 'moral knowledge' is generally understood. For instance, A.J. Ayer is of the opinion that there are four senses in which one can understand moral knowledge. As a starting point, it is understood as knowledge of propositions expressing definitions of ethical terms or judgments about their validity. Furthermore, moral knowledge involves understanding the propositions relating to moral phenomena experience and their causes. Thirdly, it can be understood as knowledge of exhortations to moral virtue. Lastly, moral knowledge can be understood as knowledge of moral judgments. (A.J Ayer, 1952,103). According to A.J Ayer, it is only the first sense (which comprises definitions of ethical terms) that can be considered philosophically relevant because it is only this sense that constitutes ethical philosophy. Other senses in which moral knowledge is understood do not constitute ethical philosophy but rather constitute the science of psychology or sociology.

The significant question raised by Ayer in this context concerns the feasibility of reducing ethical statements to empirical statements. The answer which philosophers give in response to this question is relevant for determining the source of moral knowledge. Statements of ethical value can, according to subjectivists and utilitarians, be translated into empirical fact. In the viewpoint of subjectivists such as Hume, actions are right, and ends are good according to the feelings or emotions of approval that certain individuals or groups have towards them. Utilitarians like J.S Mill and Bentham define rightness and goodness in terms of utility, pleasure, or happiness, which results from them. Utility theory holds that good is that which maximizes happiness for most people. Moral knowledge is derived from experience, according to these philosophers, who reduce ethical terms to empirical facts. Moral sentimentalists like Anthony Ashley Cooper also consider experience to be the source of moral knowledge.

Non-naturalist G.E. Moore argued that both utilitarian and subjectivist positions (naturalisms) are wrong due to the naturalistic fallacy that they commit and the open question argument. Among Moore's contentions is that it is illogical to derive good as a normative property from pleasure or happiness as a natural property. Moore termed this fallacy 'naturalistic fallacy'. The concept of 'ought' cannot be derived from 'is', since any attempt to define evaluative and normative properties in terms of natural properties would leave room for interpretation. A naturalistic view can be true in two different ways, according to Moore. To begin with, naturalism is true if moral terms like 'good' has the same meaning as simple terms like 'pleasant' that pick out naturalistic property. Furthermore, naturalism can be true if the concept of 'good' refers to a complex naturalistic term, such as 'is the object of your desire'. Moore was of the view that both these possibilities can be refuted if one takes cognizance of the following form of argument:

In considering the question: "Is pleasure pleasant?" it may very well be said that when one understands this question, one will no doubt answer yes to it. In contrast, one can ask the question: 'Is pleasure good? '. In spite of the fact that one understands this question perfectly well, one still doubts whether it is answered correctly. The question of whether pleasure is always good is debatable.   In Moore's view, good isn't the same as pleasant on account of the open nature of the question. It is evident that anyone considering whether pleasure is good is not just wondering whether it is pleasant. Good and yellow are simple concepts, according to Moore, and as such cannot be defined. A proposition asserting what is intrinsically good cannot be proved nor disproven, according to Moore, because it is inherently good. According to intuitionists like G.E Moore, the source of moral knowledge is intuition. There are many objections advanced against intuitionism. Critics of intuitionism argue that intuitions lack an authoritative foundation in the sense that they cannot give an objective assessment of right and wrong. Further, when two intuitions conflict with one another then it becomes difficult to adjudicate and decide what to do. In her paper. In "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect", Phillipa Foot have enunciated thought experiments in which two intuition are seen to come in conflict with each other. In one of the thought experiments, "the axe murderer" thought experiment, one is to

imagine a situation in which, when one answers the door, one finds an axe-wielding man who has come with the intention to kill and is asking for a friend who is inside the house. This scenario puts the moral intuition that 'Lies are always wrong' at odds with another moral intuition, the belief that innocent life should be protected. The question that can be raised here is, what should the person answering the door do? Should she tell the axe-wielding man the truth and let her friend be killed or should she lie to the axe-wielding man and save her friend's life? (Foot, 1967). This is one of the challenges which the theory of intuitionism needs to answer.

When deciding about the source of moral knowledge, philosophers can also take the rationalist position by saying that reason provides it. In terms of reason, one can either describe moral knowledge as the outcome of deductive or inductive reasoning by an agent or as the knowledge that is derived from the faculty of reason and is apriori. Here, it is worth mentioning that there cannot be rigid watertight compartmentalization between reason as a process or reason as a faculty. Some philosophers like Kant and Samuel Clarke consider both faculty of reason as well as reasoning process as the source of moral knowledge

Philosophers may therefore approach the question of how moral knowledge is derived differently depending on the position they take regarding morality. There are different approaches to the origin of moral knowledge, which are discussed in this article.

2. Insight into moral knowledge derived from experience

Morality is concerned with action, and this cannot be denied. All our actions happen in the empirical domain. There are some voluntary actions that are not moral. There are yet some voluntary actions that are moral. Consequently, the question arises: How does the experience give rise to morality?

In the history of philosophy, there have been many philosophers who have contended that moral knowledge is closely tied to natural facts and has its source in experience. According to Aristotle, moral philosophy aims to lead human beings to the 'good life'. For Aristotle, 'good' is what leads to human flourishing and happiness. It is inherent in human nature to seek to 'live well'. When analyzing a plant or animal's needs, one can determine whether those needs are

being met in abundance, and can have an idea of what it takes to 'flourish'. Living involves making choices and taking actions as well as maintaining relationships with others and maintaining a healthy mental state. Human desire, need, and reasoning abilities are central to Aristotle's view of moral truth. Aristotle also believed that experience is the source of our knowledge. He, however, pointed out that our newly acquired knowledge should be further evaluated and validated by the use of abstract reasoning.

David Hume was another influential philosopher who regarded human nature as the source of moral knowledge. *It is clear that Hume's empiricist approach can be seen in his A Treatise on Human Nature, especially his books two and three, and in his Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals (1751).* He has emphasized many times in his writings that reason cannot provide moral knowledge. One of Hume's famous arguments in this regard is as follows:

"All claims that can be known by reason are either empirical matters of fact or conceptual truths (such as "all bachelors are unmarried," or "all cubes have six sides").

Moral claims do not represent empirical matters of fact.

Moral claims do not represent conceptual truths.

Therefore, reason cannot give us moral knowledge." (Landau, Russ Shafer(Ed.) 2007, 4)

Based on the empiricist principle that the mind is passive, Hume argues that reason cannot prevent or generate affection or action by itself. The basis of morality cannot be logically based on reason because it is about actions and affections. Reason can influence our behavior in only two ways, in a philosophical sense. In the first place, reason can ignite passion by informing us that something exists that is worthy of our passion. In addition, the reason is able to provide us with a method of exerting any passion, by teaching us how causes and effects are related. It is an intellectual failure rather than a moral one if reason fails in either of these areas by mistakenly choosing the wrong means or mistaking one unpleasant object for another. Hume also maintained a distinction between facts and values. His belief was that one could not rely on premises about what was or was not true to draw conclusions about what ought or ought not to be true.

Rather than being derived from reason, moral distinctions are derived from what Hume calls the "moral sense." One of Hume's very famous sayings is "reason is and ought only to be, the slave of passion" (Hume, David, Book I, Section: 3.1,1975)   Description of action, character, or sentiment as good or bad; as virtuous or vicious, depends on the pleasure or pain of a particular kind which the action, character or sentiment evokes. According to Hume, moral distinctions are determined more by man's natural sentiments than his reason. Pleasant sentiments demonstrate traits that are useful, such as prudence, courage, kindness, and honesty. (Hume, David, 1998, 160) We acknowledge and applaud these virtues for their contribution to society. (David Hume, 1998, 109). Nevertheless, Hume was well aware that this does not apply to all pleasures and pains. It is impossible to attribute moral judgment to the pleasure of drinking good wine, for example. According to Hume, it is "only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil" (Hume, David, Book III, Part I, Sec. 2,1975).

As a final point, Hume argues that we should not embrace moral relativism because moral distinctions are grounded in our sentiments/feelings. A central aspect of Hume's moral theory is the benevolent nature of humans, which he defends against the idea of self-love. In self-love or psychological egoism, the ultimate concern for one's own happiness and preservation is taken into account for every moral sentiment." (David Hume, 1998, 109). A social virtue or virtues are defined based on whether they are useful to the individual or to society, according to Hume's moral theory. Our approval of these virtues and concern for society's welfare, however, are motivated by altruism. Humanity and sympathy are deeply ingrained in all our sentiments. (David Hume, 1998, 117) The love of mankind motivates a man to value and praise what is beneficial to him and others.   Considering the importance of desires and aversions in moral evaluation, Alan Goldman argues that Hume's theory implies that desires and aversions are the main motivating forces for moral behavior. (Alan H. Goldman, 1988, 55).

There have been other moral sentimentalists besides Hume, such as the third Earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson, who

believed that moral knowledge derives from sentiments. An analogy is often drawn between beauty and morality by moral sentimentalists to explain their position. Those who are moral sentimentalists believe that when we observe something beautiful, such as a natural object or a work of art, we are inclined to be positive about the thing. In the same way, when we believe someone is virtuous, we are also inclined to be positive about them. Sentimentalism sees sentiments as essential aspects of morality and aesthetics, which are experienced when evaluating an object in an informed, reflective, and unbiased manner.

It may be helpful to understand how sentimentalists approach the question of where moral knowledge comes from by considering the moral sentimentalist theory of Anthony Ashley Cooper. The third Earl of Shaftesbury, best known as Anthony Ashley Cooper, was arguably the most influential moral sentimentalist of his age. It was in his essay "An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit" that he introduced the concept of moral sense. It is the "affection" behind the action that inspires moral evaluation according to Shaftesbury. In the view of Anthony Ashley Cooper, such affections can be re-enacted into a second-order affection as a result of further reflection. Anthony Ashley Cooper writes:

> There are other kinds of creatures capable of forming general notions about things, besides those whose appearances are evident to the senses. Through reflection, the actions themselves, as well as affections like kindness, gratitude, and pity, come to be Objects. Having already felt an affection, this reflected sense of liking or disliking then causes a new liking or dislike to emerge. (Shaftesbury, 1699–1714: 16)

This sense of right or wrong is defined by Ashley Cooper as a second-order liking, which explains and perhaps consists of moral approval. This sense is either innate or natural, and can only be displaced by something contrary to our habit or custom (Shaftesbury, 1699–1714: 25), although occasionally "rage, lust, or any other counteractive passion" can do the trick (Shaftesbury, 1699–1714: 35). According to Shaftesbury, moral sense favors harmonious and beautiful motives that encourage good behavior, such as personal or public affections of the whole system of rational creatures. Also, subordinate self-interests are essential, since society suffers when

individuals fail to defend or protect themselves. Virtuous acts are not only about doing the right thing, but also about exercising moral sense and acting for the sake of something commendable and honest (Shaftesbury, 1699–1714: 18). However, Ashley Cooper does not detail how right and wrong work or how they can guide behavior. In general, moral sentimentalists compare beauty to morality. Similarly, Ashley Cooper has drawn a comparison in one of his works:

> As with ordinary bodies or common sense objects, mental or moral subjects exhibit the same characteristics. Depending on the measures, arrangements, and dispositions of the separate parts, their shapes, motions, colors, and proportions will result in either beauty or deformity. The regularity or irregularity of a subject's behavior or action is of necessity likely to cause an apparent difference in our understanding of them. (Shaftesbury, 1999, 172)

As a criticism against moral sentimentalists, moral rationalists argue that since sentiments are relative and vary, they cannot be considered to be a ground of morality which is considered to be objective and universal. Sentimentalists respond to this criticism by arguing that unbiased, informed, reflective consideration of a situation will not change the sentiment a person experiences. It is sentimentalists' view that informed, reflective, and unbiased sentiments are consistent and unbiased and can serve as the basis for moral judgments because of their persistence and constancy. In addition, moral sentimentalists have been criticized for refusing to incorporate uniformity into moral knowledge, even though their sentiments are informed, reflective, and unbiased. There are some moral principles that are invariable, such as the principle that murdering innocents is wrong. A sentimentalist will counter by pointing out that certain aesthetic judgments are just as widely accepted as moral judgments.

Experience, according to philosophers such as David Hume and other moral sentimentalists, is crucial in acquiring moral knowledge, and lack of experience can be detrimental. In this context, Peter Railton has argued that the breadth of our experiences can enable us to gain valuable moral insights, which hitherto would have been unknown and we would have been impoverished, had we not had those experiences. Further, it has been argued by Railton, that at a

collective level, it is the experiences of vivid groups which lead to moral progress which further leads to the formation of civilization. Peter Railton remarks, "We are quite sure that we have gained moral knowledge from experience—both as individuals and as a society—but not sure we can explain exactly how" (Railton, 1986, 61).

In addition to its evidential role in gaining moral knowledge, Sara McGrath believes that experience is capable of also serving an enabling role since experience can sometimes be an essential factor in putting a person in a position where moral knowledge can be acquired. For the acquisition of various moral concepts, experience may be necessary. In order to acquire the concept that murdering an innocent person is wrong, a sensory experience or encounter may be necessary. Actual events can also affect one's moral judgment by motivating one to make moral judgments he would not otherwise make. Experience is important in acquiring moral concepts, but it also plays a psychological role in motivating moral judgments. It is possible to conclude that a particular form of execution is morally wrong, for instance, after witnessing it. Einstein was a staunch pacifist before Nazism came to power in Germany, believing that force cannot be justified under any circumstances. As Nazism rose in power, Einstein's perspective changed and he became convinced that such force was justified at least in some cases. (Rowe & Schulmann (Ed.), 2007) In a letter, he clarified his stance: "there are circumstances in which in my opinion, it is necessary to use force…such a case would be when I face an opponent whose unconditional aim is to destroy me and my people" (Quoted in Rowe &Schulmann). For argumentation purposes, we can suppose Einstein's absolutism was false. However, his later view, that violence can be tolerated under certain conditions was true and something he knew, so his view of violence was the truth. The fact is that Einstein might never have come to realize this if he had not lived through the Nazi era; if that is the case, then his experience of the Holocaust influenced his perspective on the world.

Based on Peacocke's observations:

We may formulate...principles and distinctions we would never have considered otherwise by analyzing historical data and current situations. Moral emotions follow the same logic. We may reach moral conclusions we might not otherwise have reached because of

our moral indignation or sudden guilt over an act we have committed. (Peacocke, 2004, 526)

3. **Moral knowledge from intuition**

The idea that moral intuition plays a vital role in moral knowledge was first developed by philosophers like Thomas Reid, Francis Hutcheson, and Anthony Shaftsbury. The revival of intuitionism in the 20th century was credited mainly to philosophers such as H. A. Prichard, W. D. Ross and Moore. Philosophers like these rejected the ethical naturalism of subjectivists and utilitarians, contending that moral knowledge is derived from intuition.

If we discuss philosophers who believe intuition is a source of knowledge, it becomes incumbent to ask what intuition is in the first place. A person's intuition is generally regarded as their moral conscience, which helps them distinguish right from wrong. Philosophers have given the following definitions of intuition:

> Some power of immediate perception of the human mind. A power of immediately perceiving right and wrong. A judgment that is not made on the basis of some kind of explicit reasoning process that a person can conceivably observe….The judgment flows spontaneously from the situations that engender them, rather than from any process of explicit reasoning.

> We come to recognize (the obligation) immediately or directly…This apprehension is immediate, in precisely the sense in which mathematical apprehension is immediate…..the fact apprehended is self-evident (Smythe & Evans, 2007, 234).

When philosophers of religion or theologians discuss intuition as the source of moral knowledge, they tend to give it religious connotations. Intuition in this context has been considered to have its ultimate source in God or some form of divinity. Though it might be significant to study the religious connotation of intuition in other fields of study, in my philosophical endeavor, I will constrain myself from delving into such a notion of intuition which somehow gets

colored by religious connotation. Throughout what follows, I aim to reflect on and explore the moral intuitionist theory of W. D. Ross and G.E Moore, its most influential proponents.

3.1 G.E. Moore's moral intuitionism

One can come across many philosophers who contend that morality is different from the factual state of affairs, and one cannot derive 'ought' from' is'. G.E. Moore can be said to be a pioneer in exemplifying the fact/value divide through his theory of intuitionism. An important point that can be raised here is that if nature and morality are entirely distinct and heterogeneous, there can be no common factor uniting them. Then in that case moral knowledge will be sui generis, a knowledge of its own kind, whereby approaching moral knowledge via empirical knowledge will not be appropriate. In this context, philosophers like Moore probably developed the theory of intuitionism.

In Principia Ethica, Moore argues that the concept of "good" refers to an indefinable, unassailable property only known through direct experience. According to Moore, the word 'good' is similar to the word 'yellow,' but different from the word 'horse'. The concept of the word 'yellow' is simple and unanalysable. The meaning of this word can only be understood through familiarity with the color. It is possible to identify yellow and know what it is, but it is not possible to define it. A horse, on the other hand, can be defined as having four legs, a flowing tail, etc. Horses do not necessarily need to be seen to understand what the word means. A concept like 'good' can be known but not defined, just like the concept of yellow. The idea of good, according to Moore, cannot be further broken down into simpler ideas; it stands on its own. Good, according to Moore, is a simple non-natural quality. To define good in terms of its natural property is to commit the so-called "naturalistic fallacy". It was because of his conception of 'good' as unanalyzable and indefinable that Moore got labeled as an intuitionist.

Moore, in his works, acknowledges that he is a moral intuitionist. He, however, declares that his intuitionist theory differs from other philosophers' intuitionist theories. As Moore writes in the preface of

his masterpiece, Principia Ethica, ".....I beg it may be noticed that I am not an 'Intuitionist', in the ordinary sense of the term". (Preface x, 1960). Two aspects to Moore's intuitionism differ from what he refers to as 'intuitionism proper' or the common doctrine of intuitionism. Intuitionists hold that propositions about what ought to be done and what ought to exist are known intuitively and cannot be disproved or proved. In Moore's intuitionism, however, propositions asserting what ought to exist are the only propositions that are considered to be known through intuition and are incapable of proof or disproof; propositions asserting what kind of action ought to be done are causal generalizations whose truth and falsity is determined via empirical investigation. Moore believed that propositions asserting what ought to be done are capable of proof and disproof and are, therefore, not intuitions. Secondly, when intuitionism proper proclaims that ethical propositions are intuitions, they also imply that such ethical propositions are cognized in a particular manner by involving the exercise of a special faculty; but when Moore proclaims ethical propositions or propositions of intrinsic value as intuitions, what he asserts merely is that propositions of intrinsic value are incapable of any kind of proof or disproof. An ethical proposition or an intrinsically valuable proposition, in Moore's view, is incapable of any kind of proof or disproof. The truth of these propositions can be discovered without inference from other propositions, as they are self-evident by themselves.

According to Moore, intuitionism is connected to his method of isolation, which he describes as a means of discerning things' intrinsic value and a pre-requisite for discerning moral truths or falsities. According to Moore, intuitions are not infallible. When faced with a dilemma about the truth of a particular proposition of intrinsic value, one should use the method of isolation. Method of isolation consists of holding a particular state of affairs before one's mind and considering the value that could be attached to it if it existed in absolute isolation. This process would lead to the performance of an act of intuition or reflective judgment, which would further lead to the instant apprehension of the truth of the proposition, asserting the inherent goodness or badness of the considered state of affairs. (1960, 180). Using the method of isolation, Moore believed all those who arrive at the same conclusion about

propositions with intrinsic value would reach the same conclusion about their truth or falsity.

According to Moore, a fundamental proposition of ethics is similar to the fundamental and ultimate propositions of empiricist beliefs, which are considered axiomatic. In both cases, propositions are known non-inferentially and are incapable of proof or disproof.

In his ethical writings, Moore provides insight into our understanding of propositions asserting the intrinsic value of things. Moore, however, has provided no clear idea of how we come to know about the idea or property signified by the term 'good'. There does not seem to be any question about how we acquire knowledge about goodness. We all seem to know what goodness is all the time. Moore writes: "Everybody is constantly aware of this notion (denoted by 'good', although he may never become aware at all that it is different from other notions of which he is also aware." (1960, 17) Elsewhere he says: "It seems self-evident that our duty is to do what will produce the best effect upon the whole, no matter how bad the effects upon ourselves may be and no matter how much we ourselves lose by it" (1960, 143). Moore seems to be giving the impression that moral knowledge is a form of immediate knowledge known intuitively.

3.2 W.D. Ross's Intuitionism

W.D. Ross's moral theory, as outlined in The Right and The Good, was a major contributor to intuitionism. According to Ross, a mature, morally competent, clear-headed, and unbiased person intuitively knows what is good. The following are the prima facie duties Ross outlines in his works: (a) The duty pertaining to fidelity involves keeping promises and the act of truth-telling (b) The duty pertaining to reparation means righting the wrong we have caused others, (c) The duty of gratitude, which recognizes the services of others, (d) The duty of justice, (e) The duty pertaining to beneficence, (f) The duty pertaining to self-improvement means improving the virtue of intelligence, and the duty of nonmaleficence means avoiding or preventing others from harm. (Ross, 1973, 21).

Ross does not rank the above-mentioned prima facie duties in order of importance. Based on Ross's perspective, a mature person can intuitively discern that these prima facie duties are true and follow them appropriately according to the circumstances. There are a

number of prima facie duties discussed by Ross which represent general moral principles. According to Ross, prima facie duties differ from final duties. At the end of the day, one's final duty is his or her moral duty, i.e., the duty one should carry out. The prima facie duties can sometimes conflict with one another, resulting in only one prima facie duty as the final duty. An important question that can be raised here is how a person comes to know that a particular duty is his /her prima facie duty. According to Ross, one can know about one's prima facie duty merely based on one's intuition. The moral principles Ross describes are self-evident; when they are understood, they become immediately apparent. Ross compares moral principles to axioms in mathematics. If a person denies that two plus two equals four, then the person probably has not understood the proposition 'Two plus two equals four.' Similarly, if a person denies that it is prima facie wrong to lie, it is likely that they have not understood this proposition.

There are several essential differences between Ross' intuitionism and that of Moore's. The non-natural property of goodness is intuitive for Moore. As Ross does not accept the existence of non-natural properties, moral intuition cannot be applied to them. Moral intuition serves two purposes, according to Ross. In the first place, intuitions are used to determine prima facie duties. The moral order the prima facie duties express, which is determined by intuition, forms part of the fundamental structure of the universe, as is the axioms of geometry, according to Ross. Underlying prima facie duties are moral principles that are as certain and self-evident as mathematical axioms are. According to Ross, moral principles are not evident from the moment we are born. Moral principles are analogous to mathematical axioms. Those who are mature in thought and who give it enough time will be able to discern moral principles. It is through contemplation of particular cases that an agent can visualize the self-evidence of general principles. It is only when we mature that we see, at least prima facie, that keeping all promises makes our acts right and that it is necessary to keep all promises.

As Ross explains, the second use of intuition is to decide what course of action to take when prima facie duties contradict each other. If the duty pertaining to non-maleficence conflicted with the duty

pertaining to beneficence or keeping promises, what should we do? Ross believes that one should apply one's intuition to the particular case whenever there is a conflict… There must be a thorough examination of all the case details, plus an analysis of the interactions between the various prima facie duties. Choosing the right answer is not a mechanical process. One merely needs to rely on one's intuition.

Moore uses the method of absolute isolation to decide about the things which have intrinsic value. On similar lines, Ross engages in thought experiments of simple kinds. One of the thought experiments enunciated by Ross is as follows: Taking all other things equal, the fulfilment of a promise would result in 1000 units of good for John while breaking the promise and doing something else would produce 1,001 units of good for Sue. According to Ross, it would not be self-evident to think that good should be done for Sue here. Only in the case of much greater disparity can the breaking of a promise be considered. Through thought experiments, thus, one can intuitively have moral knowledge, and one can also decide about the right course of action.

According to Ross, intuitions, which provide moral knowledge, are not infallible. The infallibility of moral intuition is also rejected by Ross, as it is by Moore. In the same way that one comes to reject a sense perception when it conflicts with another sense perception, Ross believed that one can reject an intuition when it conflicts with another intuition. A critique of intuitions derived from philosophical theorizing is unlikely, in Ross' view. In Ross' view, any theorizing can contribute to our conceptualization of moral knowledge, but this role is limited in scope. Ross contends that no theory is likely to be as evident as our most deeply held moral convictions. Ross writes:

> Science relies on sense perceptions as data, and well-educated, thoughtful people rely on moral convictions as data. Both the former and the former have to be rejected for being illusory; however, the former must be rejected if it conflicts with more accurate sense perceptions, and the latter must be rejected if it conflicts with other convictions that stand up better to reflection. Moral convictions, developed over many generations through moral reflection, are a very delicate source of moral distinction, and theorists cannot treat them without respect. A person's moral

awareness must serve as the foundation for his moral decisions, though he must compare them first and eliminate any contradictions. (1973, 41)

One cannot deny that intuition has been considered the source of moral knowledge by many thinkers and has been a favored opinion amongst both classical and contemporary philosophers. Intuitionism, however, has some obvious problems, according to critics. Intuitionism, for instance, has failed to agree on what the moral good is, which supposedly is self-evident. In his teleological view, Moore emphasizes the promotion of happiness and the appreciation of beauty. Ross, however, emphasizes prima facie duties. Another problem with intuitions is that one cannot be sure whether one's intuitions are correct. Further, there is no clarity about the nature of intuitions. Critics question whether intuitions are a gut feeling or the voice of God. It is further argued that people who intuit and use reason may arrive at different conclusions and that it is difficult to resolve these disagreements. A logical positivist holds that individuals' intuitions are meaningless since they cannot be tested.

4. Moral knowledge derived from reason

Moral knowledge has been attributed to reason by many philosophers throughout history. The reason is generally defined as the capacity to make sense of things consciously, apply logic to formulate principles, establish and verifying facts, and change or justify practices, and beliefs based on existing or new information. In moral philosophy, reason has been used extensively to arrive at moral principles or to make moral judgments. While discussing reason as the source of knowledge, one needs to be clear about the sense in which reason is used as a source of moral knowledge. Reason can either signify the process of reasoning, or it can signify one's rational faculty. One can either say that moral knowledge is the result of a discursive reasoning process which can be either deductive or inductive or, one can say that moral knowledge is discovered by the agent's faculty of reason.

4.1 Reasoning process as the source of knowledge

The concept of moral reasoning refers to individual or collective practical reasoning regarding what is morally right for an individual or group of people. Moral reasoning aims to arrive at moral truth. Moral reasoning can thus be considered one of the sources of moral knowledge. In the scientific domain, reasoning is used to arrive at scientific principles or to test scientific hypotheses and theories. Analogous to the scientific domain, the method of reasoning is used in the domain of moral philosophy either to arrive at general moral principles or to make specific moral judgments. One can generally identify two kinds of reasoning: deductive and inductive.

In logic, deductive reasoning is considered a fundamental form of valid reasoning. Deductive reasoning involves starting with a general statement or hypothesis and then evaluating the various possibilities to arrive at a specific, logical conclusion. Deduction is used in the scientific method by applying hypotheses and theories to specific cases... Using deductive reasoning, one can draw moral judgments from general moral principles. In the moral domain, the following argument can be considered an example of deductive reasoning:

Premise 1: Any act of racial genocide is morally wrong

Premise 2: The Nazi extermination of racial minorities during World War II was an act of racial genocide.

Conclusion: The Nazi extermination of racial minorities during World War II was morally wrong.

In contrast to deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning begins with specific observations and makes broad generalizations based on specific observations. The method of inductive reasoning is used quite extensively in the domain of science to formulate hypotheses and theories. Even if all premises are true, inductive reasoning can lead to incorrect conclusions. A logical argument, such as "Shyam is an uncle", and "Shyam is bald." is an inductive argument. There is no logical connection between the premises and the conclusion of an inductive argument. Inductive reasoning in the domain of morality consists in beginning with an issue and then observing various examples and situations in which the issue is raised. Then an attempt is made to formulate a moral principle that is both useful and correct

for resolving the issue in question. For instance, after observing all the examples and situations in which killing occurs, one can formulate the moral principle 'Killing of innocent creatures is morally wrong'.

If one reflects on the work of some of the pioneer moral philosophers like Immanuel Kant and J.S. Mill, then it will not be difficult to see how these philosophers have employed reasoning methodology in their moral philosophy and how moral knowledge can be considered to have its source in moral reasoning.

Reflection on Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy clearly indicates that Kant employed the method of deductive reasoning in his moral philosophy. For Kant, the source of moral knowledge (morality) cannot be external to the agent and must lie within the rational moral agent, which is the supreme moral law or principle. In Kant's view, the moral law is to act in accordance with practical reason. "Categorical Imperatives" issued by practical reason command us to obey them, according to Kant. In Kant's categorical imperative, there are three formulations:

1. Principle of Universalizability, 2. Humanity as an end in itself principle, and 3. Principle of the Kingdom of the End. Essentially, the first formulation of the categorical imperative states: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law without contradiction". The second formulation states: Always treat humanity as an end, not just as a means, whether it is in your own person or another's. As a final formulation, Kant states: "Therefore, every rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends" (Kant, 1785)

In Kant's view, morality's ultimate principle can guide people to make the right decisions in every situation. There is only one pertinent aspect of moral law: it is general in that it has the formal property of universalizability, which means it can apply to any moral agent at any time. Based on Kant's discussion of moral concepts, he derived a preliminary statement about moral obligations. Kant defined right action as those that practical reason would will as a universal rule.

According to Kant, the three formulations of categorical imperative provide a concrete, practical method for evaluating particular human actions of several varieties. Therefore, moral knowledge about what is good, what is the proper course of action in a particular situation, and what is an agent's duty in a particular situation is ultimately derived from the moral law. Our fundamental duty, according to Kant, is thus the command of reason, a categorical imperative; all specific duties are applications of this fundamental duty. From Kant's moral law, we understand that lying or stealing is immoral, and acts of charity or compassion are moral. Only actions embodying the maxim that can be willed to be universally valid are moral.

Unlike Immanuel Kant, who relied on deductive reasoning to arrive at moral knowledge, John Stuart Mill relied on inductive reasoning. He also believed in the 'Greatest Happiness Principle' or utility. A person's actions are right if they promote the greatest happiness for the most significant number while they are wrong if the reverse is true. In Mill's view, the 'Greatest Happiness Principle' can be used to resolve moral disagreements and value conflicts. Three stages are involved in Mill's proof of the 'Greatest Happiness Principle'.

Mill begins by stating that visible objects can only be proved by real people seeing them. The only evidence that a sound is audible comes from people hearing it, as do the other sources of our experience. The only evidence that anything is desirable comes from people's actual desire for it (Mill, 1871).

In the second stage, Mill claims that individual happiness is good for each individual, while general happiness is good for the collective (Mill, 1871).

In the third and last stage, Mill asserts that actions should and do aim for general happiness.

It is possible to formulate Mill's utilitarian principle this way:

> Happiness is desired by almost all human beings
>
> Each person's happiness contributes to the morality of that society
>
> Therefore, the highest principle of morality is happiness.

It can very well be argued from the above-mentioned reasoning that it is through inductive reasoning that Mill and other utilitarians arrive at the 'Greatest Good Principle' or the principle of morality they hold to be the highest. Mill's proof for utility consists in inferring a general principle of utility from specific observations about the majority of people.

4.2 Moral knowledge derived from the faculty of 'reason'

In the previous section, we discussed how moral knowledge derives from reasoning. Some moral philosophers, however, are of the opinion that the reasoning process is not necessary to acquire moral knowledge; a person's being rational is enough for her to have moral knowledge. The philosophers are probably trying to emphasize the fact that our faculty of reason is ultimately responsible for moral knowledge. The source of moral knowledge is generally assumed to be apriori and thus self-evident in this approach. In the history of moral philosophy, philosophers like Plato, Immanuel Kant and moral rationalists such as Samuel Clarke, Joseph Butler, Richard Price, Ralph Cudworth , and John Balguy, to name a few, endorsed the view that moral knowledge is a priori and originates from reason alone.

An example of transcendent values (moral knowledge) can be found in Plato's theory of the Forms. Moral values are represented by forms - justice, courage, kindness, etc. Values, like all Forms, are independent of human opinion and exist outside of space and time. Moral values and things in the empirical domain, such as human actions and motives, are revealed by participating in the Forms. Our moral nature is derived from the Forms. Plato argues that the Forms are perfect due to their participation in the "highest" Form, the Form of Good. What makes all 'values' valuable? What are their strengths? The 'Good' or 'Value' is what they have in common. There is no higher form of knowledge than knowing what is 'Good'.

Moral truth is regarded as 'transcendent' if it is distinct and different from the empirical world and in some way, superior to it. For Plato, the source of moral knowledge is undeniably our faculty of reason.

Kant argues in *Critique of Pure Reason* that God, Freedom, and the Soul are transcendental and therefore, unknowable. According to Kant, knowledge of entities that transcend this world is not humanly

possible: it is neither possible via experience nor by reason. In Critique of Practical Reason, however, Kant mitigates his earlier claim and argues that Freedom is knowable because it is revealed by God. God and immortality are also knowable. Kant believed that belief in God, freedom, and soul are "subjectively necessary" beliefs, items of faith essential for action, or as he put it, "postulates of reason". Kant thus creates space for morality in Critique of Practical Reason to give room to faith. This quantum jump makes clear that morality and naturalism are on different tracks, according to Kant. Morality, according to Kant, is the result of rationality and reason. Previously, it was discussed how according to Kant, morality is a matter of deductive reasoning wherein moral judgments about what is right, what one's duty, etc., are deduced from the moral law. However, Kant thinks that moral law itself cannot be known through deductive reasoning but through the faculty of reason. In his work, Kant talks about the principle of autonomy, by which he that each of us is capable of figuring out what is right or wrong on his or her own without appealing to external authority, just by using the faculty of reason.

Like Plato and Kant, moral rationalists like Samuel Clarke also hold that moral knowledge has its source in the faculty of reason. Moral rationalists claim that morality originates in reason and can be discerned through reason alone. Moral rationalists like Samuel Clarke and Richard Price draw an analogy between morality and mathematics to elucidate their position… It is pertinent to note that mathematical knowledge has been understood as the paradigm of apriori knowledge and moral rationalists tend to view moral knowledge as apriori when they draw analogies between mathematical knowledge and moral knowledge.

Like 2 + 2 equals 4, it is also self-evident that killing an innocent person without explanation or provocation is wrong, according to moral rationalists. Killing an innocent person is wrong and three plus two equals five is not something we learn from experience. Both propositions cannot be denied upon understanding the relevant terms… Moral truths, like mathematical truths, are universal and can be held in any possible world, according to rationalists. An insight into one of the most influential moral rationalists of his time,

Samuel Clarke can throw some light on the position of the moral rationalist.

Eminent philosopher and theologian Samuel Clarke formulated his rationalist ethics in one of his two main works, *A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion,* and *the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation.* Many rationalists of the 18th century somehow conceived reason as a divine light working within man. Samuel Clarke, however, can be given the credit for having humanized reason as reason was no longer conceived as a divine light working within human beings but was conceived as a human faculty. Moral values and principles constitute what Clarke calls the law of morality and are a component of nature.

Human expectation of happiness and avoidance of suffering cannot be reflected in the notions of good and evil, according to Clarke, because they are logical consequences of reality and represent a fundamental structure that encompasses the fundamental relationships between beings and their differences. In accordance with this metaphysical structure, all events and actions are either consistent or inconsistent. If there is consistency, then the event, action, or being under consideration is considered to be fit; if there is any inconsistency, then it is indicative of unfitness. Our mental faculties enable us to discover the harmony of relationships and differences and to understand the resulting moral categories on which ethical principles are based.

According to Clarke, fitness signifies a moral category – the category of "good". Unfitness, conversely, signifies the moral category of "evil". The human mind, according to Clarke, is capable of recognizing whether the entity's actions and its relation with other beings fall into the category of being fit or unfit. Additionally, it can recognize the relationships and actions of others and pass moral judgments accordingly. In his rationalist ethics, Samuel Clarke also talks about the concept of obligations. According to Clarke, the first and basic (primary or formal) obligation of human beings is general in nature; only such actions are to be undertaken which are consistent with the law of morality and which are decoded by means of reason. In one of his writings, Clarke writes about formal obligation:

So, in general, it appears that men cannot avoid assenting to the eternal Law of Righteousness; namely, that they cannot but acknowledge that governing all their actions through the Rule of Right or Equity is reasonable and fit. It is also a formal obligation for every man to conform himself to that Rule in fact and continually in order to attain this Assent. (1732, 199)

Elsewhere Samuel Clarke writes:

[I believe it is more fitting and reasonable to preserve the life of an innocent. In any case, if I happen to have power over a man at any given time; or if I am capable of delivering him from any imminent danger, despite never having promised to do so; then that I should suffer his perdition or death without any provocation. . . It is the same as denying the Truth of these Things for a Man of Reason... as if a man who understands geometry or algebra would deny the most obvious and known proportions of lines or numbers, any more than to say that a square of equal base and height is not doubled by a triangle of equal base and height.   (1738, 609)

As criticism of moral rationalists who draw an analogy between mathematics and morality, it has been argued by Sara McGrath that moral truths cannot be considered as self-evident like mathematical truths because the disagreement and perplexity which afflicts moral thinking does not afflict mathematical truths like 'two plus two equals to four'. Moral rationalists respond by arguing that high-level mathematics involves disagreement and perplexity. When it comes to basic mathematical truths like '2+2=4' is concerned, there is no disagreement. The same applies to morality, where there is no disagreement and confusion about basic moral truths. For example, killing innocent people without justification is morally wrong. Another thing that can be said here in the context of a comparison between mathematical and moral knowledge is, that process by which one arrives at a mathematical truth is the deductive process of reasoning. There may be disagreement during the process of knowing, but at the justificatory level, there is no disagreement. It is also possible to extend this analogy to moral knowledge. The process of learning moral truths might be accompanied by disagreement, but moral knowledge cannot be disputed on the justification level.

Reflecting on the position of the philosophers who have conceived reason (either rational faculty or reasoning process) as the source of knowledge, one thing which can definitely be said about morality/moral knowledge is that it is not something that can be imposed on us from outside by an external agency but is something which comes naturally to all of us.

5. Conclusion

When one tries to review the various viewpoints with regard to the source of moral knowledge, it may appear that three somewhat opposite approaches seem to be emerging. Based on the first approach, moral beliefs are regarded as quite similar to common beliefs; moral knowledge, as per this view, can be obtained through experience just as we can learn about the world around us. In the second viewpoint, moral knowledge is regarded as an immediate and self-evident phenomenon derived from intuition. The third and final approach claims that moral knowledge comes from reason, either in the sense of rational faculties or reasoning processes.

Considering the views of all philosophers who have discussed the source of moral knowledge, one can clearly see that neither experience nor intuition nor reason alone seems to be sufficient for moral knowledge. Those with an intuitionist viewpoint believe moral knowledge is derived from intuition, but again there is a disclaimer that intuition is not to be regarded as infallible. To validate intuition, intuitionists ultimately rely on their experience. Further, when inductive reasoning is considered the source of knowledge, there is an indirect admission of the role of experience in obtaining moral knowledge. When one considers the viewpoint of empiricists then, it can be seen that empiricists like Aristotle also go on to speak about the role of reasoning in validating one's knowledge. Moral knowledge can thus be obtained only via an interplay of various faculties and processes, which must include intuition, reason, and experience. In my opinion, intuitive belief can be considered to be the starting point in the process of acquiring moral knowledge, but it should not be considered self-evident. With both reason and experience, our initial hunches or intuitive belief can be granted the status of knowledge.

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Political Meanings of Atrocity: Phenomenology of Caste Violence

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Abstract:

The philosophical understanding of 'atrocity' may provide not only the political and moral meanings but also captures the phenomenon of violence since its method is descriptive, evaluative and emancipative. The phenomenon of caste violence as an atrocity has multi layered and had multiple meanings as it involves multiple actors and agencies. The act of violence is relational and intentional. The phenomenological understanding of caste violence may provide diverse vantage points in understanding 'atrocity.'. On the same act of caste violence, victim, perpetuator, police, judiciary and state provides different accounts and different approaches and so the political meaning varies. Especially, the perpetuator, caste hindu and the victim, dalit makes sense of their acts and came up with different meaning to the same act. Dalit victim articulates the caste violence as an atrocity committing against him. The perpetuator, the caste hindu justifies his act of violence by pointing out the violation of 'social norm' by the dalits. Violence therefore imposes one interpretive framework and destroys the victim's interpretive framework. We are able to find different descriptions of the same act of caste violence. Rather negating the discourse of other positions, we may use them to morally and politically strengthen the position of weak, underprivileged, voiceless, and victim by exposing them. The political meaning evolved from this may negotiate inter-subjective veracity of objectively just norms. To explore into a socially constituted inter-subjective meanings of the atrocity may facilitate better understanding of the social world and may provide framework for changing the social world from alternative moral and political ground.

Introduction

Atrocity in general means- 'a behavior or an action that is wicked or ruthless'; 'an extremely cruel act; a horrid act of injustice'; 'the quality of being shockingly cruel and inhumane'; 'the quality of lacking compassion or consideration for others.' Atrocity annihilates all attempts to give life meaning and destroys forever a subject's possibility of seeking justice as well as the individual's relation with the world. The idea of atrocity is associated with acts of assaults and violence against an individual or group which are illegitimate, inhuman and cruel. It has different contextual and structural meanings.

Genocide, caste violence, gendered violence, rape, ethnic cleansing, mass murder, war, slavery and torture are some examples of atrocity. The terms atrocity and violence are often used as synonymously. But these are two distinctive categories and are invariably related to each other. Violence is a sociological and cultural category .It is mostly descriptive in nature. Atrocity is a moral and political category. It is evaluative in nature.

The word 'atrocious' is an adjective form, meaning very wicked or cruel or shocking. The noun form of it is atrocity, meaning wicked or cruel act. Atrocity is an act. Legislation preventing it is confining to the limited objective of avoiding such act. Legislation is intended at prevent of cruel act because it is unbearably inhuman, appealing to our realist aesthetic. The statist use of a term atrocity does not go beyond its apparent inhumanity and explore into socially constituted intersubjective meanings of the atrocity. The state already assumes a sanitized picture of society as consisting of simple individuals located outside caste bound cultural contexts. At least it intends to build such a society, completely ignoring the intersubjective nature of social meaning.

The philosophical understanding of 'atrocity' may provide not only the moral and political meanings but also captures the very phenomenon of violence. My paper is an attempt to understand the phenomenon of caste violence as an atrocity to locate its political meanings on the basis of morality. The problem of atrocity has approached differently by the victims, perpetuators and state. Dalit movement and dalit literature has primarily concerned with ongoing atrocities against dalits. For them atrocity means active functioning of illegitimate social structure called caste against dalits. The atrocity is rooted in caste system. They are critical about the social hegemony and the failure of the state apparatus in protecting the victims of caste system. Their meaning of atrocity lies in their struggle against atrocity. For the perpetuator, atrocity means control over the victims and an effort to continue the hegemony. He even doesn't want to recognize it as atrocity. The social scientists mostly engaged with the causes of atrocity. They often viewed atrocity as a problem with the tradition or consequence of modernity. In reading atrocity, their humanitarian concerns are linked with development. The state always looks at atrocity as a problem of law and order. It concerns about atrocity as a hurdle to harmony and views it as anti-developmental act. It articulates atrocity from a perspective of prevention. Apart from these approaches, one's own the subjective position plays a role in approaching the problem of atrocity in a caste ridden society. The situation warrants us to understand atrocity from a philosophical framework, which can lead to a better political direction by accommodating different

positions within. Phenomenological understanding of caste violence is one such approach to deal the idea of atrocity.

Phenomenological Understanding of Violence

Violence has to be understood in a social context and relations of power. The structural violence has been differentiated from revolutionary violence. Revolutionary violence is often considered as counter violence. It even treated as an act of inauguration of the self of the oppressed. Caste violence is a form structural violence. It is an act of discrimination, humiliation and exploitation against the oppressed committed by the dominant social group in the name of caste. It manifests both physically and psychologically. It is a political act and used as a means to control power over the weak. There may be many attempts to understand the violence in general and caste violence in particular. Violence is an emotional act that motivates one's own moral behavior. The phenomenologist Sartre holds the opinion that emotion is a certain way of apprehending the world. It has to be understood with its signification. According to Sartre, emotion is a mode of our conscious existence and not an accident. Emotion signifies the totality of the relation of the human reality of the world. [1] The phenomenological explanation of caste atrocity as a philosophical approach may capture the underlying social, political and ethical meanings. Phenomenological method mediates both philosophy and psychology of social experience. The phenomenologists consider experience is an 'in-relation-to' phenomenon, and it is defined by qualities of directedness, embodiment, and worldliness, which is invoked by the term 'being-in-the-world. This means viewing people as being –in-the-world as a reciprocal with their world and others. Phenomenological approach captures the complexity of the situation and tries to understand from one's own intentionality rather scientific understanding. Merleau- Ponty, the phenomenologist views the human behavior has to be understood in the context of lived experience. His concern is to prompt human beings to recognize that objective thought fundamentally distorts the phenomenon of one's lived experience. He argues that objective thought estranges human beings from their own selves, the world in which they live and other people with whom they interact. He seeks to reestablish our roots in corporeality and the perceptual world, while awakening human beings to an appreciation of the inherent ambiguity of our lived experience.[2] He believes

that perceptual experience of each individual helps in understanding individual's behavior in better manner.

According to Micheal Humphrey, 'atrocity' is compelling and disturbing for victims and witnesses in the way that excessive violence against individual human bodies is made a spectacle. The marks of injury and death on living bodies are elemental in this politics designed to engender horror and to disrupt confidence in a normative reality. Through horror individuals, as victims and witnesses, are confronted by the fragility of their individual and social existence. The politics of atrocity challenges the very basis of modern political life: the belief in the sacredness of human life, of bodily inviolability in law, and that our humanity confers rights which stand in opposition to the political sovereignty of the state. Moreover, atrocity produces a legacy of individual suffering which itself remains a political resource for both reinjuring and healing. As he argues, while all violence threatens normative reality, atrocity—excessive violence—shakes the very foundations of both self and social existence. Atrocity is a traumatising violence because it leaves an unassimilable memory in the victim and exceeds cultural discourses of law or morality which manage the circulation of everyday violence. To explains the politics of atrocity he adopts the approach of phenomenology of violence explains how violence is experienced both as a victim and witness. It is concerned with the way violence disturbs the normal relationship between sentience and meaning, between affect and culture.[3]

 Phenomenological approach of violence was applied to different issues located in different social contexts. Michael Staudigl in *Towards a Phenomenological Theory of Violence(2007)* argues that phenomenological descriptions helps to overcome objectifying interpretations and one sided casual explanations of our ways of understanding the social world.[4] Phenomenological description does not primarily focus on the objects experienced, but seeks to develop thematically the ways we make sense of them. Phenomenological description does so by reaching beyond the continuum of cause and effect and, thus, avoids reduction, substitution for, or reification of subjectivity. He elaborates his position by taking clues from Merleau – Ponty and Alfred Schutz .Violence undoubtedly threatens, attacks, and possibly destroys communicative action and its symbolic interactive infrastructure. Because such action presupposes an embodied subject who is able to communicate and symbolize, it is, however, not the ultimate dimension in which to study the very phenomenon of violence. He argues that the task is not only clarifying how violence is destructive of pre-given *sense structures* but, correlatively, of the very

foundational *ways we are able to make sense of the world.* In explaining the many faces of violence, he looks for a much sensitive and integrative approach. Violence is irreducibly bound to the whole spectrum of the subject's vulnerability, which is grounded in its pre-reflectively lived embodiment. It means only embodied and vulnerable subject can experience *violations*, but not all that violates its integrity will be perceived as *violence*. On the other hand, the subject might experience something as violence only in as much as it conceives of the experience as the result of another's intention to violate its integrity or personality. He proposes the phenomenologically grounded theory of violence from the perspective of a pragmatic theory of the life-world', anchored in the 'lived body's vulnerability'. From this perspective he explains whole spectrum of the subject's action and experience in terms of embodiement and views violence as being destructive of bodily enacted senses. He proposes to analyze the many faces of violence in terms of violating the subject's sense making " I can."He adopted an integrative notion of violence that can be used to consider physical, psychic and cultural violence was not as different, but as altogether bodily founded facets of a single phenomenon.

Norman K. Denzin applies the phenomenological approach in understanding the violence in specific context of domestic violence in his article *Towards a Phenomenology of Domestic, Family Violence (1984).* [5] .He viewed domestic violence is situated, interpersonal, emotional, and cognitive activity involving negative symbolic interaction between intimates, usually in the family home. Domestic order is the arena for the clash of social selves and the display of raw emotionality that erupts into violence. His critical phenomenology assumes that the phenomenon of violence must be examined from within; that although structural processes (economic, legal, religious, cultural, ideological) influence and shape family violence, their meanings are filtered and woven through the lives of interacting individuals, each of whom is understood to be a universal singular, embodying in his or her lifetime the forces, contradictions, and ideologies of a particular historical moment. Concomitant with the emphasis on violence as lived experience is his central thesis that emotionality lies at the core of violent conduct. An understanding of violence demands a phenomenological interpretation of emotionality. Violence is defined as the attempt to regain, through the use of emotional and physical force, something that has been lost. What has been lost is directly traceable to the self of the violent person. The self and its feelings are at the core of violent conduct. The self of the violent subject is not in consciousness but in the world of social interaction. It haunts the subject. Its meanings

are given through violence, denials of violence, self-deception, bad faith, and deceit. The emotional feelings of anger, loss, rage, hostility, fright, and fear are central to the structures of experience that enclose and capture the man of violence and his family. In active emotional embodiment the bodies of the participants become instruments or tools, even weapons. In passive emotional embodiment the body is a complementary extension of the subject's verbal and emotional lines of action. Violent embodied emotion involves the display, use, and articulation of the lived body of others in a negative, hostile, destructive manner. The negativity of the body may be passive or active. Just as persons hurl forth emotional anger with their voices, the silent, loud languages and actions of their bodies may speak more directly and more meaningfully than their utterances. Denzin explains violence as "situated, interpersonal, emotional, and cognitive activity". Denzin argues that for the perpetrator of domestic violence, the man, violence is an attempt to use physical or emotional force to regain hegemonic status and the respect of other family members. The perpetrator interprets the actions of the victim as an attack to his identity and thus as a cause of his violence. In turn the violent actor is overcome with emotional rage and suspends the moral value of the victim. This justifies the intent to harm and narrows any alternative views of the situation. Violence therefore imposes one interpretive framework and destroys the victim's interpretive framework.

Claudia Card in her book *'The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil' (2002)* treated as an ethical inquiry into atrocity. She defines atrocity as 'foreseeable intolerable harms produced by culpable wrongdoing.'[6] Her theory of atrocity highlights basic concepts of intolerable harm and culpable wrongdoing. Harm is what is most salient about atrocities. Atrocity as an evil, deprives, or seriously risks depriving others of basics that are necessary to make a life possible and tolerable or decent. She treats atrocity as an evil and discussed as a part of moral –political agenda. As she argues the very naming of an atrocity as such suggests identification with victims. Further explains that perpetrators commonly do not understand their deeds as atrocities. With the atrocity theory, we can conjecture, more specifically, that perpetrators are likely to underestimate the harm, whereas victims are likely to exaggerate the reprehensibility of the perpetrators' motives. She maintains that her atrocity paradigm attempts to broaden our theoretical interests still further by giving victims' perspectives more of their due and considering how perpetrators might respond to what they have done and to the continuing needs of victims.

Apart from this, Hegel's view of master – slave dialectic as explained in *Phenomenology of Spirit* may provide may provide an insight in understanding the caste violence. The phenomenology progresses via several dialectics that represent different mindsets or, depending upon your interpretation, possibly different stages in human history or development. A dialectic is a presentation of two sides of an issue, usually via some form of discussion or interaction. For Hegel, the human consciousness is an inherently social process, and one cannot be fully certain of their consciousness unless that consciousness is "mediated" through another entity. Basically, a person must receive acknowledgment of their consciousness from another person in order for that consciousness to exist. In the context of master- slave relations, the result is that when two self-conscious beings meet, both entities are completely fixated on receiving acknowledgment from the other, but neither is willing to give acknowledgment. This refusal to cooperate leads to an almost immediate struggle. Master requires recognition from the slave. Slave even he recognized master as master, master requires recognition from another human, not slave, a thing. But master can not recognize slave as human because if he recognizes so, he is not slave.[7]

Phenomenology of caste violence is an approach to understand the problem and its implications. Phenomenology of violence suggests the understanding of violence as relational (interpersonal) and intentional. It has to be understood from within. It is concerned more about meanings and senses of particular acts, though it acknowledges the influences of structural processes such as economic, legal, religious, cultural and ideological. Caste violence has to be understood from a phenomenological point to open up the complexities involved in understanding it. Caste violence has multiple dimensions and also multi layered. It is not an act of deviant behavior. It is a conscious, collective and chosen act. It is community based rather class/individual based. Caste violence is both instrumental and constitutive. It is a deliberate act to gain social control over the victim. It could not be treated as a situational or spontaneous act. Rather it is planned and organized act of violence. It is both physical and psychological. It is rooted in both cultural and religious life world. It can be ascribed to both tradition and modernity. The social structure lies behind every act. Caste violence is not only an act of violence but also humiliates and demeans the self of victim/community. The caste system subjugates dalits by transforming into being speechless and incapable of action.

An Overview of Caste Violence

Violence against dalits is an everyday social reality of India. Caste violence is not a new phenomenon. It is as old as the caste system. The atrocities, insults, humiliations, discrimination are exclusively reserved for dalits. Kilvenmani (TN) , Kanchikacherala, Karamchedu, Tsundur, Vempenta (AP), Belchi(Bihar), Puliyangundi, Tamrabarani, Melavalapu (TN), Kambalapalli (Karnataka), Jajjera (Haryana), Kairlanjee (Maharashtra)… all these places are familiar by atrocities on dalits, humiliations on dalits, and insults on the dignity of dalits. These are not just isolated incidents; there are reflections of ruling caste hegemony over dalits. Whether it is Andhra, Tamilnadu, Bihar, Maharastra, whether it is a village or city, university, office, temple, street or any other public sphere, dalit visibility could not be tolerated by the ruling castes anywhere and assertion of dalits in any form. Many incidents were happened in the past and the incidents from eighties onwards has a significance by contributing new political discourse in the nation and Dalit movements are build around these incidents. The incidents of caste violence of late nineties is reported and analyzed in the *Dalithulu* (Broken People).[8] In Tamil Nadu, the caste violence as chronicled in the Frontline from 1995-2004 is a testimony of this violence.[9] Today the Indian nation familiar with many massacres against dalits is because of the stiff resistance of dalits against the caste hegemony. Dalits have taken the route of fighting to protect them and asserting their identity in public for self respect and dignity. Dalits are in a process of building a democratic nation. It is not that post-independence India has been notably more violent than in the nineteenth or early centuries, when it was common for landowners to coerce and intimidate recalcitrant labourers and tenents, and to use the language of caste against them wherever this proved feasible. What has been different in recent times is that since the 1970s the ideals of the 'secular' nation-state have been regularly inverted by groups claiming to be under threat from the real or imagined aggression of militant 'Dalits'. This has allowed many of the victimizers to represent themselves both as victims and as embodiments of national virtue.[10] According to the government figures, there were 40,000 anti-harijan 'atrocities' between 1966 and 1976, this being the period of Indira Gandhi's so called 'decade of development'. Another 17,000 such incidents were officially recorded for the nineteenth months of Janata rule (March1977-January1980). Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and the Gangetic North Indian states have been the worst hit areas. From the mid-1980s to the

late 1990s, accounts of such attacks remained a prominent feature of Indian nation. It is revealing from the incidents that upper caste violence against dalits is increasing in its magnitude. It is more cruel and vulgar than the past. The upper caste is targeting dalits apart from killing, injuring, terrorizing, the very source of livelihood by burning their houses, boycotting from the work etc. Dominant castes are able to mobilize all other castes against dalits. 'The increased political power and economic prosperity of the forward caste is contributing to inflict violence on dalits in a systematic and concerted manner. There is a correlation between socio-economic and political inequality and caste system and increasing violence on dalits by the upper caste.'[11] The attacks on dalits are pre planned and carried in organizing manner. The target is not individual but as many as possible. The people are attacked are need not be any relation to the preceding dispute. In these mass attacks, there is an effort to involve other castes. In these attacks destroys Dalit houses, and demolish the collective symbols of the community. In these assaults, Dalit women are set in vulnerable position, often sexually abused. Moreover, always strong political hand works behind the attacks.

Meanings of Atrocity: Political and Literary Narrations

In literature, dalit writers narrated the atrocity as a protest against caste violence that took place in different forms in post-independent India. In telugu society, from eighties onwards one may witness many atrocities against dalits with the conscious assertion of dalits. Karamchedu (1985), Neerukonda (1986) Timmasamudram (1991), Chunduru (1991), Vempenta (1998) and recent Lakshimpeta (2012) are exemplary atrocities against dalits apart from unnoticed caste violence in everyday life. These atrocities got its political meaning with the active mobilization of dalits against this kind of violence. The political meaning of atrocity could be seen the intellectuals emerged from these sections. They even exposed the failure of the state in protecting dalits from these atrocities. They often accused state and its machinery become casteist. To safeguard the dalits from caste atrocities, state came with SC/ST (Prevention of atrocities) Act of 1989.It defines atrocity in its own language with legal procedures and punishments for committing offences against SC/ST people. Though the social scientists and Indian academia are initially untouched by theses atrocities, are later compelled to notice these developments

due to its political importance in mainstream politics. Their reflections on atrocities are confined to the liberal and humanitarian language. Their reading is limited to sociological reason and historical enumeration. Though dalit movements articulated the agony of dalits against caste violence with a slogan of self-respect, but they are not advanced further theoretically. In other words, the language and political articulation of dalit movement with an idea to appeal the civil society turns to be humanistic. But one has to understand that their humanistic language has depth meaning that differs with general humanistic concerns. The strong political meaning of dalit movement was not surfaced. The vital energies of dalit struggles are spent in appealing the state for compensation and provisions of security for victims. Though dalit movements understood the importance of political power and often carried with such political rhetoric, but are lack of creativity in exploring the political power in countering the atrocities. This kind of problem often faced due to their inability to generate alternative political discourse rather conferring with familiar humanistic discourse of upper caste. In responding to this kind of situation, some of the scholars looked for a philosophical framework to broaden our understanding of caste oppression and politics of liberation. Humiliation is a production of one such outcome. In this direction, there are attempts to discuss the idea of 'humiliation', 'untouchability' and 'dignity' philosophically. The scholars aimed to produce knowledge out of it rather carried with political rhetoric and empirical studies. In their effort to produce theory, the debates are mostly bank upon western theory of enlightenment, especially the philosophy of Kant. But humanistic appeal reaches its limit as the citizen is projected to be middle class upper caste male, others do not deserve humanistic treatment as they lack culture to be objects of one's sympathy. On the other, it paved the way for upper caste intellectual in engaging with these issues in the name of theory by easily marginalizing the dalit scholarship. The scholars like Sunder Sarukkai, went to extent to project Brahmins as untouchables by his selective invocation of philosophical method of phenomenology.[12] Ashis Nandy another intellectual in tune with phenomenology argues that humiliation is a situation. It can never be

extra-or trans-human.to humiliate someone, you have to grant your target human sensitivity. You also have to be willing to be captive to the will of the humiliated. In this respect, humiliation is a bit like torture. One is successful torturer only when one's victim begs for forgiveness and screams for mercy thereby satisfying the torturer's sense of power, control, or sadism and thus endorsing his sense of mastery over himself. But think of the torturer whose victim laughs at him and denies his ability to inflict pain, thus gradually reducing the torturer to a frustrated desperate and even humiliated being, struggling to maintain his dignity.[13]

At this historical juncture, we need a philosophical theory that unifies not only the politics and morality but also to provide a radical political direction for dalits who are happened to be the victims of caste violence for generations. The literature produced by the conscious dalits has a potential to develop such theory. Though the dalit literature may not provide a systematic political theory, but we may infer philosophical insights from these writings. The life, struggle, politics, philosophy, culture are fused in the dalit narratives. I believe the philosophical discourse on atrocity may be providing a new meaning in freedom of the self in a caste society. The idea of atrocity had different dimensions in case of caste violence. Caste violence could not be reduced either to physical or psychological phenomenon. More than physical and psychological, it is a social, cultural and religious phenomenon. The phenomenological method may provide link to connect the victim, perpetuator, state, social structure and social agencies involved in the phenomenon of caste violence. The purpose is not to identify or describe different political positions in the phenomenon of atrocity. But it is to strengthen or justify the moral and political position of victim of atrocity in relation to other positions. This phenomenological method may help in grounding the possibility of communication by negotiating with other.

Public intellectuals tend to either subjectivise or objectivise the social world. Poets/writers tend to subjectivise the meaning of social act like atrocity while academics tend to see this as end product of play of objective forces like class. Public movements-when they attempt to remedy atrocity, they do so by trying to

mobilize people by conscientizing them through teaching the objective picture of the world and thereby making them consumers and carriers of that picture. Insightful analyst could gives us some kind of intersubjectivity intrinsic to social world. Either of subjectivist or objectivist description denies the possibility of accessibility to intersubjectively constituted social world. Invoking phenomenology cautions us about impossibility of making social world according to our wishes. Social worlds can be understood culturally constituted intersubjective social meanings. Atrocity occurs and it is an instance of crises of normative hindu social order due to alteration in the internal perspective of the actor. However, the norm remains to be hindu social order. Reconciliation takes place through readjusting each other's perspective according to that norm. Atrocity also happens in the context of invoking objectivist just conceptions of the world into the village social world or also in the process of negotiating intersubjective veracity of objectively just norms.

 Dalita Rananinadam (2005), a compilation of analytical essays on atrocities against dalits , that took place between 1985-2005 provides an understanding of atrocity viewed by dalit intellectuals who are actively involved dalit movement of this period. *Chunduru Nethuti Charitra* (2008) is about Chunduru massacre, contains the testimonies/witnesses of dalit victims of that massacre produced in SC/ST special court, published by *Kula Nirmulana Porata Samithi (KNPS).* Kathi Padma Rao, the dalit leader emerged from the struggle against Karamchedu massacre argues that Upper caste (kammas) are targeted dalits of Karamchedu by consolidating their energies all possible way (kamma manpower of nearby seven village, tractors, weapons and by keeping police under their control).When the dalits are not organized, they used to attack individual dalits in their cattle sheds. Now they changed their strategies by understanding the collective strength of dalits. He illustrates that the perpetuators of Karamchedu massacre and the dalit victims have different philosophical background. Whenever dalit castes are resisting the feudal caste hegemony, the upper caste are killing, raping and massacring dalits by consolidating their political, Social (caste), economic power.

In establishing their caste hegemony, they are unifying their social force. This atrocity has to simply understand as an issue of economic or political oppression but as an hegemonic caste massacre. This has to be resisted through the weapons of philosophy of annihilation of caste.[14] K. G. Satyamurthy, another dalit leader commenting on Chunduru massacre, though there is significant economic change in agrarian society of coastal Andhra, but in corresponding to this, there was no change in social and cultural life. If that change took place, upper caste would not respond in such atrocious way against the idea of self-respect of dalits .[15] Another Dalit writer Ravi Kumar in his foreword to S. Viswanathan's Dalits in Dravidian Land expresses that caste violence has not only changed its pattern and also changed its geography. Even when a small development or incident leading to the empowerment of dalits takes place, casteist forces are at the forefront of efforts to quash it. The instruments of the state cooperate with these forces. The judiciary too plays its part. And further adds that the important aspect of recent caste clashes was the fact that the dalits had begun to retaliate. It is more explicit in most of the caste atrocities.[16]

The Dalit Poet P.C. Ramulu commenting on caste violence, *For me the Wound is not new/Only the way I got wounded is new/The experience is as past as yesterday/Only the way I got experienced is new*.[17] Another writer responding on Chunduru massacre thorough his poetry-*Twenty two years ago, my name was Kanchikacherla Kotesu/My place of birth is Kilvenmani, Karamchedu, Neerukonda/Now Chunduru is the name that cold-blooded feudal brutality/Has tattooed on my heart with ploughshares/From now on, Chunduru is not a noun but a pronoun/ Now every heart is a Chunduru, a burning tumour/I am the wound of multitudes, the multitude of wounds/For generations, an unfree individual in a free country/Having been the target/Of humiliations, atrocities, rapes and torture/I am someone raising his head for a fistful of self- respect/ In this nation of casteist bigots blinded by wealth/I am someone who lives to register life itself as a protest/I am someone who dies repeatedly to live/Don't call me a victim/I am an immortal, I*

am an immortal, I am an immortal/...I don't need words of sympathy or tears of pity/I'm not a victim, I'm an immortal/I am the fluttering flag of defiance.[18]

The Telugu fiction writers, Bojja Tarakam in *Nela, Nagali and Mudeddulu* (Land, Ploughshare and Three Bulls), Kolakaluri Enoch in *Oora Bhavi* (The Village Well) captured the multidimensional and layered caste violence effectively.

Bojja Tarakam, popular dalit leader of telugu society, in his book *Nela, Nagali, and Mudedulu,* depicts politics and philosophy behind the reduction of a dalit to a third bull in agrarian society.[19] Land is under the control of upper caste. Land becomes the power of the caste. Caste got its power because of land in their hand. The upper caste feudal lord silences the dalit by taming to a slave of him. The dalit have no other options other than working in his fields like a bull. In that state, he doesn't have any identity or recognition. The invisible power operates against him and controls him. A special life style is ascribed for him and it is sanctified by social rules supported by a law. The social system won't allow him to think on his own. The landlord enjoys all power over him and his family, including his wife. He takes measures not to question or check his authority by any means. The government machinery is always in support of him. Religion, god and philosophy are further makes dalit's life as a slave. In a village, the landlord had established his control over the body (labour) of a dalit, the priest over his mind (thinking/creativity) and the money lender in another form. All these happened to be from upper castes. They are not only having their caste interests but also feel the necessity to protect the hanour, power and supremacy of caste over their subordinates. They work together for smooth functioning of their hegemonic system. Power is a phenomenon, one kind of system, a machinery and all these are linked together and interdependent. With changing situation, though there are some laws are enacted for safeguarding the dignity of dalits but are not implemented. The reason might be the fellow who makes laws, implement the laws and the implementing force are belongs to almost share the same caste identity. The judiciary too has its own social morality that looks suspicious of dalits and treats them as potential criminals

without trails. There will not be any problems in leading his life as bull. The problem starts only when he wishes to live like a man and started questioning his master. This bull to become a man has to required land and education. Along with land and education, caste is determining force. It won't allow dalits to liberate from the life of slavery. Caste is an artificial construction to establish control over dalits. Caste determines the thinking though it does not have any material basis. By knowing this, the feudal lords keep education, land and power away from dalits. To get these two they need power and to change their life requires courage to question this systemic dominance. The questioning of the power leads to an atrocity. The author in this writing hints that atrocity lies in the power of land, knowledge and caste that are working as a social system. Any kind of critical intervention by the subordinates of this social structure in any form has to face the violence.

Kolakaluri Enoch in his short story *Oorabhavi* (The Village Well, 1969) depicts the atrocity from multiple positions.[20] The story is about the denial of access to a public well to the dalits of a village and ultimate success of dalits in getting the access to that well through an unrevealed strategy adopted by a dalit woman. The story narrates how torturous for both upper caste people and dalits to reach this climax. The well is treated as a symbol of unfreedom and slavery for dalits for generations. Dalits of the village used to face acute water problem in summer season as the well in the dalit palle dried up. In one of the public well constructed by the government located in between uppercaste and dalits localities having enough water in all seasons. The upper caste of village draws the water from this well and dalits too are depending on that well in summer season. But dalits are denied access directly to draw the water from the well due to the practice of untouchability. They depend on the mercy of upper caste to get the water. One day a conscious dalit woman by intolerating this kind of practice thought of a remedy of her own and implemented it secretly. One night she had thrown a skeletal frame of dead bull into that well without giving any information to anybody, including her family members. By seeing the flesh of the dead cattle in the well, the whole village got shocked. The upper caste treated this as atrocity and decided to punish offerenders. The village

head, Munsif and others came to a conclusion that this may be handwork of a young dalit man Chidambaram as he known for his arrogant behavior/ activities of self assertion. In fulfilling his vow to break twenty coconuts after his marriage with a girl of his own choice, he was not allowed to the temple. At last he fulfilled his vow with the help of police against the will of village. In another occasion, in a railway station he didn't care to stand up and give a space for the munsif/uppercaste from the bench he sat on the platform of the railway station. The munsif demanded him to stand up in respect to the custom and even tried to beat him in public. Chidambaram's wife retaliates and the station master supported them that it is the right of everybody. The self assertion of Chidambaram has seen as an erratic and arrogant behavior by the Munsif and the villagers. The day before the incident of dead cattle in the well, there is a complaint by his wife that an attempt of sexual assault by the upper caste young man at the well. There is a coincidence of the bull of Nancharaiah, where he and his father Ramudu works, was dead. It is obvious that the dead bull belongs to them and take up the skin of the bull. In this backdrop, Chidambaram and his father were brought to a village court and the Munsif mercilessly beat them and tied to tree. Chidambaram got head injury. Interestingly, the Munsif too locked up in the fear. His behavior was totally changed. The villagers asked the dalits to remove the skeletal frame of dead buffalo from the well and the dalits responded that as per the custom we should touch your well. The villagers got angry that the whole community of dalits was behind this atrocious act. At last they made an effort to remove the skeleton of the dead cattle with the help of servants but they failed due to one servant fell into the well. He came out with the help of the people around the well. Somebody in the crowd told that this skeletal frame demanding a sacrifice. Everybody gave up their efforts to remove the skeletal frame from the well. They villagers and Munsif came to a conclusion that let the dalits take over the well. Dalits of the villagers are not prepared to use the well due to the belief of sacrifice. At this juncture, Chidambaram's wife courageously came out and removed the skeletal frame from the well and villagers started using the well by cleaning the well. Nobody knows that it was the

Chidambaram's wife put the skeletal frame of dead bull with a purpose. She played a trick by accusing the uppercaste young man assaulted her. She even dared to beat up the Munsif in disguise and set the haystacks on fire. The writer poses a question that how long this village and country live on the basis of fear? When will we see the birth of a village or social structure based on the principles of love? At least, how far away, the human society lives without having any fear?

In this story we can see the relatedness of dalits and uppercastes on certain conditions. The idea of atrocity has different meanings in the story. It is multilayered and manifested in social structure. The upper castes are unanimous in considering the incident of polluting the well with skeletal frame of dead body. They don't feel it is atrocious to practice untouchability against dalits. They treat this as a normal act and moreover sanctity of social and religious codes. They don't see the denial of access to the public well or temple to dalits as a violence. At the same time, the author differentiates various positions within the uppercastes on specific instances. For instance, Nancharaiah, the master of the servant Ramudu and Satyanarayana, a Gandhian intervenes and differs with Munsif on mercilessly beating the Ramudu and his son Chidambartam. On the other hand, dalits have to face physical violence even on a suspicion. Any act of dalit that threatens the power of the caste hindus has been treated as arrogance and that leads to violence. The incident of polluting the well may have different meaning for dalits. Behind this incident lies the social anger of the community. Though it seems to be an act of adventurism, isolated and individualistic act and connected to the will of the community as a whole but it had definitely different meaning to dalits. The shared meaning can be seen when they decided to not remove the skeletal frame of dead bull from the well by using the language of the upper castes that dalits should not touch the well of the upper caste. This story has written in the year 1969. By late eighties one can witness the collective assertion of dalits in demanding rights and human dignity. This is the time we can see systematically organized and cruel mass atrocities committing by caste hindus against dalits. The intensity, geography,

social agency and pattern of caste violence may be changed but we can get insights from the story *Oorabhavi* in understanding and theorizing the atrocity.

Conclusion

This is to conclude that phenomenological understanding of caste violence may provide diverse vantage points in understanding 'atrocity.' From the above discussion, we are able to find different descriptions of caste violence. Rather negating the discourse of other positions, we may use them to morally and politically strengthen the position of weak, underprivileged, voiceless, and victim by exposing them. Caste violence is socially located and had a historical continuity. It manifests in many forms. It is constituted and a cognitive act. It is relational and intentional. The perpetuator, caste hindu and the victim, dalit makes sense of their acts and came up with different meaning to the same act. Dalit victim articulates the caste violence as an atrocity committing against him. The perpetuator, the caste hindu justifies his act of violence by pointing out the violation of 'social norm' by the dalits. The perpetuator projects the targeted dalit as violent, anti-social and potential threat to 'public'. Rather observing the caste violence as an emotional act took place between individuals or a group, we have to take note of social structure and institutions that are undercurrent of this phenomenon. The social merit of these structures has to be evaluated in terms of social justice and common good. As dalit leader Kathi Padma Rao observed, the perpetuator and the victim have two different world views. It is the clash of brahminical world view of upper caste hindu and the world view of annihilation of caste represented by dalit. As it is observed, for dalit leaders understood atrocity as a reaction to retaliation of dalits against caste hegemony for the sake of self-respect. For caste hindu , his act of violence is to maintain his status and control over dalits, which he has foreseen as losing with the assertion of dalits. State has seen the atrocity as the breaking of law but in practice unable to implement it due to its social character. As a result state limiting to itself as a dealer of compensation for victims rather intervening in the social process to minimize the social inequalities. The academic understanding on

atrocity is a reflection of this process and ultimately ends in reproducing the knowledge, which is mostly empirical in nature. It lacks proper theoretical direction and obviously keeps in status quo of society. The social scientists are limiting themselves in explaining the social conditions that leads to violence rather providing normative and political understanding of the issue. At most the theoretical understanding is confines to liberal humanistic or Gandhian in case of understanding caste violence. In this context, dalit literary writing to certain extent captured the idea of atrocity and provides the normative meaning to atrocity by locating it socially and historically. Though it was a cultural construction of dalit writer that reflects his subjective position, but to a possible extent they opened up the diverse subjective positions. In Bojja Tarakam's *Nela, Nagali and Mudeddulu*, we may find how dalit subjectivity got erased by the caste hindu, who happened to have control over the land and resources. The power denies the identity of dalit as a human being and reduced him to a third bull. An attempt to live as human being leads to knowing about oneself and questioning the power that obviously leads to violence. The author   has not only depicts the conditions that leads to violence and explains the functioning of the social structure as a whole against the labourer, subordinate, dalit. To overcome this atrocity of slavery, he suggests that dalits should have land, education and political power. To transform the society requires courage to fight against this inhuman and oppressed society. Kolakaluri Enoch's *Oorabhavi* provides the multiple meanings of atrocity by capturing the complexity involved in the society and explaining the caste violence. It also provides the strategies adopted by the dalits in resisting the everyday caste violence. In our philosophical understanding of atrocity we have to take note of these dimensions of caste violence in order to change the inhuman, oppressive and exploitative social system. Rather describing the phenomenon of caste violence, our understanding of atrocity has to acknowledge the politics of resisting the caste violence.

Remedying atrocity is partly possible through multipronged strategy of the state, but developing a framework of universally valid intersubjective norms for social life is daunting.

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আলোচনা চক্র

নারীবাদের দর্শন লিঙ্গস্বরূপ যৌনস্বরূপ দি পার্সোনাল ইজ দ্য বিজ্ঞানে নারী বাদ ধ্রুপদি যুক্তিবিজ্ঞান জগৎ বিশ্বাস ও যুক্তি রীজনের পুরুষায়ন জ্ঞানীয় মূল্য অবস্থানিক তত্ত্ব উত্তর-আধুনিকতাবাদ নারীবাদী অধিবিদ্যা বাংলা সিনেমায় গল্পে উপন্যাসে দর্শন 'আধুনিকতা' প্রসঙ্গে হানা আরেন্ট সত্তাবোধের আত্ম-অন্যীভবন জেনোফেমিনিজম ও শুঁড়েলা চিন্তন বাস্তবের মরুভূমিতে স্লাভই জিজেক দর্শন সাক্ষাৎকার জর্জিয়ো আগামবেন প্রসঙ্গ জেরি ফোডর বঙ্গীয় শব্দার্থকোষ বেদান্তদর্শন ১৯৪৬-৪৭ এর ডায়েরি

নারীবাদের দর্শন

সম্পাদনা : অতসী চ্যাটার্জী সিনহা ও মনোজ নক্ষর

'ঘুরে দেখতে শিখুন ...' ।। শেফালী মৈত্র
লিঙ্গস্বরূপ ও যৌনস্বরূপ ।। ঝুমা চক্রবর্তী দি পার্সোনাল ইজ দ্য ...।। অনুপ ধর
বিজ্ঞানে নারী বাদ ।। প্রয়াস সরকার ধ্রুপদি যুক্তিবিজ্ঞান ... ।। অঙ্গনা চট্টোপাধ্যায়
জগৎ, বিশ্বাস ও যুক্তি ।। মনোজ নক্ষর রীজনের পুরুষায়ন ...।। নন্দিতা বাগচী
জ্ঞানীয় মূল্য ... ।। পৌলোমী তালুকদার অবস্থানিক তত্ত্ব ... ।। পায়েল কর
উত্তর-আধুনিকতাবাদ ও নারীবাদ ।। বিদিশা চট্টোপাধ্যায়
নারীবাদী অধিবিদ্যা ... ।। অতসী চ্যাটার্জী সিনহা

বিবিধ সন্দর্ভ

বাংলা সিনেমায়, গল্পে, ... দর্শন।।এণাক্ষী রায় মিত্র
'আধুনিকতা' প্রসঙ্গে হানা আরেন্ট ।। কুমার মিত্র
সত্তাবোধের আত্ম-অন্যীভবন ।। সন্মিত চট্টোপাধ্যায়
জেনোফেমিনিজম ও শুঁড়েলা চিন্তন ।। অভীক চট্টোপাধ্যায়
বাস্তবের মরুভূমিতে ... স্লাভই জিজেক ।। অর্ণব সাহা
দর্শন—সাক্ষাৎকার : জর্জিয়ো আগামবেন।। উজ্জ্বল বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়
মনের কথা : প্রসঙ্গ জেরি ফোডর ।। নির্মাল্য নারায়ণ চক্রবর্তী
বঙ্গীয় শব্দার্থকোষ - পর্যালোচনা ।। বিদ্যাব্রত মজুমদার
বেদান্তদর্শন, পাঠপ্রতিক্রিয়া ।। কুন্তলা ভট্টাচার্য

ইতিহাসবিদের ডায়েরী ।। সম্পাদনা : প্রয়াণ দাশগুপ্ত
১৯৪৬-৪৭ এর ডায়েরি ।। অরুণ দাশগুপ্ত

সম্পাদক চিরঞ্জীব শূর

সূচিপত্র

বাংলা সিনেমায়, গল্পে, উপন্যাসে দর্শনের চুক্‌রো চুক্‌রো চিত্র

এণাক্ষী রায় মিত্র

চলচ্চিত্র, সাহিত্য ও চিত্রকলার সঙ্গে দর্শনতত্ত্বের সম্বন্ধটা ঘনিষ্ঠ ও বহুমুখী। শিল্প সাহিত্য প্রভৃতির কার্যাবলোতে, এদের সঙ্গে মানুষের আদান-প্রদান বেমন দর্শনের একটা বিষয়, আবার কোনো কোনো সময়ে একটি বিশেষ দর্শন-চিন্তা তত্ত্বের বেড়্জনীর বাহিরে কল্পকাহিনি বা ছায়াছবির আঙ্গিনাস হাজির হয়। আবার অনেক সমযে তত্ত্বাটকে একটা ত্বত্ত্বালাস্ত নাট্যকল দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করা হয়—বিভিন্ন চরিত্রের মধ্যে ঘটনাদয কথোপকথনের মাধ্যমে।

শিল্প-দর্শন সাম্বন্ধন বিষযে অনেক ভুরু-গম্ভীর তত্ত্ব-কাঠামো থাকতে পারে, কিন্তু এই প্রবন্ধের এই জাতিষ কোনও পদ্ধতি উচ্চাশা নেই। আমি শুধু কয়েকটা বিশিষ্ট দুষ্টাত নেব, দু-একটা ছায়াছবি, একটা দুটো গল্প আর উপন্যাস—সবই বাংলা ভাষার। এগুলি সবই বেশ জনপ্রিয় আর বহুল প্রচালিত, বাঙালী পাঠকের বা দর্শকের সদাক করাতে অসুবিধে হবে না। আর এইগুলির মধ্য থেকে ছুলে নেবো কিছু বিশেষ মুহূর্ত বা পরিছিতি, যেখানে কোনো কোনো চরিত্রের মুখে (বা কখনো বার লেখকের বয়ানে) ভেসে ওঠেছে ছোটো খাটো বিশিষ্ট দর্শন বা চুক্‌রো চুক্‌রো দার্শনিক মন্তব্য।

আমি কেন এ-কয়টা দুষ্টাত্তই বেচে নিলাম—এটা কিছু দুরোরপুরি আকস্মিক, এই দুষ্টাত্তগুলি আমার ব্যাক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতার পরিসদের ঘটনাকেন এসে পড়েছে; এই নির্বাচনের আর কোনও তার্কিক বা নীতিগত ভিত্তি নেই। যা বলহিলাম—এই সব চুক্‌রো চিন্তা দর্শন-চিন্তাগুলি নিয়ে একটু মাথা চাড়া করব, দেখতে চাইব মূল দর্শনতত্ত্বের কতটা প্রাতকলন ঘাটেই এসব মন্তব্যে, নাকি আষা তার্কিক, আধা-অ-তার্কিক, বোধা-না-বোধার আলোছায়াতেই থেকে মাধুর্য? সতিটই তো, শিল্প-সাহিত্যের চরিত্রগুলি যদি সব সমযেই যথাযথ দর্শন-তত্ত্ব আওড়াতে, তাহলে তো খোদ শিল্প-মাধ্যমটাই হত্যে বোতো একটা ইদ্যাবেল্লী শাস্তবিভ্জন।

সাহিত্য-সঙ্গীত সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়ের প্রথম দিকের ভিন্নাস মেঘ, বৃষ্টি, আলো, আন্যে দিয়ে শুরু করছি। যদিও এটা আমাদের বেশির ভাগেরই পড়া, তবু যে পারিছিত্তটা নিযে আমি আলোচনা করাতে চাই—সেটা পাঠকদের একটু মনে করিরে দেওয়া প্রয়োজন। ভিন্নাসের নাষিকা অনুরাধা প্রবজন সুদর্শিনা, স্বাভাবতী দুবতী—তার প্রাতবেশী প্রাতবেশবার মহুরবস্ক, বিবাহিত, ষাঁর স্ত্রী কম্মা অসুস্ত! প্রাতবেশবার কোনো এক বিশেষী যন্ত্রণাতির কোম্পানির সেলস ভিপার্টমেন্টে কাজ করেন, কিন্তু অবসর সমযে বিভিন্ন তার্কিক বিয়রের বই পড়া তার অভ্যাস। অনুরাধাকে প্রাযই তার বাড়িতে যেতে হয়, তার অবস্থু ত্রীকে দেখতে বা বাচা মেরোচিক সদ দিতে। প্রাতবেশবার ভদ্র, পরিছিনিত, দাসিচিশীল স্বামী ও পিতা, কিন্তু অন্যদিকে তিনি অনুরাধার প্রতি নৃত্রভাবে অনুরত্ত।

হয়, তা একটি ব্যাপক জীবনচর্যার পটভূমি ছাড়া সম্ভব হয় না। স্ট্রিপ-টীজের সাফল্য বা তার অভিপ্রেত ফলটি কিন্তু ওই নৃত্যের শরীরের মধ্যে নিহিত নেই। একটু অন্যভাবে বলতে গেলে—ঐ নৃত্য ও নৃত্যের ফলস্বরূপ যে চূড়ান্ত কামনার উদ্রেক—এ দুটি পরস্পর-বিচ্ছিন্ন নয়—একটি প্রলম্বিত অভ্যাসের মধ্য দিয়ে আমরা এ দুটিকে একাকার করতে শিখে নিয়েছি। কুতুক এই জীবনচর্যা বা এই অভ্যাসের বাইরে—তাই স্ট্রিপ-টীজের অভিপ্রেত ফলটি তার ওপর কাজ করল না। তবে এও ঠিক যে নারদ-কুতুকের প্রশ্নোত্তর শুনে মনে হয় কুতুক যেন সত্যিই শরীরের তলায়, অস্থি-মাংস-মজ্জার তলায়, সর্বোপরি কংকালের তলায় 'নারীসত্তা' নামক এক বস্তুময় দ্রব্যের সন্ধানী, তাঁর বাক্‌শৈলীতে ক্যাটেগরি-মিস্টেক-এর একটা অতি-পরিচিত আঙ্গিক অস্বীকার করা যায় না। রাজশেখর বসু হয়তো জেনে বুঝেই তাঁর চরিত্রদের মধ্য দিয়ে একটা নয়—দু দুটো সমান্তরাল ক্যাটেগরি-মিস্টেক মূর্ত করে তুলেছিলেন।

দু-একটি বাংলা ছায়াছবিকে এবার আলোচনার পরিসরে নিয়ে আসব—এখানে চরিত্রেরা অনায়াসে যেভাবে দার্শনিক মন্তব্য ছুঁড়ে দেন—তা বেশ মনোরঞ্জক। যেমন সত্যজিৎ রায়ের 'নায়ক' ছবিতে[১১] একটি পার্শ্বচরিত্র জ্যোতি ও ছবির কেন্দ্রীয় চরিত্র অরিন্দমের কথোপকথন। অরিন্দম 'নায়ক' ছবির নায়ক হলেও উল্লিখিত দার্শনিক আলাপচারিতার নায়ক কিন্তু জ্যোতি, অরিন্দম এখানে শ্রোতা মাত্র। দৃশ্যের সংলাপটি শুধু তুলে দিলাম—

'অরিন্দম : পরজন্মে তোর বিশ্বাস আছে?

জ্যোতি : কার পরজন্ম?

অরিন্দম : মানুষের, ধর তোর।

জ্যোতি : আমি যে আমি সেটা পরজন্মে আমি বুঝছি কি করে? জ্যোতি বাঁড়ুজ্যে তো আর জ্যোতি বাঁড়ুজ্যে হয়ে জন্মাচ্ছে না। আর জাতিস্মরও সবাই হয় না। তাই বিশ্বাস-অবিশ্বাসের প্রশ্ন উঠছে কি করে?

অরিন্দম : (দীর্ঘশ্বাস) এগ্‌জ্যাক্টলি

জ্যোতি : মার্ক্স আর ফ্রয়েডের যুগ ভাই, নো পরজন্ম, নো প্রভিডেন্স।

অরিন্দম : জানি জানি, একটাই লাইফ টাইম একটাই চান্স ...'

অরিন্দম জ্যোতির এই যুক্তিতে সন্তুষ্ট, এতটাই সন্তুষ্ট যে এর ভিত্তিতে সে তার জীবনের বাঁককে পাল্টে ফেলল। কিন্তু আপনি সন্তুষ্ট কি? না আমি বলছি না যে পরজন্ম আছে, অর্থাৎ দেহ বিনষ্ট হলেও আত্মা অমর, সে অন্য দেহে পুনরায় জন্মগ্রহণ করে। কিন্তু জ্যোতির যুক্তিতে একটা স্ববিরোধ আছে। পরজন্মের কথা তোলাটাই যে আসলে অর্থহীন সেটা প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে হলে পরজন্মের তাত্ত্বিক সম্ভাবনাটুকুও মেনে নেওয়া যায় না; কিন্তু জ্যোতি তো সেটাই মেনে নিল। অর্থাৎ মেনে নিল যে কিছু কিছু মানুষ সত্যিই জাতিস্মর হয়ে থাকে, অর্থাৎ আত্মা সত্যিই এক দেহ ছেড়ে অন্য দেহ পরিগ্রহ করে। অর্থাৎ আত্মার নতুন নতুন দেহ প্রহণের কথা বলা মোটেও অর্থহীন নয়, তবে বেশির ভাগ ক্ষেত্রেই জাতক তার পূর্বজন্মের দেহবিনাশ, আত্মার দেহমুক্তি ও নতুন দেহে অনুপ্রবেশ ইত্যাদি ঘটনা মনে করতে পারে না। ফলে তার এই জন্মের

আত্মা ও পূর্বজন্মের আত্মা যে অভিন্ন—এই অভিন্নতাটাও তার জ্ঞানের বিষয় হয় না। জ্যোতির যুক্তি থেকে শুধু এটুকুই প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় যে বেশির ভাগ ক্ষেত্রেই বর্তমান জাতক 'আমি' শব্দটির দ্বারা পূর্বজন্মের বা পরজন্মের কোনো জাতককে নির্দেশ করতে পারে না; ফলে 'পরজন্মে আমায় এই জন্মের কর্মফল ভোগ করতে হবে', বা 'গতজন্মে ঐ পাপ করেছিলাম, তাই এই জন্মে তার শাস্তিভোগ করতে হচ্ছে'—এই ধরনের বাক্যগুলি সত্য না মিথ্যা তা জানার কোনও উপায়ই নেই। কিন্তু এ থেকে পরজন্মের প্রস্তাব যে অবান্তর বা অর্থহীন সেটা কিন্তু প্রতিপাদিত হয় না। পূর্বজন্ম আর পরজন্মের কথা সর্বৈব নির্মূল করতে হলে জ্যোতি আর অরিন্দমকে বুঝতে হবে যে জাতিস্মরের কথা বলাটাই অর্থহীন, অর্থাৎ আত্মার এক দেহ ছেড়ে অন্য দেহে পরিক্রমণের প্রস্তাবটি বাগর্থগত ভাবেই নিষ্ফল।

বাগর্থগতভাবে নিষ্ফল কোন্‌ বাক্যগুলি? যেমন অসমাপ্ত বাক্য (যেমন 'রাম খেতে ...'), ব্যাকরণবিরোধী বাক্য ('সে আপনার অতীব শ্রীযুক্ত মুখমণ্ডলের খাসা সিম নাসার বেসর সেখানে ঝুটাপান্না'[১২]), ও ক্যাটেগরি-মিস্টেক ঘটিত বাক্য ('শচীন তেন্ডুল্কারের ব্যাট করার রঙ নীল')। শেষোক্ত বাক্যটি পূর্ণায়ত, ব্যাকরণগত গঠনেও কোনও দোষ নেই, কিন্তু বাক্যের অন্তর্গত শব্দগুলি বা তাদের দ্বারা নির্দেশিত প্রত্যয়গুলি পরস্পর সম্মিলনে অযোগ্য। এখন 'আত্মা এক দেহ থেকে অন্য দেহে সঞ্চরণশীল'—এটা অর্থহীনতার শেষোক্ত বর্গেই পড়বে, কিন্তু সেটা বোঝার জন্য সামান্য একটু পরিশ্রম করতে হবে। 'নায়ক' ছবিতে তো জ্যোতি বা অরিন্দম এই পরিশ্রমটুকু করেনি (বা পরিচালকও তাদের দিয়ে করাতে চাননি), তাই আমরাই বোঝার চেষ্টা করি।

প্রথমে দেখতে হবে দেহহীন চৈতন্যের অর্থপূর্ণ নির্মাণ অসম্ভব, সেটা বুঝলে বিদেহী আত্মার এক দেহ থেকে অন্য দেহে সংক্রমণের প্রস্তাবটাও কাটিয়ে উঠতে পারব। প্রথমে উল্টোদিক দিয়েই শুরু করি—অর্থাৎ যেটাকে নস্যাৎ করতে চাই, সেটা সাময়িকভাবে ধরে নিয়েই এগোনো যাক। ভাবুন তো আপনার দেহ নেই, কিন্তু চিন্তা আছে, অনুভূতি আছে, আপনি দেখতে পাচ্ছেন, শুনতে পাচ্ছেন, নীরব বাক্যও উচ্চারণ করতে পারছেন। এই দেখা, শোনাকে অতীন্দ্রিয় হিসেবে ভাবতে হবে, বাক্যোচ্চারণও হতে হবে বাক্যন্ত্রের সাহায্য ছাড়া— কারণ বিদেহী আত্মার ইন্দ্রিয় বা বাক্যন্ত্র থাকবে কি করে? রাতে দিব্যি ঘুমিয়েছিলেন, সকালে উঠে দেখলেন ঘর-ভর্তি আলো, ঘড়িতে আট্টা বাজছে, ঘরের আসবাব-পত্র সব ঠিক আছে, কিন্তু আপনার শরীরকে আপনি বিছানায় দেখতে পাচ্ছেন না। চমকে আয়নার দিকে তাকালেন, না আয়নার মধ্যে আপনার প্রতিফলন নেই। আপনি কি তাহলে অদৃশ্য হয়ে গেছেন? না, কারণ কেউ যদি ঘরের মধ্যে আসে সে আপনাকে স্পর্শও করতে পারবে না। আয়নার দিকে হাঁটার চেষ্টা করলেন, যদিও কিভাবে করলেন, সেটা বলা মুশকিল, কারণ আপনার তো পা নেই, কিন্তু কোনোভাবে দেখছেন আপনার সামনের জিনিসগুলি বড় হচ্ছে, আর দূরে খাটের কাছে রাখা জিনিসগুলো ছোট হচ্ছে। সবই একরকম, শুধু নিজের দেহকে দেখতে পাচ্ছেন না, ছুঁতেও পারছেন না। অভিজ্ঞতা বা অনুভবের জন্য প্রয়োজন যে স্নায়বিক টান, মাংসপেশীর কুঞ্চন, ভারসাম্য ও লঘ্বমানতার বোধও অটুট—এই সব আছে কিন্তু শরীর নেই।

কেরা : তার সাথে দুর্গাপূজার কী সম্পর্ক?

অরুণ : বেসিকালি দুটোই তো এক। ঘর আর বাসা বাদ দিলে বাকি থাকে জল আর মাটি। সেই জল আর মাটি দিয়ে ঠাকুর গড়ে ভাসান দিলে আবার জল আর মাটি হয়ে যায়। কন্সট্রাকশন-ডিকন্সট্রাকশন ... (থরথর করে গলা কাঁপছে) কন্সট্রাকশন-ডিকন্সট্রাকশন (অধিক মাত্রায় গলা কাঁপা) ... কন্সট্রাকশন-ডিকন্সট্রাকশন (কেঁপে বুঁজে আসছে গলা)

দৃশ্য শেষ

আসলে একটি ধারণার আবেষ্টনী ভেঙে তাকে তার বিপরীতে মিলিয়ে দেওয়ার প্রক্রিয়া কিন্তু ডিকন্সট্রাকশন নয়। একটি বস্তুকে সমানধর্মে বেঁধে ফেলে তারপর তাকে তরলায়িত করে বিপরীতের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে দেওয়া যায়। বাস্তব নিজেও এক পিচ্ছিল পরিসর—লাল রঙ মিশে যায় হলুদে, সোজা মিশে যায় ব্যাঁকায়, দীর্ঘ হয় হ্রস্ব, কতগুলি চুল হারালে একজন সুকেশ ব্যক্তিকে আমরা ইন্দ্রলুপ্ত বলতে আরম্ভ করি—তা বলা যায় না। কিন্তু বৈপরীত্যের এই পরস্পর-নিরবিচ্ছিন্নতা, বা পরস্পর-পরিপূরকতা—যেমন জন্ম-মৃত্যুর প্রবাহ, জল-মাটি থেকে গড়ে উঠে আবার জল-মাটিতেই বিলীন হয়ে যাওয়া—এগুলি কন্সট্রাকশন-ডিকন্সট্রাকশনের দৃষ্টান্ত নয়। এসব ক্ষেত্রে দুটি সংজ্ঞাবদ্ধ পরিচিতি থেকে আরম্ভ করে দুটিকেই সুপরিকল্পিত পরস্পর-বিপরীত ধারণা-প্রবাহে চালিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়েছে; কিন্তু বিপরীতে নিমজ্জিত হওয়ার আগে তথাকথিত মূল ধারণা দুটির অন্তর্নিহিত ফাটল, তাদের ফাঁক-ফোকর, বাস্তব প্রয়োগের মধ্যে দিয়ে তাদের একটু একটু করে হয়ে ওঠার প্রক্রিয়াকে আশ্বস্ত করা হয়নি। মাটিকে জলপ্রবাহে মিশিয়ে দেওয়ার আগেই তো মাটিকে এক একমাত্রিক সামান্যধারণায় হিমায়িত করে দেওয়া হয়েছে— তার ফলেই তো তৈরি হয়েছে বৈষম্য-দূরীকরণের প্রক্রিয়া—বা এই আপাত-বিনির্মাণ। কিন্তু প্রকৃতপক্ষে ডিকন্সট্রাকশনের পরিসরে বিপরীত জোড়ের পদদুটিই অনির্দেশ্য পথ ভেঙে-চুরে এগিয়ে চলে, একে অপরে মিশে যাওয়ার কোনো নির্দিষ্ট পথ তো আগে থেকে কেটে দেওয়া নেই।

তবে এই দার্শনিক অপলাপের জন্য অরুণকে (বা এই ছবির পরিচালকে) দোষ দেওয়া উচিত হবে না। ঘনীভূত কামোন্মাদনা যখন ঘনীভূত দর্শনচেতনায় মিশে যায়—সেখানে কন্সট্রাকশন-ডিকন্সট্রাকশনের ধারণাগুলি তো ওলট-পালট হয়ে যেতেই পারে—এ আর বেশি কথা কি?

....

এরকম টুকরো টুকরো দর্শন ছড়িয়ে আছে আরও অসংখ্য গল্পে, উপন্যাসে, নাটকে, কবিতায়, সিনেমায়, কারুশিল্পে। অনেক সময়ে এরা রচনার বাঁধুনির সঙ্গে অঙ্গাঙ্গীভাবে জড়িত, তবে অনেক সময়েই আসে আলগা মন্তব্যে, অনির্দিষ্টভাবে, কোনো না কোনো চরিত্রের মুখে। আর শুধু শিল্প-সাহিত্যে কেন—আমাদের প্রতিদিনের জীবনের প্রতিটি ক্ষেপে শতকরা পঞ্চাশ ভাগ মানুষের মুখে মুখে দর্শনের খই ফোটে। সম্প্রতি দেশের বিভিন্ন কলেজ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়গুলির গুণাগুণ বিচার করে তাদের যথাযথ নম্বর দেবার ভার নিয়েছে কিছু প্রতিষ্ঠান—যেমন 'ন্যাশনাল অ্যাসেসমেন্ট অ্যান্ড অ্যাক্রেডিটেশন' (সংক্ষেপে 'ন্যাক'); আর তাদের মূল্যাঙ্কনের

মানদণ্ডগুলির মধ্যে একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নিরিখ হল যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধীত পাঠক্রম শুধু তাত্ত্বিক স্তরে থাকলে হবে না, তাদের বাস্তব প্রয়োগ দেখাতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে কলেজ-বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দর্শন-বিভাগগুলি অন্তত এই বিষয়ে নিশ্চিন্ত থাকতে পারবে— শিল্পে, সাহিত্যে ও জীবনে দর্শনের প্রায়োগিক দৃষ্টান্তের অভাব কোনোদিনই হবে না।

সূত্রপঞ্জি

১. গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় সুনীল, *সাতটি উপন্যাস*, দেজ পাবলিশিং, কলকাতা, ২০০৬, পৃ. ১১-১০২।

২. ঐ, পৃ. ৫৩।

৩. কান্ট ইমানুএল, *ক্রিটিক অফ পিওর রীজন*, অনু : নর্ম্যান কেম্প স্মিথ, ম্যাকমিলান, লন্ডন, ১৯৯২। 'রীজন' শব্দটির বিবিধ প্রয়োগের জন্য ইন্ডেক্স দ্রষ্টব্য।

৪. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মানিক, *মানিক গ্রন্থাবলী*, গ্রন্থালয় প্রাইভেট লিঃ, কলকাতা, ১৯৮২, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, পৃঃ ২৫৩-২৬২, উদ্ধৃতি পৃ. ২৬২।

৫. ফুকো মিশেল, *হিস্ট্রী অফ সেকসুয়ালিটি*, অনু: রবার্ট হালী, নিউ ইয়র্ক, ভিন্টেজ, ১১৯০, ভল্যুম-১। বিস্তৃত ভাষ্যের জন্য *দ্য কেম্ব্রিজ ফুকো লেক্সিকন*, সম্পা. লিওনার্ড লওলার, জন নেল, কেম্ব্রিজ ইউনিভার্সিটি প্রেস, নিউ ইয়র্ক, ২০১৪ দ্রষ্টব্য।

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৭. রাজশেখর বসু দিব্য মানবের ব্যাখ্যা দিয়েছেন—যাঁরা স্বর্গে মর্ত্যে অবাধে আনাগোনা করেন। ঐ, পৃ. ৬১৩।

৮. ঐ, পৃ. ৬১৫।

৯. রাইল গিলবার্ট, *কনসেপ্ট অফ মাইন্ড*, হাচিসন অ্যান্ড কোম্পানী লিমিটেড, লন্ডন, ১৯৬৩, প্রথম অধ্যায় দ্রষ্টব্য।

১০. বসু রাজশেখর, 'নির্মোক নৃত্য', পৃ. ৬১৪।

১১. 'নায়ক', পরিচালনা ও চিত্রনাট্য : সত্যজিৎ রায়, প্রযোজনা : আর ডি বনশাল, মুক্তি : ১৯৬৬।

১২. কমল কুমার মজুমদারের *সুহাসিনীর পমেটম* উপন্যাস থেকে উদ্ধৃত। উদ্ধৃতিটি নিম্নোক্ত ওয়েব লিংক থেকে উপলব্ধ - http://humanitiesunderground.org/untimely-kamalkumar-a-campaign-for-a-writer / ২৮.১০.২০১৮। কমল কুমার এই উপন্যাসে পরীক্ষামূলকভাবে বাংলা ভাষার উপর ফরাসী ব্যাকরণ-কাঠামো ব্যবহার করেছেন—এরকম বলা হয়ে থাকে।

১৩. হসপার্স জন, *অ্যান ইন্ট্রোডাকশন টু ফিলজফিকাল অ্যানালিসিস* (অ্যালাইড পাবলিশার্স, বম্বে, ১৯৮৬) গ্রন্থ অনুসারে বিদেহী অস্তিত্বের বিশ্লেষণটি পরিবেশন করেছি। এই গ্রন্থের পৃ. ৪১৭-১৯ দ্রষ্টব্য। তাঁর উল্লিখিত নিম্নোক্ত গ্রন্থটিতেও প্রাসঙ্গিক আলোচনা পাওয়া

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১৪. ন্যায়-বৈশেষিক সম্মত আত্মার অতি-সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিচিতির জন্য পাঠক এই বইটি দেখতে পারেন—অন্নংভট্ট, তর্কসংগ্রহ ও তর্ক-সংগ্রহ *দীপিকা*, অধ্যাপনা : নারায়ণচন্দ্র গোস্বামী, সংস্কৃত পুস্তক ভাণ্ডার, কলকাতা, বঙ্গাব্দ, ১৪১০।

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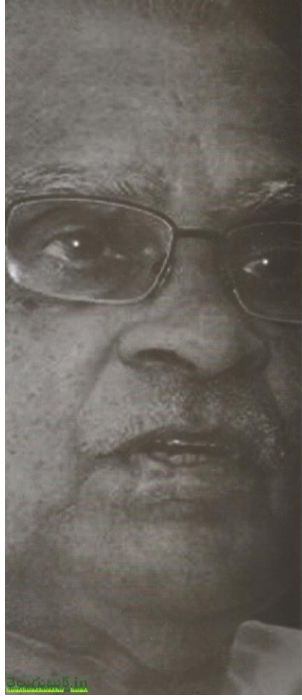
THE GENTLE WARRIOR

In Memory of
Bojja Tharakam

బొజ్జా తారకం జ్ఞాపకాలు

Bojja Tarakam: Ambedkarite of Our Times

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Bojja Tarakam (1939-2016), Radical Ambedkarite and Dalit leader of high eminence was passed away on 17th September 2016. He is a well known Dalit leader with multiple facets to his personality. He left his mark on most of the democratic struggles of Telugu society in post independent India. He is a peoples' leader, civil rights activist, advocate, organizer, writer, poet, social scientist and ideologue of democratic struggles. He is the public intellectual our times having the passion for politics of change. He lived into all most all the democratic struggles of late 1960s. He has not only identified with the ongoing struggles around him but also inaugurated himself from the philosophy of Ambedkar. He and his family was grown up with Ambedkarite struggles in Telugu society from early Ambedkarite Adi-Andhra movement to Dalit movements of contemporary times. His activism has not frozen into either of the dominant streams of his times either Marxism inspired revolutionary struggles or Dalit movement. He traversed both with unparallel ease and sense of purpose. He has been critical of Marxist struggles in India for its caste blindness. For him, Dalit struggles means not merely confinement to issues relating to caste but also considers struggles of class as dalits are victims of both caste as well as class. He did not undermine either. Instead he brought credence to both. He believed that both struggles have to go hand in hand simultaneously. He struggled and lived accordingly. He waged struggle against both Brahminism and feudalism/capitalism. He is the true Ambedkarite stood for the democratic revolution that internalizes the spirit social, economical and political revolutions. He is the only dalit leader and ideologue mediating all the democratic struggles of our times.

He was born in a village in Konaseema of coastal Andhra in an Ambedkarite family in 1939. His father, Bojja Appala Swamy was a first generation dalit leader in independent India and was responsible for establishing Ambedkar led Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942 and had been elected as a Member of legislative Assembly in 1950s.

Educate , Organise and Agitate

Tarakam was an active student leader and completed his graduation in Law. He started practicing law from late 1960s to late 1970s in Nizamabad and engaged in wide range of struggles by organizing *Rythu Coolie Sangham* and *Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangham*. He was arrested during emergency and imprisoned for his public activism on various issues of people. Later he shifted to Hyderabad and started practicing in High court and become appointed as public Prosecutor of Administrative Tribunal. Later, in protest against Karamchedu massacre, he resigned for this post and continued as senior advocate by taking up the cases of people. He was the founder vice-president of *Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee* (APCLC) and a member of Revolutionary Writers Association (Virasam). Though he was active in Marxist

leaning organization, he never deviated from the core of Ambedkarism. After Karamchedu massacre, Telugu society has witnessed the strong assertion of dalits and formed autonomous dalit organization by ideologically differentiating itself from Marxist politics. The formation of *Dalita Mahasabha* in 1985 by Tarakam along with another prominent dalit leader Kathi Padma Rao was the turning point in Dalit politics of Telugu Society. He was the founder president of that organization. As advocate , he took up the Karamchedu case. The Dalit Maha Sabha (1985-1991) had a creative intervention in Telugu society and consequently changed the political discourse. Dalit struggles got intensified with struggles against Chunduru massacre. He then become a state convener for *Chunduru Struggle Committee*(1991).The political mobilization of dalits resulted in formation of *Bahujana Samaj Party* in A.P. and he was the founder secretary from 1990-1994. He came out of the BSP as a protest against the party for its alliance with BJP in Uttar Pradesh. He started reviving Republican Party of India in A.P and came out after the Republican Party leader Ramdas Athavale's identification with BJP.

Tarakam's life was spent in writing fact finding reports, organizing press meets, public meetings and fighting for justice in courts. He believed in the philosophy of questioning the social system and state machinery rather than petitioning to them. It is clear that Tarakam has established credibility with his commitment to wide range of issues of people and a threshold for democratic struggles. He reached to the people through his writings on various issues. In Telugu society, public life was marked by ideological confrontation between left and dalit politics. Many intellectuals and writers came out of the fold of left politics with emergence of dalit politics from late eighties. But Tarakam was an exception to this trend. He was never deviated from the philosophy and practice of Ambedkarism and viewed every struggle from Ambedkarism. His struggles and writings are testimony for this. His criticism against revolutionary left is constructive and anticipated support for dalit issues. His work *Kulam –Vargam*(Caste- Class, 1996) ideologically clarifies his position on both caste and class. Apart from his literary writings *Nadiputtina Gonthuka*(The Voice That Gave Birth to the River,1983), *Nalage Godavari*(The Godavari is Like Me, 2000) and *Panchatantram*(2012), his special tracts Nela-Nagali-Mudeddulu(Land, Plough and Three Oxen, 2008) , *Dalitulu-Rajyam* (Dalits and the State,2008), *Constitution and the Coup D' Etat (2000)* provides specific theoretical approach to key issues. His last book *Charitra Marchina Manishi*(The Man Who changed History, 2016) was about his father Bojja Appalaswamy, the early Ambedkarite dalit leader and legislator of Independent India. More than about his father, this book provides the social history and struggles of dalit community in Coastal Andhra. The way he constructed the dalit history was remarkable. The edited books of editorials and essays (*Bojja Tarakam Nalupu Vyasalu, Bojja Tarakam Nalupu Sampadakeeyalu*,2017) published in the prominent dalit journal *Nalupu* (1989-95) provides the political commentary and scholarly analysis on various issues from subaltern point of view. In other words, we may find distinct approach of Tarakam in understanding our society, culture and polity. His commitment and romantic involvement in democratic politics is visible in his writings and sruggles.

Dalit Labourer as Third Bull

Tarakam's *Nela-Nagali- Mudeddulu* is about the relations of feudal system and exploitation of labour. This explains the master and slave relations. Here the third bull symbolically represents the *Paleru*(bonded labourer)/ *Jeetagadu* (wage labourer). This is a story set in Indian agrarian society and deals with how the labourer is reduced to the beast. In the feudal set up, labourer does not have any rights or freedom other than working for the landlord. The landlord has control over the land. Power and status has invariable relationship with land. The landlord, social system and state machinery collectively operate to maintain the status quo in social relations. It depicts a condition of economic drudgery and mental slavery which is rooted in world view of feudal Brahminical system. When the labourer realizes that he is a human and that awareness leads to struggle. It is impossibility as imagination is etched in feudal world view. The political economy of agrarian society depicted in an impressive manner in a form of a story in this book. This is a new genre in literature informed by specifities of political economy.

State, Constitution and Dalit Movement

Dalitulu –Rajyam depicts the evolution of Indian state and marginalization of dalits. This book is continued in the above said genre and explains how dalits were kept out of politics and purview of state. In this he explains the origin and nature of state and its sustenance in protecting the interests of ruling class/caste by maintain status quo of dalits. The state has structured such a way that it controls the anger and aspirations of dalits against the ruling class/caste and state. Though the welfare state in modern times came up with egalitarian principles to uphold the dignity of the oppressed, the caste structure and its value system does not allows the state to be a welfare state based on these principles. He stretched this logic in *Constitution and the Coup D' Etat* , which was written in the context of Hindutva's design to review the Indian constitution. Though the state that based on constitution drafted by Ambedkar was escaping its role of equalizer, modernizer and liberator of the masses of the country, but it was checked by the struggles of the country. The conservative hindutva ruling classes felt the struggles of the oppressed is a threat to the hegemony. To control the masses and to continue their hegemony, thought of changing the constitution to suits their interests. By foreseeing this evil intention of hindutva forces, Tarakam argued that 'we have to protect this constitution because it promises justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. We have to save the constitution because it guarantees the celebrated fundamental freedoms. We have to guard the constitution because it assures a welfare state.' Tarakam maintains that if oppressed people won't fight against injustice, state will be undemocratic and monopolized by ruling class/caste.

Literature as A Medium

Tarakam is a voracious reader and evaluated literature from a dalit perspective. He took literature as an organized activity in making people conscious. In seventies, he identified with Revolutionary Writers Association (Virasam) and in eighties he has organized all India dalit

writers coference with participation of around thousand writers. In nineties, under his editorship, *Nalupu* has initiated the alternative cultural discourse. Tarakam's *Nadi Puuttina Gonthuka* is a poetry written in the context of emergency. We can see a tone of angry young man raised voice against the authoritarian state. Through his poetry he questioned the hypocrisy of Gandhian politics, Oh! Mahatma, have you ever lived with dalits and had a real feel of suffering of dalits? Naalage Godari is later collection of poetry. To portray the larger and complex social reality, he chooses the literary form novel. Tarakam's novel *Panchatantram* illustrates the problem of dalits in the background of caste and class relations in Coastal Andhra village. Viswanath is a landlord of a village and Suranna works as his *Paleru*(labourer). The sexual relation between Suranna and Lakshmi daughter of Viswanath leads to killing of Suranna. Suranna's father too was killed for making an attempt to complain against landlord. The story ends up with the struggles of resistance of young Suranna who was born illicitly born to Lakshmi and Suranna. This novel depicts the cruel face of the caste in India in ordinary situation. Land, power and status are with the landlord. Rules of social system, and state machinery is subordinated the upper caste landlord. Dalits have no freedom in situations of everyday life. Any resistance to the authority of landlord was crushed ruthlessly and the institutions of state were used in their favour. The authority was later carried by Dattu, grandson of Viswanath. This casteist young man killed those who contested him (Ganganna , a dalit boy for contesting against him in school elections, and Gowri , dalit girl raped and killed by him). In both cases, the son of landlord escaped from the cases and on other attempts to implicate Suranna, rebellious young dalit man (illegitimate son of Gowri) who is the force behind Dalit victims. Suranna's struggle has no value with the manipulation of police, courts and doctors by the landlord but Suranna stands as a moral force in this novel. The novel ends with killing of the landlord Viswanath in the dark by Sathemma another victim of Viswanath. The novel not only depicts the discrimination, helplessness of dalits but also the resistance of dalits against the landlord in every occasion. In nutshell, the novel narrates the feudal power and how the structures of village and of state are succumbed to the power of caste and class. Tarakam believes that this situation has to be changed for a democratic society. The change has possible only through struggles of the oppressed in various forms.

Caste and Class

Kulam- Vargam is a text of Tarakam that engages with questions of significance of caste and   class in transforming Indian Society. This political text has been written in a form of story to reach the ordinary readers. This has its historical significance where the ideological differences were widened within democratic struggles. This makes clear the differences between movements of radical left and dalits in understanding Indian social reality. It sets the programme for the both the camps in reconstruction of Indian society. In India, *caste is the foundation on which society is organized. Caste alone determines the economic, social, political and cultural status of the people*. He posed a question how can caste and class be abolished simultaneously? Both caste and class struggles are constituents of the revolution. *The abolition of caste is as*

revolutionary as classlessness. Caste struggle is a mental-material revolution, while the focus of a class struggle tends to be limited to materialistic considerations. In both Srikakulam and Telangana armed struggles, the communist party did not addressed caste issue. The upper caste leadership of communist party failed to take up the issue of caste against the interests of their own castes. He believes that so long as the leadership remains in the hands of upper castes, no attempt will be made to bring about fundamental changes. Tarakam believes that annihilation of caste and class is an immediate political necessity. It is the responsibility of both Dalit and Marxist struggles, otherwise both will not sustain. In the process of struggle, dialogue between these groups inevitable. It needs conviction and energy to overcome immediate hurdles. Tarakam had both conviction and energy in a dream of realizing social revolution.

Multi faceted Life

He worked for the struggles of the people in his entire life. He has simultaneously involved in the revolutionary struggles and dalit struggles. He is consistent in his firm political conviction of ideology of liberation of oppressed. The organizational structures were never constraints for him. He valued every effort and struggle of the people, whatever may be the form or political affiliation. He was in forefront of all the democratic struggles of Telugu society. His politics has larger canvas. He was directly and indirectly part of all the people struggles for a period of five decades. This includes both class and caste struggles- land struggles, Beedi workers struggles, political prisoners, fake encounters, struggles against Special economic zones, struggles against SC/ST atrocities, specific struggles against Padirikuppam, Karamchedu, Chunduru, Nirukonda, Timmasamudram, Laximpeta massacres. He expressed his political position through his speeches and write ups. It bears a distinctive dalit point of view. Tarakam was not confined to the political struggles and extended himself to literary and cultural domains. He believed that politics has to be based on strong social and cultural foundations. He wrote poetry, novels, poetic prose and essays. For him, literary writing is a political necessity. To express himself and to reach people, he invented a new political genre that fused social/political theory and literature. The liberation of the oppressed is the underlying theme of all his writings. His politics and writings set against the ruling caste-ruling class and state. Tarakam is an organic intellectual in Gramscian sense. He was organized the oppressed social groups (dalits) keeping in forefront and felt the need for having alliances with other groups against the dominant ruling caste/class hegemony and state.

In establishing the hegemony of the ordinary people, Tarakam believed in Ideology of Ambedkar as a political ideology to bring about just social order. All his speeches and writings reflects the essence of Ambedkar thought. He made us to understand Ambedkar in simple terms for ordinary public. He has translated some of the volumes of Ambedkar writings and formed Ambedkar memorial trust. Rather reproducing the Ambedkar, he has creatively interpreted Ambedkar to suits the contemporary situation. He negotiated with Marxists from Ambedkarist position. He made his position clear that without understanding the caste, it is difficult to have a successful revolution. Both Marxist movements and Dalit movements have to work simultaneously for annihilation of caste and class. Tarakam's contribution is that he opens up the category of dalit as

a broad political category that have the spirit of rebellion against dominance. We can see a conscious effort on his part from the time of Dalit Maha Sabha till his last breath.

Lost Horizons

The life of Tarakam is devoted to democratic struggles having connections to diverse ideological positions and organizations. He participated in all the democratic struggles of our society. It is difficult to fill the gap of Tarakam especially to regain such rich cultural past of democratic struggles and the way he mediated contesting ideological positions in the liberation of the oppressed. The strength of Tarakam lies in moving beyond the dichotomy of Marxism and Ambedkarism. He has created larger ideological frame work for dalit liberation through his relentless engagement in public struggles which has economic as well as cultural dimension. Dalit politics in Telugu society have entered into a new phase in which assertion of exclusive identity becomes means for self recognition. It is important to celebrate the historically and culturally marginalized identity to achieve self affirmation. Unfortunately dalit politics during this phase has avoided economic and cultural issues. It has not only narrowed the scope of politics but also fails to carry out multi dimensional struggles. The dalit mobilization has become self congratulatory without focusing on suffering. Due to lack of strong political foundations, this dalit identity has not only become authoritarian but also looses on liberatory content of dalit struggles of previous decades. The direction of dalit movement has changed. There is no voice of protest and the new dalit leadership became subordinate to power of ruling castes. This kind of situation undermines dalit politics. It becomes a suicidal situation for dalit politics. One thing is clear that the generation of Tarakam had never bowed down to these ruling communities/classes and had a relentless fight against the undemocratic system. He never compromised with system and lived with honesty. When the political struggles of dalits were at low phase, he channelized his energies to literature. He never took retirement from public life and waged consistent struggle against oppressive Brahminical society and undemocratic state. Tarakam has opened up the space for dalit politics by widening dalit identity. His struggle is for dignity, political power and rights and not for subordination to the centers of power.

Tarakam was clear in his thinking about functioning of our system and democracy. He was aware of functioning of state with high handedness of ruling class/caste and control of its organs such as Police and judiciary over people. Obviously there will be no justice for the weak and oppressed communities of this country though it promised. Tarakam was well aware that how fake our democracy is! But he took a route that we have to believe in the system and work with it till it gets exposed. The oppressed of the country has to realize that there will be no justice for them in caste and class ridden society till they get the real political power. As Tarakam symbolizes the theory and praxis of Ambedkarism and remains a meeting point for all the democratic struggles of our times.

Charles Taylor's Idea of the Self

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Abstract

As a moral realist, Taylor tries to establish a concept that morality is the basis to understand the human existence and his identity. He argues that morality defines the self or our identity, because human being got appeared into the world as an embodied and moral agent with an inherent sense of morality. However, human ideas have not fully been developed but still flourishing towards a higher perfection, and therefore our understanding of the human self is still in the making. Without resorting to any extreme position we see in the Plato's 'theory of idea' which focuses on the abstract values and in the naturalist or reductionist principle which focuses only on the physical experience following the natural science, Taylor attempts to incorporate both the abstract and the concrete world to understand the human self. Morality or good is, therefore, not always transcendental but immanent, and it gets manifested through the embodied world. Taylor, therefore, argues that, to realize the true self-identity, one has to pursue morality within the lived world.

Keywords: *Self Identity, Embodied Agent, Morality, Communal Narrative, Moral Framework*

1. Introduction: Taylor argues that morality has an objective existence and is the source of human identity. He believes that, unlike other animals, human beings are moral animals possessing an inherent sense of moral good and moral evaluation. He claims that the moral source, good, hypergood, moral evaluation and moral framework, where an essence of the self is embedded, are givens and not a mere mental construct. Therefore, a person is not a mere self devoid of good but a moral self found with other communal narratives within a moral framework. Being a moral realist who thinks the morals are givens, Taylor understands that the human agent by nature has a sense of moral evaluation on the competing goods and accordingly praises or condemns the acts of the doers. Hence, moral evaluation is one of the objective and essential features of human identity. In the moral evaluation, one good among the other competing goods in the particular framework is qualitatively most preferred which is called the hypergood. And human aspiring for the

hypergood is motivated by the moral source or constitutive good. Though this moral source finds with the self in the moral framework, it also transcends the self and the social narratives. Taylor argues that a moral framework is the moral landmark of human existence within which the moral agent is only capable of experiencing, articulating, choosing and qualitatively ordering the life goods. The self and the good are interwoven in the framework, because one cannot exclusively talk of the good without at the same time talk of the moral life and actions. However, apart from the life goods and moral evaluation, a moral framework is also constituted of human stories, cultures, language, social and political institutions. Hence, a moral framework itself is embedded in the human existence with a communal narrative and articulacy. Taylor argues that though humans are a conscious, evaluative and moral being- the qualities absent in other animals, they also share certain animal qualities such as sexual desire, feelings, emotions, etc. Human beings are therefore an embodied agent having a lived experience with other things in the world despite humans are goal oriented and free oriented beings transcending other nature.

2. Source of the Self: Taylor claims that the human existence itself as a moral being with an inherent capacity to experience, evaluate and interpret morality presupposes the objective existence of the moral source. Such moral reflection implies the moral source as real, transcendental and independent of the human subjective interpretation. This moral source is also called a constitutive good. It is a source of moral motivation and inspiration to the self in the pursuit of the life goods; generosity, courage, kindness, justice, equality, etc. In his work, *Sources of the Self*, Taylor views that a thing of higher standard requires a source outside of the thing itself but gives a quality of goodness to that thing; the life goods in this case (516, 122). The moral goods are therefore givens, and they have to be realized and interpreted based on their objective attributes irrespective of the cultural and the human subjective interpretation. The moral source therefore transcends the self, the life goods and the moral framework. Taylor places those objective goods in the higher realm separated from the other goods such as animal desires. He argues that, though many of us are not conscious of it, there are some qualities that are universally possessed by all the morally healthy human beings irrespective of the culture. And despite weaknesses and often look ourselves bad for our inability to practice some goods, our own moral intuition and evaluation admits that we consider those objective and transcendental values such as generosity, kindness, justice and equality more important and respected than those corporeal values such as animal desire for sex, food, survival etc (*Sources*, 20). Taylor is a moral pluralist without becoming a moral relativist, because the former makes a qualitative distinction or order of the goods, whereas the latter does not. He balances both theory and practice of the given morality as thinking and living presupposes each other. He is therefore open to objective and dialectical judgment and debate on the preferences and choices of good without subjecting ourselves to the subjective preferences of one good to another good. He believes that, in carrying out an objective moral evaluation, there will be a normative and transcendental command to our sense that we prefer those goods which are qualitatively higher in order to those goods which are animal desires (*Sources*, 4, 20). Independence of the good is, therefore, the basis in Taylor's approach to morality. Flanagan

views that Taylor's moral evaluation is both descriptive because it describes human nature, and normative because it prescripts a correct moral conduct to us (147). Taylor offers two human actions, one that carries out a medical relief work and the other that carries out sex trafficking or child pornography. He asserts that it is a common sense to every moral person that carrying out a medical relief work appeals to good more than engaging in sex trafficking, and this sense of good is objective, universal and instinctive to all the normal humans (*Sources*, 42). Taylor's moral evaluation itself affirms that the moral source or good precedes evaluation since evaluation is possible only because something exists prior to evaluation. This understanding therefore justifies the logical and ontological claim of the existence of the moral source (*Sources*, 99). Taylor expands the concept of morality by including that the agent should not only do the good as a command, but must also fall in love with the moral source (*Sources*, 93)

2.1. Moral Evaluation: Moral evaluation means a hierarchical ordering of the goods based on their properties such as justice, equality and kindness are better than the animal desire for sex, food, survival etc. Respecting human life is praised and murder is condemned by every member of the society. Taylor sees this universal fact of respecting life being translated into the language of 'right' in the western context (*Sources*, 11), and what we derived after carrying out a moral debate and evaluation speaks that such conviction is not one of adrenal reactions but one of human moral intuition (*Sources*, 7). In Taylor's realism, apart from the objective aspect, the self also has the subjective aspects that make humans to not just act but also to evaluate their actions. He accepts the fact of the importance of human subjective preference and interpretation of morality without negating the objective moral conviction. However, the subjective aspect of moral self-evaluation of the actions is always directed to a certain objective moral standard. Taylor argues that subjective preference and choice is a factual experience and it is sometimes influenced by the cultures. A particular good is not being treated or desired equally in all the cultures depending on the communal influence and narratives. In spite of this social influence in choosing the goods, there is still a universal acceptance that some goods are considered more desirable and valuable, because every moral person irrespective of culture feels an intuitive command from within that those goods are preferred in the human moral choice (*Sources*, 58, 68, 74). He also accepts some subjective aspects of morality, but it only means making the implicit property of morality explicit through human evaluation and interpretation (*Sources*, 342). Ruth Abbey also views that Taylor's subjective quality of morality is dependent on the interpretation and existence of the moral agent (29). The hierarchical order of good through moral evaluation gives the self a meaningful life and defines the identity of the moral self. However, a moral evaluation is not a force but more of an objective moral appeal. The agent identity is therefore not fixed as inherited from the past, but open to new interpretation based on the contextual change in the future. Taylor claims that, without the moral agent making a moral discrimination, the life of the human agent will remain unworthy and unexplained because a self-evaluated life is one of the essential features of human identity as it provides an answer to the question of who and what am I as a moral self (*Sources*, 28, 34, 87).

2.2. Hypergood: Taylor argues that there are many goods in the particular given framework. In each moral framework, one good, by virtue of its objective quality, will surpass all the other goods and that good is called a hypergood. Just as there are many goods and moral frameworks, he also believes in the plurality of hypergood. Different moral frameworks, therefore, have different hypergoods. Taylor claims that hypergood influences, regulates or orders and sustains other goods in the given moral framework. It is the hypergood that defines and bears the whole structure and meaning of that framework. Hypergood comes to the central picture and acts as a driving force and prerequisite in defining who the moral agent is (*Sources*, 63). Hypergood is independent in nature and therefore not subject to the subjective interpretation of the self. However, when the moral agent pursues the good, he is guided by the existing social narratives of that particular moral framework. Good, therefore, has to be achieved and made explicit as a communal narrative in the form of culture, language and belief. Irrespective of the differences, every society has a sense of morality, and the members of that society always have a natural tendency to aspire for the highest good among the many competing goods existing in the framework. One good surpassing other goods in the given framework is neither eliminating nor completely suppressing other goods, but a dynamic ordering of goods based on their quality which is changeable following the different context. By making the process dynamic and not static, Taylor tries to restore a moral source that has been lost out in the modern moral philosophy by focusing on one single good as the only good, which is self-happiness (*Sources*, 520). By employing the idea of hypergood, Taylor tries to embrace the diversity of goods so that history and culture have not been ruled out from his moral philosophy as they are the indispensible parts of human existence. Also, by employing the idea of a dynamic order of goods without any epistemological fixed setting, it offers the moral agent a chance to re-evaluate his moral position and actualize closer towards the highest good or meaningful life which in turn gives a true identity to the self.

2.3. Moral Framework: A moral framework is the moral landmark within which the moral self pursues the life goods and makes moral choice and evaluation. Moral framework is constituted of the life goods, constitutive good, hypergood and other social elements such as culture, language, social stories and institution. Just as the physical space with different contents in space to space, moral space also has many moral frameworks with social elements and various qualitatively ordered goods as the constituents. Taylor argues that we can experience, motivate, articulate, evaluate, define and be conscious of ourselves only within the parameter of the moral framework, whether or not these activities are quite visible or mild to some of us in terms of consciousness. And any attempt of searching our identity outside this framework would result to a moral disaster (*Sources*, 27-28). The moral framework ontologically transcends the self even though the self and the moral framework are interwoven in the lived world. Different from Foucault who thinks the goods are not ontologically good but created by the powerful elites, Taylor's goods are ontological, and despite being influenced often by our parents and society in our moral choice, one can, through moral evaluation, still shift from one framework to another or one good to another good based on objective articulation and interpretation of the new and discovered

framework (*Sources*, 17-18). Hence, the moral framework of Taylor is dynamic and open to an objective dialectical debate. Taylor cannot be accused of being a nihilist or relativist for the employment of dynamic framework and self-interpretation because his ultimate moral claim rests in a true self to be defined in terms of the objective articulation and order of the good (*Sources*, 99). It is true even from the common sense that any ideal concept cannot be discussed alone without being connected to the lived objects. Taylor therefore claims that whenever we talk about the good or the moral framework, we naturally have to talk about the human existence as a moral agent (*Sources*, 42).

2.4. Communal Narratives: Taylor argues that humans are not only a moral being but also a language being. He broadens the concept of framework to include other fellow social members, culture, language and communal narrative along with the life goods. Just as the moral framework, communal narrative is one of the dimensions of the self. It is simply not practical to define oneself without having any interaction with the Other-families and friends- and communal narratives. One can develop and realize one's identity only by involving oneself in the social webs of communication. The self alone cannot understand what morality is. It is the dynamic and reflective community that manifests, nutures and cherishes the goods. The narrative of the self is embedded in the narrative of the community and vice versa. Taylor argues that I can only be in the position to define myself by virtue of my spiritual and physical relation with my families or loved ones and community with whom I also realize my social and moral status, my identity, depending on the existing social narrative (*Sources*, 35). Hence, one understanding of the self is always found within a culture and language which is open to change and progress. The culture of modernity too is, therefore, a gradual development from the past culture when human understanding and thinking progresses forward. The bad culture such as slavery will be condemned and stopped to practice as human moral evaluation progresses. Taylor also argues that the language used in the human science is not as neutral and objective as the language used in the natural science (*Sources*, 59; *Gadamer and the Human Science*, 280). He further argues that self is interpreted through language and the language exists only in the community. The diversity of culture of different communities interprets the self depending on the existing narratives of that community. Narrative structures one's identity. One is self only in reference to other selves, communal narratives and the surroundings (*Sources*, 35).

3. Understanding the Human Agency: Understanding our own self is to understand our moral existence, and the moral problems associated with our existence. Taylor argues that to be a self or agent means to be one who is goal oriented, and who pursues and attains the goal. The agent should be aware of himself and his actions, desires, aversion, choices, aspiration, feelings, etc. To be the agent is to constantly search for significance and meaning of life. The agent should look into his inner world, his real human nature of being embedded in the lived world, his moral space, individuality, freedom and responsibility that follows (*The Person*, 257-262). He, however, rejects any universal definition of what is to be a self because human beings are a self-interpreting being, and the agent with the inherent power of self-evaluation can achieve moral good. According to Taylor, there are two kinds of our

desire: the order desire and the second order desire. The first order desire is a weak evaluation and the second order desire is a strong evaluation. The first order desire relates to our ordinary human desire such as choice of food items and choice of place to visit which are immediate and need no serious moral reflection. The second order desire relates to questioning our moral justification as to why one prefers this thing to another thing; why one chooses this action or goal over another. Taylor borrows the idea of two kinds of desire from Harry Frankfurt's second order desire or strong evaluation of the person (15-20). Taylor means the second order desire in the search for agent's meaning of life and identity as it appeals us to evaluate our decision or preference based on the qualitative nature of the object, and he maintains that utilitarianism follows the first order desire. In his work, *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1*, Taylor argues that self-evaluation of the action comes with responsibility of the agent. Strong evaluation and responsibility of the agent are inherently connected since, in the process of evaluation, there involves the use of personal freedom and inner wisdom that makes life worth living (28-33). He emphasizes on the strong evaluation and responsibility of the agent to have a deeper understanding of the agent because it is the strong evaluation that defines the self by distinguishing humans as an evaluative being which is absent in other animals. Taylor writes: "Our identity is therefore defined by certain evaluations which are inseparable from ourselves as agents" (*Human Agency*, 34). He claims that his writing is not epistemological, but rather metaphysical, anthropological and ontological. Therefore, his explanation of the human nature as a moral agent is more than a neutral and impartial description as done in the natural science. Taylor's understanding of the human science is based on good faith, honest, bold and self-authentic reflection (*Human Agency*, 29-33). Human as a self-evaluator being presupposes human as a self-interpreting being.

3.1. A Self-Interpreting Agent: Taylor gives importance to the reality of human existence as the embodied beings in the world with the capacity to interpret themselves depending on their fields of perception. Interpreting oneself according to one experiences his existence is therefore one of the essential features of human identity (*Human Agency*, 3). In other words, self-interpretation constitutes the nature of human being. Unlike other animals, human self-interpretation is a complex structure in human existence, and it is not as clear and objective as the natural science interprets nature. Taylor is against of the reductionist and naturalist position mainly influenced by the Cartesian dualism that tries to explain human existence based on the method of neutrality and objectivity used in the natural science. Therefore, any attempt to explain the human agent based on the natural science is incoherent and impossible. Taylor argues that the subject-referring properties such as human emotions, desire, motivation, inspiration, feelings, moral obligation, fulfillment, shame and realization of mistake describe the human agent (*Human Agency*, 54, 60). All these human qualities cannot be put into reflection without language. Our sense of dignity, moral remorse and shame and other feelings are interpreted through language. Taylor writes: "we are language animals, we are stuck with language, as it were" (*Human Agency*, 72). Human self-interpretation affirms and sustains his subjective nature without reducing the self to a mere object of research. Taylor views that interpretation incorporates our motivation, emotions,

moral thought and values to the human agent, and humans interpreting themmselves is not a luxury but an essential part of human existence to the fullest (*Human Agency*, 65, 75).

3.2. An Embodied Agent: Human being as an embodied agent is not the original idea of Taylor. He borrows it from phenomenological thinkers like Meraleu-Ponty and Heidegger. Humans are embodied beings because the subject's experiences and thoughts are always embodied in the world. It means that, in all respects, the human nature as an embodied subject is related to the world. Perception is the fundamental feature of the embodied subject. The subject perceives the world in his station and with his sense organs. The subject's senses and the background or spatial-temporal dimensions such as 'up and down' and 'back and forth' are the preconditions for perception. Perception is an experience of the embodied aged who is engaged with the world. And the perception of the embodied agent always takes place against the perceptual field or background. The background exists only for the subject to perceive or experience (Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 24). It is the background that structures the perception of the subject. However, what the subject really perceives in the perceptual field is the potential activities the subject could have and not the field itself. The perceptual field itself is nothing without providing potential activities to the perceiver. The perceptual fields therefore open the subject to the world of experience and interpretation. However, the agent sees the world as the way he experiences it, and knows nothing of the thing in itself which Taylor leaves a room for a transcendental world. Taylor therefore claims that our sense of ourselves as an embodied agent itself is a constitutive of our experience (*Philosophical Arguments*, 25). In other words, our experiences are constituted by our sense of ourselves as an embodied agent. Our thoughts and experiences are the thoughts and experiences of the embodied agent, and without this sense we cannot even be a subject or exercise our subjectivity or aware of the world (*Sources*, 14). Agents' embodiment makes us understand our own human nature. Therefore, agent's embodiment and self-understanding are deeply interwoven. We can define and interpret our own existence because we are an embodied agent. Taylor's embodied world is opposed to a mechanistic world of reductionism that makes a distinction between the subject and object.

3.3. **A Self Beyond Naturalism:** Taylor views that the nature of human self or agency cannot be adequately explained within the framework of naturalism because human nature is much more complicated and mysterious than the other ordinary things in the world, and therefore cannot be explained through the principle of neutrality and objectivity used in the natural science. In his work, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2*, Taylor claims that naturalism explains the human agent based on the principle of natural science without making any distinction between man and nature (2). It tries to explain human nature like the qualities of other material objects undermining the human subjective properties such as a sense of moral values, evaluation, reflection, interpretation, motivation, feelings and emotions. He claims that the framework of naturalism is not broad enough to accommodate those human subjective qualities. Human existence with those subjective qualities itself is a mystery and we cannot even truly and fully understand who we are as a person. The framework to define the human agent is much broader than the framework of

naturalism. One may argue that those subjective qualities are explicitly part of culture and civilization, but Taylor claims that they are but not seen separately from the agent and they are incorporated by the agent into his self-understanding. According to Taylor, another is the intellectualist or reductionist (Cartesian) view that considers human consciousness as the only and real representation of the world, and objectifying the material things as neutral and are always available to serve the ends of the self (*Human Agency*, 104), however this view only gives an incomplete account of the human self (*Human Agency*, 103) Taylor claims that both intellectualism and naturalism are common on three things: disengagement from the world, objectification of the world and freedom of the self. Disengagement means disenchantment of the self from the world and objectification of the world means making the objects in the world to serve the interest or ends of the self. Taylor, therefore, thinks that disengagement and objectification give the self a freedom (*Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, 5). Taylor's world is an embodied world which is not exclusive as we see in naturalism and intellectualism. However, he does not completely reject them. Taylor argues that naturalist and intellectualist idea of disenchantment and objectification have attracted the minds of the moderns (*Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, 4). The modern agents have transferred the naturalist and intellectualist or reductionist epistemology to social or human sciences such as economics, polity, psychology, socio-anthropology, etc. The modern economic activity of production and supply is now solely based on the material interest and well-being of the economic agents with no concern for nature (*Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, 92). The modern concept of political rights and liberty has now become a natural right of the political agents. Disenchantment of the agent and objectification of the things have also shared the religious aspiration especially the Judeo-Christian values of spiritual transcendence. Taylor views that these phenomena explain how everything orbits around the centre of the human agent. Humans have been made superior and primacy over everything and placed at the centre of the universe (*Human Agency*, 104-105). Humans are no longer in the chain of cosmic order like other things in the world which we see in the Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics. This concerns Taylor because he sees displacement of the self from moral domain in the quest of his authenticity and identity. Taylor is clearly not against of the desperate search for spiritual freedom, authenticity and meaningful life by the moderns because it is the new version of the traditional aspiration for spiritual freedom (*Human Agency*, 112-113). Taylor does not want to completely oppose the naturalist and reductionist aspiration for spiritual liberation, but what he is against is only the methods or approach adopted by the moderns in their search for a true, authentic and free self by abandoning moral source external to the self (*Human Agency*, 113) which is but a source of our motivation and inspiration in the self-actualization towards the higher good or ends of life. Humans never get satisfied with his present state of affairs but are always wanting for improvement and change for good or worse. This phenomenon therefore transcends naturalism. This is the reality of human existence. Humans will always try to venture beyond the limit of his reason which Kant calls landing up on faith. Taylor, therefore, sees the similar spiritual desperation in the lives of moderns who adopted naturalism and reductionism as a means to free themselves from any external force or authority in search of

the real self. Taylor's moral philosophy opens the possibilities to better understand and realize the aspiration of the self which is but realizing the true identity of the self as an embodied agent in the world. Freedom defines the self, and the self attains real spiritual freedom by accepting morality as the framework.

4. **Conclusion:** As a moral realist, Taylor defends and explains the absolute reality of the moral source by introducing the life goods, hypergoods, constitutive good and moral framework which all and ultimately refer back to the moral source. In relation to the moral framework, the moral source is transcendental and the hypergood is immanent. He shows the necessity of the moral framework in the moral agent's actualization towards a moral perfection which will then define the identity of the moral agent. Taylor being attracted to the phenomenology or embodiment of Heidegger and Ponty, the perceptual field or background of the embodied agent's experience which includes the moral framework and culture as the constituents is very important to understand the human existence as the moral self. He sees human as a moral agent inherently embedded in the world, therefore, the self is neither disengaging from the world by becoming a pure subject nor objectifying the non-human agents by considering them as the mere and neutral objects meaning to serve the ends of the human agent. Taylor accepts the reality of the objective existence of the world without denying the reality of the existence of the objective and transcendental source, a source which is moral and good, that causes all existence. And human being realizes his true self or identity by taking part in the embodied world.

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CLASSICAL BUDDHISM, NEO-BUDDHISM AND THE QUESTION OF CASTE

Edited by
Pradeep P. Gokhale

CLASSICAL BUDDHISM, NEO-BUDDHISM AND THE QUESTION OF CASTE

This book examines the interface between Buddhism and the caste system in India. It discusses how Buddhism in different stages, from its early period to contemporary forms—Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Tantrayāna and Navayāna—dealt with the question of caste. It also traces the intersections between the problem of caste with those of class and gender. The volume reflects on the interaction between Hinduism and Buddhism: it looks at critiques of caste in the classical Buddhist tradition while simultaneously drawing attention to the radical challenge posed by Dr B. R. Ambedkar's Navayāna Buddhism or neo-Buddhism. The essays in the book further compare approaches to varṇa and caste developed by modern thinkers such as M. K. Gandhi and S. Radhakrishnan with Ambedkar's criticisms and his departures from mainstream appraisals.

   With its interdisciplinary methodology, combining insights from literature, philosophy, political science and sociology, the volume explores contemporary critiques of caste from the perspective of Buddhism and its historical context. By analyzing religion through the lens of caste and gender, it also forays into the complex relationship between religion and politics, while offering a rigorous study of the textual tradition of Buddhism in India. This book will be useful to scholars and researchers of Indian philosophy, Buddhist studies, Indology, literature (especially Sanskrit and Pāli), exclusion and discrimination studies, history, political studies, women studies, sociology, and South Asian studies.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Many terms and expressions in Sanskrit and Pāli are used in the Introduction and Chapters 1–5 and 8, as well as in Appendices I and II. Sanskrit and Pāli expressions are presented in Roman script with diacritical marks. The following table can be used for reading Romanized Sanskrit or Pāli expressions:

Aids to Reading Romanised Sanskrit or Pāli

Roman letters (with diacritical marks) standing for Devanāgarī letters

Romanisation	Devanāgarī	Romanisation	Devanāgarī	Romanisation	Devanāgarī
A, a	अ	Ḥ, ḥ	ः	P, p	प
Ā, ā	आ	I, i	इ	Ph, ph	फ
Ai, ai	ऐ	Ī, ī	ई	R, r	र
Au, au	औ	J, j	ज	Ṛ, ṛ	ऋ
B, b	ब	Jh, jh	झ	Ṝ, ṝ	ॠ
Bh, bh	भ	K, k	क	S, s	स
C, c	च	Kh, kh	ख	Ś, ś	श
Ch, ch	छ	L, l	ल	Ṣ, ṣ	ष
D, d	द	ḻ	ळ	T, t	त
Dh, dh	ध	M, m	म	Th, th	थ
ḍ	ड	M, ṃ	ं	ṭ	ट
ḍh	ढ	N, n	न	ṭh	ठ
E, e	ए	Ṅ, ṅ	ङ	U, u	उ
G, g	ग	Ṇ, ṇ	ण	Ū ū	ऊ
Gh, gh	घ	Ñ, ñ	ञ	V, v	व
H, h	ह	O, o	ओ	Y, y	य

In other chapters, words such as the following are used without diacritical marks and are spelt differently: varna, jati, brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya, shudra, atishudra and chandala.

Sanskrit and Pāli words and quotations are generally italicised except in the following cases:

1   Proper names of persons (e.g., Śaṅkara, Dharmakīrti), religious cults (e.g., Theravāda, Mahāyāna) and philosophical systems (e.g., Sāṅkhya, Yogācāra) are not italicised.
2   The following words are not italicised in this book because of their frequent usage: varṇa, brāhmaṇa, kṣtriya, vaiśya, śūdra, atiśūdra and caṇḍāla

FOREWORD

Caste in classical and contemporary Buddhism

Gail Omvedt

Classical Buddhism

In classical Buddhism there is a fairly clear denial of caste. We can give one example from the *Sutta Nipāta*, in *Sutta 9*, on "What is a brahmin?" It starts when two young brahmins, Vasettha and Bharadvaja, were having a dispute over what makes a brahmin—was it purity of descent for seven generations on both sides, as Bharadvaja contended, or virtue and moral conduct, as Vasettha said?

   The Buddha responds by saying that "diverse breeds" exist among grass, tress, insects, various creatures and birds, but among "men alone" this is not true.

> They differ not in hair, head, ears, or eyes,
> in mouth or nostrils, not in eyebrows, lips,
> throat, shoulders, belly, buttocks, back, or chest,
> nor in the parts of shame, female or male,
> nor yet in hands or feet, in fingers, nails,
> in calves or thighs; in hue, or sound of voice; –
> naught shows men stamped by nature diverse breeds.
>
> <div align="right">(606–10)</div>

He then goes on to say that a person is what he/she does.

> "The man that lives by keeping herds of cows –
> know him as farmer, not as Brahmin true.
> The man that lives by diverse handicrafts –
> know him as tradesman, not as Brahmin true.
> The man that lives by selling merchandise –
> know him as merchant, not as Brahmin true.
>
> <div align="right">(613–6)</div>

And so on: the man living by arms is a soldier, the man living by sacrificial rites is a priest, the man supported by realms is a monarch. "Not birth,

nor parentage a Brahmin makes….True Brahmin call I him, who shackle-free, by bonds and ties untroubled, lives his life" (621). Gotama goes on to describe almost lyrically the nonviolence, calmness, gentleness, lack of lustfulness of the brahmin, who is free from sorrow, has no longings left, has "passed away" and will face no further rebirth: the brahmin is the true Arahat. The Sutta ends with both Bharadvaja and Vasettha asking to become disciples.

This text shows the classical Buddhist strategy towards Brahmanism—redefine it. Accept the superiority of brahmins, but define them so that whoever shows such traits is a "brahmin"; the criterion of birth is removed. As a strategy, it was long lasting but in the end seems to have been ineffective. Brahmins kept their superiority and the "birth brahmin" remained the archetype.

The other classical text of Buddhist anti-caste sentiment is the *Vajrasūci* of Ashvaghosh. This also focused on the theme of "what is a brahmin?" It was scornful about brahmins in many ways, and rejects the idea that brahmin-hood comes through birth or knowledge. It denies the claim that the only duty of shudras is to serve brahmins. Instead, avoidance of sin, purity of life is what makes a brahmin. Birth is not the cause of brahmin-hood; people born of different castes like Vyasa and Vasishtha have become brahmins. There are no basic distinctions among human beings; there is only one caste, not four (Brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya, shudra). "The caste is not seen. It is good qualities that are the source of good. It is he whose life is for the Law, whose life is for others, who practices tolerance day and night, is recognized as brahmin by the gods…..Nonviolence, selflessness, abstinence from actions that are not approved, and detachment from lust and hatred are the characteristics of a brahmin" (45–7).

The *Vajrasūci* survived through the ages; there is a story that Tukaram, the great Marathi saint-poet of the 17th century, asked his disciple Bahenabai to translate it into Marathi, which she did. Regarding Bahenabai's *Vajrasuci*, the following comments can be made (references are to Abbott 1985):

Bahenabai's *Vajrasūci* is also centred on the theme of "What makes a brahmin?" However, it is prefaced by several stanzas on the superiority of brahmin, which were not seen in the original. Then she asks, "But who in reality is to be called a brahmin?" Birth does not determine brahmin-hood, neither does bodily form, nor colour, nor caste. Mere learning does not count, nor do "mere duties," nor "religious duties" (413–20, p. 126–9). Then she goes into the familiar themes that a brahmin is freed from illusion, grief, hunger, thirst, decay and death. Here there is something very Brahmanical in Bahenabai's version. "One who knows Brahma is called a Brāhmaṇa," who has experienced "Brahma," "made one the individual and the universal soul" (435, p. 134). But this is contrary to Buddhism, which holds to *anattā*, the denial of the "*ātman*." We should conclude that if the

original *Vajrasūci* survived, it was heavily contaminated by Brahmanical ideas by the time of Bahenabai! This can be considered a paradigm for the "survival" of Buddhism in India—co-opted by Brahmanism, transformed and distorted.

Contemporary Buddhism

A new era of contemporary Buddhism begins with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. "Classical" Buddhism of course still exists in most countries with large Buddhist populations. But in India, where Buddhism had almost completely disappeared, it was revived but in a new form with Ambedkar's "Navayana" Buddhism.

Navayana gave a new meaning to Buddhism. In his introduction to *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar makes it clear that he rejects four crucial elements of classical Buddhism. One is the idea of *sabbam dukkham*, "all is sorrow." "If this is true there is no way out." In fact, Buddhism does not really say that "all is sorrow," only that there is *dukkha,* and it can be overcome. Second, he rejects the notion of *karma* and transmigration or rebirth; he prefers to reinterpret *karma* to have the meaning of social causation and also perhaps genetical inheritance (in this he follows the earlier re-interpreter and reviver of Buddhism, Pandit Iyothee Thass). Third, he refutes the idea that Buddha renounced the world after seeing an old man, a sick man and a dead man, instead arguing that he was trying to avoid a conflict over water between the Koliya and Śākya clans. Finally, he rejects the notion of the Sangha as a society of world renouncers; he would prefer to have it as a kind of social service league.

This leads to the development of a rationalistic, even "materialistic," form of Buddhism. Contemporary Buddhism, Ambedkar's Navayana Buddhism, is resolutely anti-caste. His theme is the annihilation of caste; he does not want simply to analyse it but to destroy it. Caste, according to Ambedkar, is the bane of Indian society: it erects barriers between human beings, weakens solidarity and any ability to resist oppression; it is anti-national. Destroying caste must be done, first of all, by attacking its foundations—and these, Ambedkar believed, were found in Brahminic Hinduism. Thus destruction and renunciation of the sacred scriptures was a crucial task. Just as the Buddhist revolution and the revolution led by Guru Nanak had made possible political revolutions, so too a new anti-caste revolution must be found in the renunciation of Brahmanical Hinduism. Intermarriage was a factor, but it would follow most naturally on this foundation of a profound moral transformation.

He believed that Buddhism was, generally speaking, a materialistic philosophy; he saw it as helpful to abolition of exploitation. Conflicts today are because of caste and capitalist exploitation. In *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* he stressed a profound ongoing conflict between Brahmanism

and Buddhism. He did not deal with the philosophy developed by later Buddhist scholars like Ashvaghosha. This is because contemporary neo-Buddhists are oriented in diverse directions such as meditation and philosophies for achieving nirvana. There are also differences among them regarding what Buddhist ideology means in practice. Thus, there is no foundation from what Babasaheb said; he did not have time to do this. Thus there is a great confusion in contemporary Navayana Buddhists in regard to the ideological aspects of Buddhism and practices to be followed. Babasaheb did not give concrete alternatives for the life ceremonies of birth, marriage, etc. Hence, for example, Buddhist marriages occurred on an ad hoc basis.

Annihilation of caste, then, was Babasaheb's goal. This also implies its possibility. The fact that caste can be overcome is founded in the historical reality that caste in India is not eternal nor even all that long lasting. Through all the millennia that Buddhism was hegemonic, the caste system was not a social reality in India. Instead, social organization was based on gahapatis, gaṇa sanghas, dāsa-kammakaras and so forth. True, the *Manusmriti* and *Arthashastra* were written during this period. But these were not descriptions of society; rather, they were prescriptions of what their Brahmanical authors saw as an ideal society. Caste itself was only firmly established at the social level after the defeat of Buddhism around the 6th century. After that, gradually the *jajmani* system came into existence and village-level social organization was solidified. But this makes caste, relatively, a recent historical phenomenon. Its different forms during modern times notwithstanding, it remains a strong factor.

Thus, the annihilation of caste is a real historical possibility, one that becomes more telling during our time. It requires, as Babasaheb emphasized in his *Annihilation of Caste*, a rejection of the Brahmanic Hindu scriptures; intermarriage taking place also helps weaken caste. Once we break the link between caste and occupation, caste is further weakened.

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Transcending caste identity and becoming a true human being has been the aspiration that has guided my life. This led to my participation in anti-caste and inter-caste activities in association with friends like Vilas Wagh, Tej Nivalikar, Pandit Vidyasagar, Sanjay Pawar and many others. On a personal note I should also mention Nandini, who, by marrying me, helped me become "inter-caste." These activities also had an intellectual dimension, which led to my interaction with Com. Sharad Patil, whose whole intellectual and socio-political life was aimed at abolishing varṇa, caste, class and subordination of women. In the early phase of his intellectual pursuits, Com. Patil called his position "Marx-Phule-Ambedkarism"; in the later phase he called it "Sautrāntika-Marxism." Both these phases were inspiring to me, though I differed with him on some points. All this is the background of my humble efforts of organising the above-mentioned seminar and editing this anthology.

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Pradeep P. Gokhale

INTRODUCTION

Pradeep P. Gokhale[1]

It is generally admitted that Hindu society is "essentially" characterised by the stratification of its members on the basis of caste identification. There are hundreds of castes that are broadly grouped into five categories: the four varṇas, namely brāhmaṇa (priests), kṣatriya (warriors), vaiśya (farmers and business-persons) and śūdra (manual workers and scavengers), and atiśūdra (outcastes). The fifth class of atiśūdra was not given official status in the system of varṇas, and hence it was called the system of four varṇas (Cāturvarṇya). The division of Hindu society into the four varṇas gives a broad, rather simplistic formal framework, the contents of which were filled by hundreds of castes in reality. All these varṇas and castes played their role in the working of Hindu society.[2]

The varṇa-caste system was a system of distributing occupations among different strata of traditional society. It was a productive system because each caste was associated with some occupation related to maintaining traditional society. But the system also carried with it certain elements that rendered it an unjust, irrational and exploitative system. Some of these elements were as follows:

1 The varṇa-caste system divides society into groups of families. Such a society does not experience solidarity.
2 The varṇa-caste system creates a hierarchical division in which brāhmaṇas are at the top, while the atiśūdras such as caṇḍālas are at the bottom. Each intermediate varṇa/caste is inferior to some and superior to others. This inequality is supposed to be inborn and inviolable. Hence the principle of equality of humans qua humans is violated.[3]
3 The inequality among varṇas/castes is associated with the particular occupations assigned to them. There are prohibitions on leaving the occupation assigned to one's caste and adopting someone else's occupation, particularly that of a higher caste. Occupations were also ordered in terms of purity and impurity and respectability and otherwise. Hence certain castes were permanently condemned as impure and despicable, and certain castes were permanently honoured as pure

1

and respectable. The extreme purity and impurity attached to some castes led to the practice of untouchability, which is a great social evil. Untouchability was observed at two levels. Brahmins were untouchable to the "lower" castes for the former's alleged extreme purity. Śūdras and atiśūdras were untouchable to the "higher" castes for their alleged extreme impurity.

4   The varṇa-caste system puts restrictions on free association between members of different castes. Persons from lower caste positions were not even allowed to share seats in public places with those who occupied higher caste status. There was no permission to socialise, in either formal or informal ways, across caste hierarchy. Further, those from the lower tiers were not allowed to speak Sanskrit, as it was the prerogative of the higher castes. These restrictions were partly governed by ideas of purity and impurity that were highly irrational.

5   A basic form of prohibition on inter-caste association was that of inter-caste marriages. A general rule of marriage made by *Dharmaśāstra* was that one should marry within one's own varṇa and caste. Those who married outside the caste could not enjoy a respectable status in their own caste. Moreover, their children had to face serious social disadvantages. A child born from an inter-caste marriage was deprived of the caste status of both its father and mother. The situation was made more complicated and severe due to patriarchy. If in an inter-caste marriage the groom belonged to the higher caste, it was a lesser evil than if it were the other way around. The former type of marriage was called *anuloma* (along the stream) because it did not hamper the superiority of man, while the latter type was called *pratiloma* (against the stream) because it challenged the superiority of man. So the child born from *anuloma* marriage enjoyed an intermediate caste status, but the child born from *pratiloma* marriage was assigned a caste lower than that of both mother and father.

6   The so-called higher varṇas/castes were granted the possession of all types of wealth and powers.[4] The so-called lower varṇas/castes, particularly śūdras and atiśūdras, were supposedly born to serve other varṇas/castes and were deprived of possession of wealth and powers.[5] This led to different types of exploitation of the lower varṇas/castes by the upper varṇas/castes. This is how the system becomes essentially exploitative.

In spite of being an unjust and exploitative system, the varṇa-caste system was not felt to be so. This was for many reasons. One reason was that the inequality involved in the varṇa-caste system was not inequality pure and simple, but was what Ambedkar aptly described as "graded inequality."[6] Every caste fit somewhere in the scale of inequality such that even someone in a "lower" caste was superior to someone else in some respects (except

the supposed "lowest" caste, namely the Caṇḍāla). Every caste has been associated with its distinctive customs, deities, forms of worship and lifestyle. Hence members, instead of feeling humiliated and isolated, take pride in their caste identities. Caste identity gives a certain status and stability to the members of the respective caste, insofar as they do not violate the rules imposed on the castes. Hence the traditional-minded members of Hindu society are not ready to leave their caste identity even if it is graded as "low." They believe that the caste identity is an inalienable part of their own identity. The rigidity of this is captured in the Marathi proverb, "*Jee jaat naahee tee jaat,*" translated as, "Caste is that which does not go."

The Hindu mind is closely attached to the caste system also because the latter has been justified in the religious faith of Hindus, particularly the faith in God and karma. The *Puruṣasūkta* of *Ṛgveda* describes the four varṇas as originating from different limbs of the grand Puruṣa (the Lord). The *Manusmṛti* associated the higher and lower status of varṇas with the higher and lower limbs of the Lord from which the respective varṇas originated and also with the order in which they were produced. Hence, in this view, the Brāhmaṇa caste is the highest because it is born from the uppermost part of the Lord's body and because it was born first (MS 1.92–3). The Śūdra caste is regarded as the lowest because it originated from the lowest part of the Lord's body and at the very end.[7] The divine origination of the unequal order of castes became a deep-rooted faith of the Hindus. This faith, because of its irrational character, was the target of the critical arguments made by rational- and egalitarian-minded Buddhists and other reformers.

The *Bhagavadgītā* too advocates the divine origin of the four varṇa system. There, Lord Krishna says that he created the system of four varṇas according to the division of qualities and actions.[8] This means that he created a system according to which a person born in a particular varṇa is naturally endowed with certain qualities (*guṇa*) suitable for the actions assigned to that specific varṇa. (It does not mean as is supposed sometimes, that humans are free to determine varṇas of individuals according to qualities and actions.) The term *guṇa* here could mean strands of Prakṛti as the Sāñkhya system understands it, and the term karma could mean the actions performed in past lives. In this sense brāhmaṇas are supposed to be born with *sattvaguṇa*, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas with *rajoguṇa* and śūdras with *tamoguṇa* as a result of their past karma.[9] Through this, Krishna in the *Gītā* introduces the notion of *sahaja-karma* (the action that gets assigned to one with one's birth) and says,

"Oh the son of Kuntī, one should not leave an action assigned by birth, even if it is defective. All activities are in fact surrounded by defects, like fire surrounded by smoke."[10]

The action assigned by birth is also supposed to be determined by one's essential nature (*svabhāva-niyataṁ karma*[11]). The idea that one's nature

that is suitable for varṇa-specific actions is determined by birth is neither rationally nor historically acceptable. But this is a deep-rooted belief, often given in support of the birth-based varṇa-caste system.

The other religious faith given in support of this system is the doctrine of karma. The point may be made as follows: If God is the creator of the system of the four varṇas, then he can be blamed for being the creator of an unequal, unjust social order. This would imply that God is an evil-doer. To get rid of this problematic suggestion, Indian theists claim that caste-based inequalities are not caused by God, but by the actions performed by individuals in their past lives.[12] Hence, the unequal social order, which is apparently unjust and exploitative, becomes regarded as a just order because one's birth in a particular caste—which determines status in society— is regarded as the result of one's own past action. The doctrine of karma was in fact regarded as the stronger justification of the varṇa-caste order as it was accepted by the theist as well as atheist Brahmanical systems. Hierarchical social order is maintained through the mechanism of karma according to an orthodox Hindu, whether or not he or she believes in God. Birth in a particular varṇa was regarded as a "*gati*" (the species-status in which one is born) and the hierarchical order of the *gatis* was determined by using the parameters of the *Sāṅkhya* categories, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Hence, we find the *Manusmṛti* suggesting a scale of nine categories, consisting of three major categories (Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa), each of which are further divided in to three subcategories: highest, middle and lowest.

If we designate the three major categories as S, R and T and the subcategories as 1, 2 and 3, then Manu's categorisation of different "species" including the varṇas can be given in tabular form as shown in Table 1.[13]

According to Manu's categorisation, the species-status of brāhmaṇas is S3 (lowest in Sāttvika category, but at par with ascetics, hermits, celestial troops, constellations and *daityas*[14]). The species status of śūdras on the other hand is T2 (the middle of the Tāmasa category, which is on par with animals, beasts, despicable persons and *mlecchas*). The status of kṣatriyas is R2 or the middle of the Rājasa category. Vaiśyas are missing in this categorisation, which could be Manu's oversight. But we can imagine that the species status of the vaiśyas must be T1 or R3. Each of these is a "*gati*," or a position determined by past karma.

One claimed defence of the Brahmanical view of caste is that the latter does not support the superiority of brāhmaṇas purely on the basis of birth: If a person born as a brāhmaṇa does not perform the ascribed duties and maintain moral character, then he or she is only a "brāhmaṇa by birth" and not a real brāhmaṇa. A twofold answer can be given to this defence. One, there are statements available in *Dharmaśāstra* literature which say that a brāhmaṇa becomes superior to others by his birth itself.[15] Second, even if a person born brāhmaṇa is expected to perform

Table 1 Species status determined by past karma

The species-status (gati) determined by birth	*Species born with the respective status*
S1	Brahmā, Dharma of the creator, *Mahat* and *Avyakta* (*Prakṛti*)
S2	Brāhmaṇas who perform sacrifice, sages, gods, the Vedas, stars, years, ancestors and *sādhya*-deities
S3	Ascetics, hermits, **brāhmaṇas**, celestial troops, constellations and *daityas*
R1	Semi-gods like Gandharva, *guhyaka*, *yakṣa*, attendants of Gods and the celestial damsels
R2	Kings, **kṣatriyas**, royal priests and professional debaters
R3	Jhalla, Malla (mixed castes lower than kṣatriya), actors, weapon-sellers, gamblers and drunkards
T1	Wanderers (*cāraṇa*), eagles (*suparṇa*), hypocrites, demons (*rakṣas*) and ghosts
T2	Elephants, horses, **śūdras**, *mlecchas*, despicable persons, lions, tigers and pigs
T3	Plants, germs, insects, fish, reptiles, tortoises, (other) animals and beasts

Source: Manusmṛti, 12.42–50.

the requisite duties (rendering his birth insufficient), birth still remains generally regarded as a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for being a true brāhmaṇa.[16]

Hence Hindu society—variously called Vedic, orthodox, Brahmanical and so on—advocated the hierarchical varṇa-caste system, supposedly created by God, based on birth and regulated by the past karma of the respective beings. Non-Vedic strands in Indian society were critical of caste-based division of society from the beginning. Hence, we find critical arguments against varṇa and caste among the three non-Vedic philosophical traditions: Lokāyata, Jainism and Buddhism. Lokāyata is opposed to caste because it accepts neither God nor karma. It is strongly critical of Brahmanical ritualism. But its criticism of caste is rather sketchy. The other two non-Vedic traditions, Jainism and Buddhism, are opposed to caste discrimination partly on similar grounds. Both are atheistic systems and hence oppose the divine origin explanation of the varṇa-caste system. Both are critical of birth-based discrimination and support the idea of superiority or inferiority based on actions and moral character. Both reject *Brāhmaṇatva-jāti* as an ontological entity.[17] Such similarities aside, Buddhism is more radical and elaborate than Jainism in its criticism of caste. For example, Jainism seems to accept the caste differences through its formulation of the doctrine of karma, as it acknowledges *gotrakarma* as a specific karma that determines one's birth in a particular caste. Though Buddhism too

advocates the karma doctrine, it does not explain or justify caste differences in terms of it. Moreover, Jainism advocates non-violence in all realms including intellectual realm; because of this it sometimes has a relationship of compromising with Hinduism. On the other hand, because of its negation of soul and eternality, Buddhism stands in diametrical opposition to Hinduism.

This is not to say that Hinduism advocated the varṇa-caste system uncritically at all levels. Broadly speaking we can identify two distinct trends in Hinduism as religion. *Dharma*-oriented and liberation-oriented. By *dharma*, I mean the various socio-religious obligations prescribed in the *Dharmaśāstra* texts. These texts prescribe obligations specific to varṇa, caste, stage in life (*āśrama*), gender and so on. This gives us the structure of "specific obligations" (*viśeṣa-dharmas*). Apart from them, some common obligations (*sādhāraṇa-dharmas*), such as truthfulness, non-violence and non-stealing, applicable to all human beings qua human beings, are also prescribed. Though both these types of obligations are prescribed in these texts, specific obligations set the framework in which common obligations are followed. This gives subordinate status to common obligations as compared to specific obligations. And since the framework of specific obligations essentially involves the hierarchy among castes, domination and exploitation of the "lower castes" by the "upper castes," and also control over women by men, the *dharma*-oriented trend in Hinduism becomes essentially unjust and exploitative. In contrast, the liberation-oriented trend emphasises common obligations and at least temporarily releases the burden of specific obligations. For example, in the context of *jñānayoga* (the path of knowledge leading to liberation), it is held that since all *ātman*s are equal, they are identical with Brahman, and hence there is no inequality. Or in the context of *bhaktiyoga* (the path of devotion to God leading to liberation) it is held that, like upper-caste men, even vaiśyas, śūdras and women can attain liberation through devotion.[18] Hence, we have a tradition of saints in Hinduism who emphasise moral conduct and an egalitarian approach to all living beings, and who do not attach importance to inequalities related to caste and gender. The saint tradition has points of overlap, interaction and mutual influence with the Śramaṇa tradition, which mainly consisted of Buddhism and Jainism, whereas the ritualistic and non-egalitarian Brahmanical tradition was their common object of criticism.

However, due to the simultaneous presence of these two trends, the essence of the common Hindu psyche gets divided into the two influences: one non-egalitarian and the other egalitarian. This gives rise to a paradoxical situation. The god who has created the non-egalitarian framework of caste and gender is the same god who asks the Hindus to treat all living beings as equal in order to attain liberation. The paradox is sometimes resolved by accepting two levels of existence: ultimate or transcendental level on the one hand and practical-empirical level on the other. Equality or

unity is accepted at the ultimate level, but denied at an empirical-practical level. Hence Śaṅkara in his commentary on *Brahmasūtra* describes the ultimate reality *Brahman* as devoid of the distinctions like brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya, but at the level of *vyavahāra* accepts Manu as authority and denies śūdras the right to study the Vedas.[19] Similarly, devotees belonging to a cult such as the Bhāgavata may temporarily forget caste discriminations in their devotional stance, but come back to their unequal status in their daily, practical life. Some saints tried to transcend the inequality even in practice. This led to the formation of new religious communities. The few examples of the latter include Guru Nanak, Basaveshvar and Narayanaguru. Their religious movements tended to create egalitarian alternatives to Brahmanical Hinduism, but their relation with Hinduism remained ambiguous, because they shared a common metaphysical foundation in Saguṇa or Nirguṇa Brahman with only a change in terminology.[20]

As compared to the above trends, Buddhism differs from Brahmanical Hinduism in both its metaphysics and its social-practical approach. Buddhism denies Brahman, God and *ātman*, which are core doctrines of Brahmanical Hinduism. Like in Advaita-Vedānta, we find a distinction between ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) and practical/conventional truth (*saṃvṛti-satya* or *vyavahāra*) in Buddhism also. But through this distinction Advaita-Vedānta tried to preserve the caste system at practical level. Buddhism, on the other hand, was also critical about birth-based inequalities of caste at practical/conventional level. This sharp contrast between Hinduism and Buddhism was probably one of the reasons why Babasaheb Ambedkar chose Buddhism when he was in search of an alternative to Hinduism within the Indian tradition—an alternative that could emancipate his "untouchable" followers from the clutches of caste.

Development of the theme

This anthology addresses the problem of the caste system as it was dealt with by Buddhism during its different stages, from Early Buddhism to Neo-Buddhism. "Neo-Buddhism," also termed "Navayāna Buddhism," refers to the Buddhist way of life as it was interpreted and professed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The anthology focuses mainly on the stages and phases of Buddhism in India, occasionally referring to the modern multinational phenomenon called Engaged Buddhism in whose framework Neo-Buddhism can be situated.

Schools of Buddhism on caste

The term "Buddhism" itself has diverse interpretations. Though literally it refers to the way of life introduced and advocated by the Buddha, it is understood here that the Buddha's message and the way of life he advocated itself

underwent different interpretations and formulations through the course of history, leading to diverse sects in Buddhism as a religion and diverse schools in Buddhism as a philosophy. In the ancient and medieval period, Buddhism as religion—as long as it was alive and influential in India—took three broad forms: Śrāvakayāna, Bodhisattvayāna and Tantrayāna.[21] Śrāvakayāna, also called Hīnayāna, includes Theravāda (whose literature is in the Pāli language) and the philosophical schools Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika. Bodhisattvayāna, called Mahāyāna, includes the philosophical schools Yogācāra and Madhyamaka. Tantrayāna, while regarded as a part of Mahāyāna, differs from mainstream Mahāyāna due to the former's special ritualistic practices and the method of transformation of passions into the Path. Though the three sects differ in their metaphysical views and spiritual practices, they share some common views. They believe in the impermanence and soullessness of all phenomena and are critical of the Brahmanical tradition, which supports sacrificial rituals and a hierarchical social structure based on the four varṇas and the caste system, governed by birth.

This anthology contains chapters pertaining to all the three forms of classical Buddhism. Bimalendra Kumar in Chapter 1 discusses the Buddha's attitude towards the caste system as found in Pāli texts. He brings out the Buddha's observation that the way there are different species among animals and plants with different bodily features, different varṇas and castes among humans cannot be called different species of human beings. He refers to the Buddha's declaration that "it is merely the empty sound that the brāhmaṇas are superior, others are inferior; Brāhmaṇas are of high caste, others are low caste." Actually speaking, "the people of all the four castes are equal and I see no difference in them." In fact the Buddha's mission, which results from his radical criticism of the caste system, was two-fold. He was a reformer of the society governed by Brahmanical religion, as well as the founder of a new religion in which caste had no place. Through constant dialogues with brāhmaṇas, he criticised the Vedic ritualism of sacrifices, challenged the claim of Upaniṣadic thinkers about realisation of ultimate reality (Brahman) and questioned the hierarchical social order governed by varṇa/caste, determined by birth and given divine sanction. Simultaneously he developed a theory and discipline of an alternative form of religious life and formed the religious organisation called Saṅgha, which provided for the moral-psychological and spiritual development of human beings. The Saṅgha was framed in such a way that it was a society of members free from caste identity. As Bimalendra Kumar refers to the Buddha's statement recorded in *Cullavagga*:

> Just as the great rivers, such as, the Gaṅgā, the Yamunā, the Acirā-
> vatī, the Sarabhū and the Mahī, when they pour their waters into
> the Great Ocean, lose their names and origins and become the
> Great Ocean precisely so, you monks, do. These four castes—the

> Khattiya, the Brāhmaṇa, the Vessa and the Sudda—when they
> pass, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Tathāgata,
> from home to homelessness, lose their names and origins.

The above passage indicates how the Buddha, through Saṅgha, tried to
establish an alternative culture of moral-seekers, based on egalitarian and
democratic values. (Mahesh A. Deokar in Chapter 5 explains how the Bud-
dha adopted certain safeguards and healthy practices to ensure that there
was no discrimination against any member of his Saṅgha, and the feeling
of solidarity and fraternity developed amongst them.)

After the Buddha, Buddhism underwent a schism and different stages of
philosophical development and diversification. But the anti-caste spirit was
maintained among the different sects and schools of Buddhism. Sometime
around the beginning of the common era, we come across the formation
of philosophical schools (darśana). Hence, the debate on caste is raised to
ontological and epistemological level. *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* of Kaṇāda accepted
jāti or *sāmānya* (universal) as a *padārtha* (ontological category). Nyāya-
Vaiśeṣika philosophers accepted *brāhmaṇatva* etc. as kinds of *jātis*, thereby
suggesting that the castes such as brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya have a well-defined
and permanent ontological status. Kumārila-Bhaṭṭa, a Mīmāṃsā philoso-
pher, joins Vaiśeṣikas in accepting *brāhmaṇatva,* etc. as eternal universals.
In opposition to the Vaiśeṣīka and Bhāṭṭa-Mīmāṃsā view, which gives a
permanent ontological status to universals (*sāmānya* or *jāti*) in general and
the caste determining universals in particular, we have the Buddhist view
developed by Diññāga and Dharmakīrti, according to which there are no
eternal ontological entities called *sāmānya* or *jāti*. Prabal Kumar Sen dis-
cusses in Chapter 2, with many technical details, how different orthodox
schools explained and defended brāhmaṇa-hood and other varṇa-identities
by giving them the ontological status of universals (*sāmānya* or *jāti*). It
also shows how Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophers like Dharmakīrti and
Jaina philosophers like Prabhācandrasūri questioned this status given to
caste-identities. Sen also refers to the egalitarian thoughts found in ortho-
dox texts that deny rigid varṇa-identities based on birth.

Dharmakīrti's philosophical position has two faces: Sautrāntika and
Yogācāra. Hence, he can be described as belonging to both the Śrāvakayāna
and Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions. Ajay Verma in Chapter 3 regards Dhar-
makīrti as a Mahāyāna philosopher. But Verma's main point is not that
Dharmakīrti was a Mahāyānist, but that he was anti-essentialist. Hence
Verma focuses on the debate between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Nyāya as
that between essentialism and anti-essentialism. Nyāya adherence to *jāti*
at ontological level and the caste system at social level was a mark of its
essentialism—which Mahāyāna Buddhism was fundamentally opposed to.

The third form of Buddhism that is important in the context of its criticism
of caste is Tantrayāna. Shrikant Bahulkar in Chapter 4 discusses the anti-caste

views expressed in *Vimalaprabhā*, a commentary on *Kālacakratantra*. He brings out how the *Vimalaprabhā* ridicules the religious explanation of the caste system and exposes its irrationality. He also refers to *Vimalaprabhā*'s criticism of the sacredness of the Sanskrit language.

In fact the justification of caste in the Brahmanical Hindu tradition does not come alone, it comes as a part of a package: the Vedas (either as eternal or as God's creation), God, karma (as the determiner of caste), the Smṛtis and the purity of Sanskrit language, the superiority of brāhmaṇas and the caste determined by birth—all these doctrines are interconnected and Buddhist thinkers criticise them all. This is true in both classical Buddhism and Neo-Buddhism.

Neo-Buddhism: Ambedkar on caste, class and gender

The anti-caste egalitarian thought of B. R. Ambedkar had a complex lineage: that of the thoughts of saints like Kabir, non-Brahmanical social reformers like Jotiba Phule and also the Buddha's life and mission, which was introduced to Ambedkar in his teenage years through a book gifted to him by his teacher, Mr. Keluskar.

Ambedkar's criticism of caste, however, was not just "religiously" oriented, but more so scientifically and philosophically. Mahesh A. Deokar, in Chapter 5, presents a comparative analysis of early-Buddhist and Ambedkarian approaches to the issue of caste. He points out that the Pāli *suttas* mention peculiar characteristics of the caste system such as endogamy, caste-based division of labour, graded inequality and the denial of the right to education to "lower" castes, but none of them attempt a formal definition of caste nor discuss its genesis and mechanism. Deokar discusses Ambedkar's treatment of caste as it has evolved from his three works, *Castes in India*, *Annihilation of Caste* and *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. He finds a strong connection between the Buddha and Ambedkar on the matter of refuting castes and on the remedy for overcoming it. He also points out an important difference between the two—while the Buddha's safeguards against inequality were only operational within the limits of his Saṅgha, Ambedkar extends them to all Indians by incorporating them into the Indian constitution.

Like caste, class too has been used to explain the stratification and hierarchical order in society. However, the two concepts are different. Though Ambedkar defined caste in terms of class, he also distinguished between them. As Gopal Guru clarifies in Chapter 6, India according to Ambedkar had a two-fold challenge before her: capitalism and Brahmanism. Naturally, the final goal was to create a classless and casteless society. Both these elements were relevant to Buddhism, according to him. The Buddha as depicted by Ambedkar was not only a critic of the caste system, but was

also concerned with the problem of class conflict causing social suffering. Gopal Guru points out that the alienation of the proletariat and of untouchables are categorically of different natures. Ambedkar articulated a form of Buddhism that could combat both types of alienation. The Buddha of Ambedkar had an answer to Karl Marx in this sense.

Caste and gender are also closely connected issues. The status of a woman in Hindu society was regulated by her caste, and caste status of a child born from an inter-caste marriage was regulated by the relative caste-status of its mother in the family. Ambedkar in his writings brought out the relationship between caste and gender. As Pratima Pardeshi explores in Chapter 7, Ambedkar, through his anthropological study of caste, maintained that the basis of the caste system is "endogamy," which gives rise to the problems of surplus man and surplus woman within an endogamous group. Practices like *sati*, enforced widowhood, enforced celibacy and child marriage are attempted remedies to perpetuate endogamy and the caste system. Ambedkar, in this way, maintained that women are the gateways to the caste system. As Pardeshi argues, according to Ambedkar, though all women are exploited due by the patriarchy, they are not all exploited to the same degree. Dalit women are doubly exploited—both by the patriarchy as well as by caste. Ambedkar held that the Buddha paved the way for granting women status equivalent to that of men.

The impact of Buddhism on medieval India and the role of the Vajrasūci

On the way from Classical Buddhism to Neo-Buddhism, we come across an intermediate phenomenon, represented by the works like *Vajrasūci* and *Vajrasūci-upaniṣad*, as well other signs of the influence of Buddhism on Hinduism. *Vajrasūci* is an important text as it aims at refuting the caste ideology by advancing logical as well as scripture-based arguments. The author of the text is Aśvaghoṣa, which is the popular name of the 1st century author of poetic works such as *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*. Hence, Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyay (who edited the text in 1949) argued that *Vajrasūci* must be from the same Aśvaghoṣa who authored *Buddhacarita*. This claim is debatable as, although the author of *Vajrasūci* starts by saluting Mañjughoṣa (a mark of the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism), he starts his argument by accepting the authority of the Vedas and the Smṛtis, which is quite unlike a typical Buddhist author. So Sanghasen Singh argues in Appendix I (entitled "*Vajrasūci*") that the Aśvaghoṣa who authored *Vajrasūci* is not the same one who wrote *Buddhacarita*, but some later author named Siddhācārya Aśvaghoṣa, who probably lived in the 8th or 9th century. This Aśvaghoṣa must have been a spiritual master but not a thorough scholar of the Vedas, the Smṛtis and the *Mahābhārata*, which he

regards as authorities. He must have had affinity for Buddhism, but must not have been a staunch Buddhist.

Whether *Vajrasūci* can be regarded as a purely Buddhist text or not, it can be said to reflect the overlap between the egalitarian trend in Hinduism, represented by saints and spiritual masters on one hand and the Buddhist tradition on the other. Even a Buddhist can appreciate the text, although it apparently accepts the Vedas and the Smṛtis as authority. He or she could say that the text in fact brings out the inconsistency in the Hindu tradition by showing that "authoritative scriptures" like the Vedas and the Smṛtis, which are supposed to strongly support the caste system, in fact contain many counter evidences. Morally and spiritually oriented members of Hinduism would also appreciate the text like this, as it supports an egalitarian approach within the framework of the Vedas and the Smṛtis. Hence, we find that an abridged and "edited" version of *Vajrasūci* acquired the status of an Upaniṣad and continued to inspire some Hindu saints and reformers in the medieval and modern periods. We get a picture of the impact of *Vajrasūci* on saints like Bahenabai and reformer-thinkers like Raja Rammohan Rai, Tukaram Tatya Padwal and V. D. Savarkar in Appendix II of this anthology, which is based on the study conducted by the late Marathi Indologist Ramchandra Chintaman Dhere.

Chapter 8 by Shrikant Bahulkar too records the influence of Buddhism on Hindu society. Hindu society considered the Buddha the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu. The chapter indicates that in the Bhakti literature of medieval Maharashtra, this notion is reflected in two ways: first, the saint poets considered their God, Viṭṭhal or Viṭhobā, the Buddha—the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu; and second, their teachings bear close similarity to the teachings of the Buddha and are said to have been influenced by Buddhist philosophy. The chapter observes that like the Bhakti movement in other parts of India, the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra was also anti-caste and anti-orthodox and opposed the authority of the Vedas, the sacrificial religion advocated by the Vedas and the ancient system of the *Varṇāśramadharma*.

After 12th century, India saw a decline in Buddhism. In this period that lasted about seven centuries, the egalitarian approach transcending caste discriminations in the spiritual realm was advocated by saints of different cults, in whose literature the indirect influence of Buddhism can be traced, through occasional references to Buddhist ideas and to the Buddha. Of course Buddhism must have formed a very small part of the source of egalitarian ideas available to Hindu saints in medieval India. Many Hindu saints came in contact with Islam and must have seen the possibility of religious life without a caste system, as available in Islamic culture. This gave rise to an equality between Hinduism and Islam at a spiritual level, reflected in the literature of the saints like Ekanath, Nanak and Kabir.

On the conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism

Ambedkar situated his critique of caste as a part of the cultural history of India. As Umesh Bagade explains in Chapter 9, Ambedkar presented Indian history as that of cultural conflict between two forces: Brahmanical and Buddhist. According to Ambedkar, Brahmanism represented the coercive and hegemonic force of varṇa, caste and gender subordination, whereas Buddhism represented egalitarian spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity, incessantly acting as an ideological powerhouse of anti-caste rebellions. Revolution and counter-revolution are important categories in Ambedkar's articulation of Indian history. In his view, the condition of Brahmanism before the Buddha was that of utmost moral degradation. Against this, the Buddha's teaching proved to be a religious revolution, which posed a challenge to the infallibility of the Vedas, the Creator God and the eternal soul and the revision of regnant conceptions of *kamma*. It was also a social and political revolution exemplified by equal opportunity for low-caste in-dividuals and women, as well as equal access to education. As a reaction to the Buddha's revolution, there was a counter-revolution launched by Brah-manism, marked by social processes turning varṇa into caste; indiscrimi-nate coercion against Buddhism under the reign of Puṣyamitra Śunga; the channelization of rituals, beliefs and laws elevating the status of brahmins and prohibiting inter-dining and inter-caste marriages and the construction of an ideology that subordinated women.

Ambedkar's act of reviving Buddhism in India through mass conversion and his reinterpretation of the life and teachings of the Buddha can be deemed his attempt to revive the Buddha's revolution under modern con-ditions. Buddhism as adopted by Ambedkar does not remain Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna as understood by tradition, but becomes a part of "modern Buddhism." In order to distinguish the form of Buddhism he adopted from traditional Buddhism, Ambedkar agreed to the nomenclature "Navayāna," which is popularly translated as "Neo-Buddhism."

Critique of caste by saints, reformers and by Ambedkar

In the 19th and 20th centuries, India saw a period of revival, reformation and enlightenment influenced by the Enlightenment in Europe. In this spirit, there were attempts to interrogate and critique the caste system. Broadly speaking, we come across two types of reformist thinkers at this stage: Ve-dic and non-Vedic. Vedic reformer thinkers tried to trace anti-caste thinking in sources like the Vedas, Upaniṣads, the *Gītā*, Vedāntic philosophies and the literature of saints. However, critiques of caste based on Vedic tradition could not radically challenge the caste system, either because, by making a slippery distinction between varṇa and caste, it allowed caste to prevail through the back door; or because by restricting the scope of equality to the spiritual realm, it permitted inequalities to prevail in the social realm.

Some non-Brahmin reformer thinkers questioned the authority of the Vedas and the Smṛtis and traced egalitarian thoughts to non-Vedic sources. P. Kesav Kumar in Chapter 12 refers to non-Brahmin thinkers such as Jothibha Phule and Periyar, and also to Iyothee Thassar and Lakhmi Narasu of Madras presidency. Phule took inspiration for his anti-caste thinking from the views of Bṛhaspati (Cārvāka), the Buddha and also deism (as presented by Thomas Paine). He proposed the religion of Universal Truth (*sārvajanik satya dharma*). Periyar attacked Hinduism from an atheistic point by arguing the distinctiveness of Dravidian culture from the Brahmanical Aryan religion. Iyothee Thassar and Lakhmi Narasu invoked Buddhism against Hinduism.

A modern world view and modern values have posed a challenge for all religions. Naturally Buddhism, too, has to face this. Buddhist thinkers seem to have found this challenge comparatively easy because many core features of the religion were already modern in character. And though it did have some other-worldly and dogmatic features, they could be got rid of, or at least bracketed. The Buddha's own statements in *Kālāmasutta* reveal his insistence of not accepting anything on the basis of the so-called authority of a text or a person, but accepting or rejecting a view only on the basis of one's own experience and reason. Hence, we have secular forms of the Buddhist way of life advocated by some contemporary Buddhist thinkers and spiritual masters.[22]

However, it was not equally possible for reformers of other religions to secularise their religions. Here, however we are mainly concerned with the reformation of Hinduism vis-à-vis caste. We find that though 19th- and 20th-century Hindu thinkers and reformers do not advocate the traditional caste system in its rigid form, they did try to defend it in some way or the other. Some of them were radically critical of caste, but they were not influential enough to generate an anti-caste turn in Hinduism. A few models can be considered in this context:

A   Vedāntic/spiritual/saintly model

According to this model, all living beings are of ātman-Brahman-nature and are, therefore, equal. Hence there were Hindu saints who were egalitarian at a spiritual level, though at a material and social level they generally compromised with caste. It is accepted under this model that one's spiritual point of view can have an impact on one's material life also. Hence, we have radical examples like Basaveshvar and Nanak whose egalitarian spiritual movements resulted in the formation of sects on the border of Hinduism or outside it. Narayanaguru was another example of someone opposed to caste in a spiritual as well as social, practical realm. Another example is Swami Vivekananda, who is known for his Practical Vedānta. Vivekananda was against untouchability but he was not opposed to the caste system as

such. He believed that caste had a historical role to play and a historical purpose to serve: to transform all into brāhmaṇas.[23] Gandhi's critique of caste falls, to some extent, in the category advanced by saintly thinkers. Like them, Gandhi believed in the equality of all beings; so even if he accepted the varṇa system, he denied the hierarchy among varṇas. This brings him close to Ambedkar in terms of regarding equality a basic human value. Valerian Rodrigues, while giving a comparative account of the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar on caste in Chapter 10, refers to this similarity in terms of "equality as a value," while immediately pointing out the difference between the two figures in terms of "freedom as a value." Gandhi believed that the profession of a Hindu person may be determined by his varṇa, that is, by his birth, whereas Ambedkar believed that this takes away the freedom of a Hindu to choose their own profession. Rodrigues makes a significant observation:

> …. what Gandhi considered as the degeneration of Hinduism is seen by Ambedkar as its essential characteristics. For Ambedkar there cannot be an impulse for equality from within the central tenets and institutions of Hinduism. It can come only from a radical reorganisation of Hinduism or from outside it. To the contrary, Gandhi argued that the central tenets of Hinduism and its institutions uphold equality. Reforms are required to shed the dross, rather than reinvent Hinduism.

Rodrigues gives his comparative account impartially. He seems to leave the reader to make his or her own judgement.

B The model of distinguishing between varṇa and caste

Some Hindu reformer thinkers based their critiques of the caste system on the distinction between varṇa and caste. They held that the caste system, which originally had the nature of varṇa, was fine and just. It degenerated as caste system with untouchability as its extreme form, in later centuries. So Dayananda, the founder of Aryasamaj, held that, as the Vedas are the authority, varṇas are assigned according to qualities and actions, not birth. So he denied the caste system as it was practiced and tried to reduce it to a system of four varṇas. He accepted the hierarchy among varṇas but denied its birth-based character. As Deokar in chapter 5 points out, Ambedkar, in *Annihilation of Caste*, argues that organising a caste-ridden society into four varṇas is impractical.

Dayananda's approach can be compared with that of Gandhi, which are prima facie similar but fundamentally different. According to Gandhi, as Rodrigues points out, the law of varṇa means that everyone shall follow as a matter of *dharma*—duty—the hereditary calling of their forefathers insofar

as it is consistent with fundamental ethics. Accordingly, a person earns his livelihood by following that calling. Hence, one's varṇa is determined by birth. But Gandhi did not accept hierarchy among varṇas as Dayananda did. Gandhi thought that the varṇa system itself does not contain the sense of "high" and "low," the caste system does.

It is important to note in this context that both Gandhi's and Ambedkar's approaches to the caste system underwent changes and development. Initially, Ambedkar tried to run the anti-caste movement as a Hindu reformer. He led movements like drinking water at Chavdar Lake and temple entry. When he realised futility of these, he argued that the caste system should be combatted with stronger remedies, like propagating inter-caste marriages and, more importantly, the rejection of *Dharmaśāstra* texts. Finally, since Hinduism was unable to implement such radical means to annihilate caste, Ambedkar left Hinduism and embraced Buddhism, which was essentially a casteless religion.

Gandhi was supporter of Hinduism (as he interpreted it), though he would treat it and other religions as equal. He was vehemently opposed to untouchability in all stages of his social career, though not equally opposed to caste. As Rodrigues records, Gandhi initially—that is, in 1922—defended the caste system. However, by the second half of that decade he had come to criticise caste. His initial acceptance of caste was based on his view that Hindu society was sustained by caste. His subsequent criticism of caste was based on his view that caste fundamentally involves the idea of "higher" and "lower." At the latter stage he accepted varṇa instead of caste. The four varṇas according to him were not hierarchical, but implied a division of labour determined by ancestral calling, that is, by birth. Varṇa in this sense carried at least one character of caste. Since the birth-based character of varṇa implied that marriages should take place within the same varṇa/caste, Gandhi regarded restricting marital relation to one's own caste to be naturally consistent with *varṇāśrama*.[24] His views on inter-caste marriage seem to have undergone a drastic change by 1946, when he appealed to all boys and girls seeking to get married and who belonged to the Congress party, not to get married in Sevagram Ashram unless one of the parties was a Harijan. He added, "I am convinced that there is no real difficulty in this. All that is needed is a change of outlook" (Bose 1972, 268). What change of outlook was Gandhi talking about? Does this imply that Gandhi's own outlook had changed? Had he left the position that marrying in one's own caste is naturally consistent with *varṇāśrama*?

Gandhi's new outlook seemed to bring him closer to Ambedkar's position in *Annihilation of Caste*. Ambedkar in this text proposed two means to annihilate caste: intermarriages and criticising religious texts. Gandhi at this late stage seems to have agreed to the first means, but seems to have remained as dogmatic as before with respect to the authority of religious texts. Of course, Gandhi was not of the view that religious scriptures should

be followed blindly. He believed that the core teaching of all religious texts is truth and non-violence. And if there are statements inconsistent with this core then they should be treated as interpolations.

It is doubtful whether this hermeneutical approach of Gandhi is defensible. The authors of religious texts are, after all, human beings susceptible to error; it is not necessary to believe that they must be fully consistent in their views. To believe that religious texts/scriptures are fully consistent and authentic is a dogma—the dogma of authenticity (*prāmāṇya*). Gandhi first projects the doctrines of truth and non-violence as the core of given religious texts and then treats the statements in them inconsistent with the core as interpolations. This is just a case of the dogma of authenticity. Secondly, even if a given religious text contains principles like truth and non-violence, it is doubtful whether this is sufficient to regard the text as authentic. The question is about what place is given to the principles in the total scheme of the text. For example, in *Manusmṛti* these principles are included in the list of abridged obligations (*sāmāsika-dharma*).[25] But, as I have stated before, they are given subordinate status in the framework of the hierarchical system of specific obligations (*viśeṣadharma*) of varṇa, caste and gender. If one were to follow Gandhi's policy of interpretation, a major part of *Manusmṛti* would have to be discarded as interpolation in order to retain the authoritative character of the text. Instead, Ambedkar's policy was to dethrone such a text from its authentic status. This policy seems to be more reasonable.

Hence Ambedkar, in *Annihilation of Caste*, appealed to Hindus to make a radical decision to get rid of their anti-egalitarian *Dharmaśāstra* and adopt those texts that propagate values such as liberty, equality and fraternity. He also suggested that perhaps the Upaniṣads could be such a text.[26]

C   Religion as personal and caste as social: the model of S. Radhakrishnan

S. Radhakrishnan was an important scholar of Indian philosophy, and a spokesman for Hinduism and Vedānta. His approach to caste was influenced by both the above models. As Mahadevan points out in Chapter 11, Radhakrishnan rejected the notion of caste determined by birth, and justified it as varṇa forming the basis of a graded social order united through a harmonious performance of diverse functions. This view is similar to that of Dayananda, who accepts hierarchy as natural diversity. On the other hand, Radhakrisnan upheld religion as an individual's inclination towards the spiritual, which is realized through human perfection. He seems to reconcile spirituality with caste through the Advaitic notion of "a common clay of human nature" that is nevertheless differentiated as "wise" and "foolish" or "high" and "low". Radhakrishnan's approach to religion and caste can be contrasted with that of Ambedkar. Ambedkar distinguished between religion and Dhamma (TBHD, IV.I.2), which was virtually the

distinction between theistic religion and Dhamma (religion based on morality). In theistic religion, one's relationship with God is central and morality is secondary. In Dhamma, on the other hand, the egalitarian moral relationship of humans with other humans is essential. Religion as understood by Radhakrishnan was based on the God-human relation or *jīva*-Brahman relation, which can accommodate caste and inequality at a practical-social level.

D Rational critique of caste in the service of Hindu nationalism: V. D. Savarkar's model

V. D. Savarkar, a freedom fighter whose freedom movement aimed at a free Hindu Nation, believed that Hindus cannot be one nation unless they are free from caste division. In 1924, he was confined by the British government in Ratnagiri and, prohibited from performing political activities, he focused on social activities aimed at consolidating Hindu society by eradicating caste divisions among them. He was in Ratnagiri until 1937. During this period Savarkar wrote a number of essays he called "*Jatyucchedaka Nibandha*" (*Caste-eradicating Essays*).[27] In these, he criticised different prohibitive rules (Bandī) that banned the study of the Vedas by lower castes, touching other castes, accepting professions of other castes, co-dining and intermarriages. Interestingly, in one of his articles, he endorsed the position of Aśvaghoṣa's *Vajrasūci* by including his Marathi translation of the text in it (Savarkar 1964, 532–42).[28] At practical level he focused on arranging co-dining programs where all castes were involved. His approach was more rational as compared to the saintly/spiritualist approach of the first model and the traditionalist approach of the second model. Hence, we find Savarkar criticising traditionalism symbolised by the expression "*Śrutismṛtipurāṇokta*" (the authority of the Vedas, Smṛtis and Purāṇas) and propagating modernism symbolised by the expression "*adya-yāvat*" (up-to-date).[29] However, the limitation of Savarkar's anti-caste approach and modernism was that it was subservient to his main mission of making India an independent Hindu nation. It consisted of uniting Hindus by undermining their internal differences. His definition of Hindu neither implied freedom from the caste system nor an emphasis on rationality.[30]

Ambedkar's critique of caste stands out in comparison to all the above models. Unlike the first model, he was not criticising caste from a theist or idealistic point of view, but from a humanist perspective. Caste, according to him, was opposed to human integrity and dignity. Unlike the second model, he did not want to replace the caste system with a varṇa system, which too carried evil elements in his estimation. Unlike the third model, he did not regard religion as a personal affair, which would imply compromise with caste distinctions. And unlike the fourth model, his rational critique of caste was not aimed at the narrow goal of organising Hindus,

but at reconstructing society on a foundation of universal values. The latter comprises liberty, equality, fraternity and justice.

Though Ambedkar did not rule out the theoretical possibility of Hindu society being reorganised on the basis of these universal values and becoming free from caste divisions, such a reorganisation involved drastic steps including abandoning the traditional rule-bound *Dharmaśāstra*. Such a step was empirically impossible for Hindu society in near future. Hence, abandoning their Hindu religious identity was inevitable for the downtrodden masses according to him. A study of religions informed Ambedkar's view that the Buddha's Dhamma was the best choice as it had universal morality and rationality at its core. It was the best religion not only for downtrodden Hindus but for humanity.

As mentioned before, Ambedkar's approach to the caste system underwent stages of change and development. He started as a Hindu reformer, but after realising the futility of the reform movement, declared that he would not remain a Hindu and finally embraced Buddhism, which he himself reinterpreted into a modern form. But in these phases of change there is also continuity. Even after he decided to abandon his Hindu identity, he did not cease to be a reformer of Hinduism. This is visible in his creation of the Hindu Code Bill, aimed at a progressive transformation of Hindu society. Ambedkar in this way played a dual role. As a reformer, he tried to free Hindu society from evils like the subordination of depressed castes and women; and, as the leader of Navayāna Buddhism, he tried to create an alternative to the caste-ridden Hinduism.

This duality resonates with the dual role played by the Buddha. A question is often asked about the Buddha as to whether he was a founder of a new religion or just a reformer of the existing Brahmanical religion. I have tried to argue elsewhere that the Buddha played a dual role. On one hand, he raised conflict with Brahmanical religion and suggested ways to reform it. On the other hand, he presented a picture of an alternative form of religious life that, according to him, was the ideal form.[31] Ambedkar, in this way, followed the legacy of the Buddha.

Neo-Buddhism as a form of modern Buddhism

As Kanchana Mahadevan highlights in Chapter 11, a modern advocate of religion and Vedāntic spirituality such as S. Radhakrishnan emphasises the need for religion and spirituality in the modern world against rival forces such as naturalistic atheism, agnosticism, scepticism, humanism, pragmatism and modernism. Radhakrishnan's conception of Hinduism was based on this model. Ambedkar's concept of ideal religion was based on his understanding of Buddhism, which in his view was consistent with modernity. As Mahadevan remarks (p. X), "Unlike Hinduism, Buddhism had the potential to be social and foreground the principles of liberty, equality and

democracy, which were central to modernity." In this context, she brings out Ambedkar's resonance with Kant, who reconciled religious faith with reason and morality.

P. Kesava Kumar in Chapter 12 talks about multiple modernities. He distinguishes Dalit modernity from colonial modernity and Brahmanical modernity. Colonial modernity is an immediate reference point for other modernities. Exponents of Brahmanical modernity professed equality in the spiritual realm but did not extend it to the material realm. Dalit modernity professes equality based on human dignity and self-respect. Kesava Kumar argues that Ambedkar, like Dewey, looked for reasoned religion and in this way overcame the tradition-modernity dichotomy. For Ambedkar, Buddhism is not a religion of rituals but rather is rationalistic. Its morality is not derived from a supernatural source; it is "this-worldly." This is how Ambedkar constructs modern or Navayāna Buddhism.

Orthodox Buddhist critics of Ambedkar sometimes regard his reinterpretation of Buddhism—as a religion characterised by scientific rationality, secular morality, democracy, socialism and gender equality—as inauthentic or non-Buddhist. I have argued in Chapter 13 that Buddhism already had these progressive elements and Ambedkar was not the only one to notice this. I have tried to show that many Buddhist thinkers and spiritual leaders of the 19th and 20th centuries have underlined the above elements in Buddhism and Ambedkar continues this prevailing trend. Where Ambedkar becomes distinct from other modern, engaged Buddhists is in his emphasis of the anti-caste approach of Buddhism. In Ambedkar's image, the Buddha was essentially a critic of Brahmanism in general and of the caste system in particular.

Chapter scheme: a sketch

This work is a multidisciplinary anthology on Buddhism and caste. The contributors belong to different disciplines: literature (Sanskrit, Pāli), philosophy, Indology, Buddhist studies, history, political science, women studies and sociology. They throw light on different aspects of the central theme by relating it to their own discipline. The chapters are arranged in a sequence broadly taking into account the logical development of the theme. Chapters were divided into four parts followed by appendices for the convenience of readers and keeping each chapter's dominant sub-themes in mind. Of course, there cannot be a strict logical order among the chapters and sections, as the treatment of many sub-themes overlaps or criss-crosses on a multidisciplinary platform.

The first part entitled "Classical Buddhism and Caste" contains four chapters that deal with the Buddhist approach to caste in the classical context. To recount this briefly, in the first chapter Bimalendra Kumar discusses the approach to the caste system found in Pāli Buddhism. In the second

chapter Prabal Kumar Sen discusses how the caste system was dealt with in different schools of Classical Indian philosophy. In the third chapter, Shrikant Bahulkar discusses the Buddhist criticism of caste found in a Buddhist Tantra text called *Vimalaprabhā*, a commentary on *Kālacakratantra*. In the fourth chapter, Ajay Verma discusses the Mahāyāna Buddhist criticism of essentialism inherent in the Nyāya justification of *jāti*.

The second part, entitled "Neo-Buddhism: Ambedkar on Caste, Class and Gender," contains three chapters dealing with the important concepts of caste, class and gender expounded by Ambedkar in his formulation of Neo-Buddhism. In the fifth chapter, Mahesh A. Deokar shows how Ambedkar's analysis of caste contains many elements already present in classical Buddhist literature and, at the same time, differs due to his use of history, sociology and anthropology in understanding caste and his application of Buddhist insights to reforming Indian society at large. In Chapter 6, Gopal Guru brings out the relevance of Ambedkar's perspective to Marx and Marxism, and shows that Ambedkar, in his formulation of Buddhism, was concerned with the exploitation and alienation caused by both class and caste. In the seventh chapter, Pratima Pardeshi brings out Ambedkar's anti-patriarchal perspective, which is inseparable from his anti-caste approach.

The third part, entitled "Hinduism and Buddhism: Interaction, Conflict and Beyond," contains three chapters that deal with the interface between Buddhism and Hinduism in India. In the eighth chapter Shrikant Bahulkar deals with the impact of Buddhism on Hinduism, particularly in medieval Maharashtra with reference to the appropriation of the Buddha in the form of Viṭṭhala and the Bhakti movement, which undermined caste discrimination. In the ninth chapter, Umesh Bagade discusses Ambedkar's interpretation of Indian history as that of the conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In tenth chapter, Valerian Rodrigues juxtaposes Ambedkar's approach to varṇa, caste and untouchability with that of Gandhi.

The fourth part—"Religion, Modernity and Navayāna Buddhism"—contains three chapters throwing light on Ambedkar's approach to religion in general and Buddhism in particular. In eleventh chapter, Kanchana Mahadevan argues that Ambedkar's conception of religion is compatible with rationality and science, and that he goes beyond Radhakrishnan's understanding of the modern. P. Kesava Kumar argues in the twelfth chapter that Ambedkar's reconstruction of Buddhism transcends the dichotomy of religion and modernity. In the thirteenth chapter, I have discussed how Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism was continuous with many modern Buddhist thinkers in different parts of the world, but becomes different because of his emphasis on the Buddha's role as a critic of caste.

The two appendices deal with the nature and historical role of *Vajrasūci*, the anti-caste text attributed to Aśvaghoṣa. In Appendix I, Sanghasen Singh presents the contents of the text and examines the identity of its author. In Appendix II, R. C. Dhere expounds the impact of *Vajrasūci*

and *Vajrasūcikopaniṣat* on saint cults such as Mahānubhāva, Vārakarī and Nātha and also on some of the social reformers of the 19th and 20th centuries.

This is a rough outline of the chapters in the anthology; the authors present many more arguments that cannot be spelt out in this short introduction. In fact, I learnt many things from these authors and also that there awaits even further learning from their work. I am sure that the volume will help readers in enriching their understanding of the social role of classical Buddhism and Neo-Buddhism.

I close with a customary disclaimer. I do not necessarily agree with the contributors in all respects. While editing the volume I found myself in tune with all the authors in a broad way but not necessarily in all details. Similarly, I do not expect that they agree with what I have said here. I can claim, however, that the chapters have made me think more seriously about the problems and their possible solutions, and I suppose that the reader will have the same experience when he or she goes through the anthology.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Prabal Kumar Sen for his valuable suggestions on the earlier draft of the Introduction.

2 Here we are using the word "Hindu," for the sake of convenience, to refer to the society of the Indian subcontinent that accepted texts such as the Vedas, the Smṛtis and the *Gītā* as authoritative, along with the varṇa-caste identity of its members.

3 Sometimes it is claimed that there is a basic difference between varṇa and caste. Castes are determined by birth, but varṇas are determined by "qualities and actions" (*guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ*). This claim does not seem to be warranted. The main difference between the two is that varṇa refers to a broad classification, whereas caste (*jāti*) refers to further diversification. It will be argued that according to the Hindu *śāstra* texts like *Manusmṛti* and the *Gītā*, both are supposed to be determined by birth.

4 "*sarvaṃ svaṃ brāhmaṇasyedaṃ yat kiñcij jagatīgatam| śraiṣṭhyenābhi-janenenedaṃ sarvaṃ vai brāhmaṇo'rhati||*" MS 1.100 [All the wealth, whatever exists in the world, belongs to Brahmins. A Brahmin deserves everything because of his superiority and his lineage.] Here and elsewhere I have referred to *Manusmṛti* as the representative of the *Dharmaśāstra* of Brahmanical religion. Similar references can be found in other *Dharmaśāstra* texts such as *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* and *Nāradasmṛti*. For an exposition of the views in different *Dharmaāstra* texts on the varṇa-caste inequality, see Chapter 3: "The Duties, Disabilities and Privileges of the Varṇas," Kane (1997, 105–64)

5 "*visrabdhaṃ brāhmaṇaḥ śūdrād dravyopādānam ācaret| na hi tasyāsti kiñcit svaṃ bhartṛhāryadhano he saḥ||*" MS 8.417 [A Brahmin may take possession of money from a śūdra unhesitatingly. For, no wealth belongs to the latter, as his money is worth being taken away by his master.]

6 "Caste system has two aspects. In one of its aspects it divides men into separate communities. In its second aspect, it places these communities in a graded order one above the other in social status." Ambedkar (2010, 72).

7 'At the end' means temporally after other varṇas were created.

8 *"cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ"*, BG 4.13ab [I have created the system of four varṇas according to qualities (or strands of *Prakṛti*) and actions.]

9 It will be seen that *Manusmṛti* also classifies varṇas in terms of the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti.*

10 *"sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣam api na tyajet| sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ||"*, BG 18.48 [One should not shun the action assigned to one by birth, even if the action is defective. For all activities are covered by defects like the fire covered by smoke.]

11 *"śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt| svabhāvaniyataṁ karma, kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam||"*, BG 18.47 [It is better to perform one's own duty even if it is defective, rather than performing someone else's duty well. One who performs an action determined by one's own nature, does not acquire sin.]

12 In this context Prabal Kumar Sen drew my attention to the statements from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 5.10.7 and *Kauṣitaki-Brahmana-Upaniṣad* 1.2 where it is claimed that the birth of a person in a particular caste is determined by past karma.

13 *"sthāvarāḥ kṛmikīṭāś ca matsyāḥ sarpāḥ sakacchapāḥ| paśavaś ca mṛgāś caiva jaghanyā tāmasī gatiḥ|| hastinaś ca turaṅgāś ca śūdrā mlecchāś ca garhitāḥ| siṁhā vyāghrā varāhāś ca madhyamā tāmasī gatiḥ|| cāraṇāś ca suparṇāś ca puruṣāś caiva dāmbhikāḥ| rakṣāṁsi ca piśācāś ca tāmasīṣūttamā gatiḥ|| jhallā mallā naṭāś caiva puruṣāḥ śastravṛttayaḥ| dyūtapānaprasaktāś ca jaghanyā rā-jasī gatiḥ|| rājānaḥ kṣtriyāś caiva rājñāṁ caiva purohitāḥ | vādayuddhapradhānāś ca madhyamā rājasī gatiḥ|| gandharvā guhyakā yakṣā vibudhānucarāś ca ye| tathaivāpsarasaḥ sarvā rājasīṣūttamā gatiḥ|| tāpasā yatayo viprā ye ca vaimānikā gaṇāḥ| nakṣatrāṇi ca daityāś ca prathamā sāttvikī gatiḥ|| yajvānaḥ ṛṣayo devā vedā jyotīṁṣi vatsarāḥ| pitaraś caiva sādhyāś ca dvitīyā sāttvikī gatiḥ || brahma viṣvasṛjo dharmo mahān avyaktam eva ca| uttamāṁ sāttvikīm etāṁ gatim āhur manīṣiṇaḥ||"* MS 12.42–50.

14 Though *daityas* are generally counted as demons, in Manu's categorization there is a distinction between *daitya* and *rakṣas*. *Daityas* are far superior to *rakṣas*. The former are Sāttvika whereas the latter are Tāmasa.

15 *"brāhmaṇaḥ sambhavenaiva devānāmapi daivatam| pramāṇaṁ caiva lokasya brahmātraiva hi kāraṇam||"* MS 11.84 (A *brāhmaṇa* becomes a god of gods by his very birth. He becomes an authority of the world. Here his spiritual power is the only reason.). Also see MS 1.98–9; 2.135, 8.20.

16 A radical view that it is not even a necessary condition, expressed exceptionally in some texts and expressed by some saints and reformers, has been considered separately.

17 For Buddhist criticism of *jāti* in general and the Jaina arguments against *brāhmaṇatva-jāti*, see Chapter 2.

18 *"māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ| striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te'pi yānti parāṁ gatim||"*, BG 9.32 [Oh the son of *Pṛthā*! Whosoever are born from sin, women, vaiśyas as well as śūdras, they too attain the highest position by taking refuge in me.]

19 *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇam*, BSSB 1.3.34–8, In this context Prabal Kumar Sen drew my attention to the fact that there is also an *Apasudradhikarana* in the *Mīmāṁsasūtra* (6.1.25–38), where the ineligibility of śūdras for studying the Vedas and participating in Vedic sacrifices has been sought to be established. However, this would not amount to the paradoxical relation between empirical and transcendental which it does in Advaita-Vedānta, as the Mīmāṁsa system is not known for accepting equality at metaphysical level.

20 The God of Guru Nanak is called Akāla (The Timeless One), Basaveshvar accepted Śiva as God and Narayanaguru upheld the *Advaita Brahman*.

21 Technically, one should also include *pratyekabuddhayāna*, that is, the path of an individual Buddha. I have not included it as a sect of Buddhism because it cannot be called an organised form of Buddhism, whereas the other three forms are organised forms.

22 For my discussion of the possibility of secular Buddhism, see Gokhale (2017, 2018).

23 "I do not propose any levelling of castes. Caste is a very good thing. Caste is the plan we want to follow......In India from caste we reach the point where there is no caste. Caste is based throughout on that principle. The plan in India is to make everybody a Brahmin, the Brahmin being the ideal of humanity" (Vivekananda 1989, 214).

24 This is derived from *Harijan*, 16-11-35 as quoted in Bose (1972, 774). Gandhi held that "self-imposed restriction against inter-marriage and interdining is essential for rapid evolution of soul." See *Harijan* 29-4-33, quoted in Bose (1972, 267 fn.)

25 *"ahiṃsā satyam asteyaṃ śaucam indriyanigrahaḥ| etaṃ sāmāsikaṃ dharmaṃ cāturvarṇye'bravīn manuḥ||"* MS 10.63 [Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, purity and control over senses: Manu has stated this consolidated obligation applicable to all the four varṇas.] However, Manu's non-egalitarian framework does not allow equal pursuit of these values by all the varṇas. Manu allows compulsory servitude imposed on śūdras, which is systemic violence committed on lower castes by upper castes. Equal pursuit of truth by all presupposes equal access to the knowledge of truth for all. But Manu deprived śūdras of the right to study the Vedas. Purity could not be practiced equally by all because Manu assigned impure professions to śūdras and pure professions to Brahmins. In this way caste rules which Manu made mandatory for all made the equal pursuit of the "consolidated obligations" impossible.

26 "Whether you do that or you do not, you must give a new doctrinal basis to your religion—a basis that will be in consonance with Liberty, Equality and fraternity, in short, with Democracy.........But I am told that .....you could draw for such principles on the Upanishads" (Ambedkar 2010, 77–8).

27 See for example Savarkar (1964, 433–90).

28 Also see Appendix II in this volume.

29 "*Dona śabdāṃta dona saṃskṛti*" (Two Cultures in Two Words), in Savarkar (1964, 354–63).

30 "*āsindhu-sindhu-paryantā yasya bhāratabhūmikā| pitṛbhūḥ puṇyabhūś caiva sa vai hindur iti smṛtaḥ||*" [He is known as a Hindu who regards the land of Bhārata, from Sindhu river to the ocean, as the ancestral land as well as the pious land.] (Savarkar 1964, 1).

31 For my discussion of this theme see Gokhale (2014).

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Part I

CLASSICAL BUDDHISM
AND CASTE

1

BUDDHA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CASTE SYSTEM AS AVAILABLE IN PĀLI TEXTS

Bimalendra Kumar

The Pāli texts of the *Tipiṭaka* of Theravāda Buddhists do not agree with the Brahmanic order of the varṇas,[1] i.e., Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra. Instead they change the order to the effect—Kṣatriya, Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya and Sūdra (Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa, Vessa and Sudda). Buddhism considers the view that one caste is superior to another false and evil—"*pāpakaṃ diṭṭhigataṃ*."[2] All the four so-called castes, it says, are exactly the same, equally pure and none of them is superior to the others.[3] But the Buddha's attitude towards the division of society on the basis of caste was antagonistic all along. He denounced the idea that Brāhmaṇas are superior on the grounds of birth. During his lifetime, society developed into a new structure of social order, generally known as "Four-Fold Assembly" or "*Catu-parisā*." It is the assembly of monks (*Bhikkhu-parisā*), assembly of nuns (*Bhikkūni-parisā*), assembly of lay devotees (*Upāsaka-parisā*) and assembly of lay female devotees (*Upāsikā-parisā*). The Buddha often talks about many things common to all of them. In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*, the Buddha says to the Māra, who asked him to attain *parinibbāna*, that he will not do so until all members of all four groups become well versed in his teaching. There are also occasional references to another four-fold classification as the assembly of Khattiyas (*Khattiya-parisā)*, assembly of Brāhmanas (*Brāhmaṇa-parisā*), assembly of Gahapatis (*Gahapati-parisā*) and the assembly of recluses (*Samaṇa-parisā*)[4] but the former is seen as more inclusive and popular than the latter. It is interesting to note that there is a reference to eight assemblies (*aṭṭha parisā*) in the *Dīghanikāya*.[5] The *Vasala Sutta* and *Vaseṭṭha Sutta* of the *Suttanipāta, Madhura Sutta, Assalāyana Sutta* and *Caṅki Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, etc., prove the worthlessness of the castes. In fact, the Buddha did away with all sorts of social distinctions between man and thus pleaded for social justice. He is reported to have said in the *Cullavagga*:

> Just as the great rivers, such as, the Gaṅgā, the Yamunā, the Acirā-vatī, the Sarabhū and the Mahī, when they pour their waters into the Great Ocean, lose their names and origins and become the

Great Ocean precisely so, you monks, do These four castes—the Khattiya, the Brāhmaṇa, the Vessa and the Sudda—when they pass, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Tathāgata, from home to homelessness, lose their names and origins.[6]

Buddha's attitude towards the caste system

The Buddha thus stood for the equality of man and the negation of the caste system. He maintained that it was *kamma* (deed, action) that determined the high and low state of a being. By birth one does not become an outcaste, by birth one does not become a Brāhmaṇa.[7] Every living being has *kamma* as its master, its kinsman, its refuge.[8] According to Pāli texts, there was no distinction of caste in the Buddha's order of monks and nuns. The Buddha's chief disciples even belonged to the so-called lower castes, such as barbers, sweepers and Caṇḍālas. Upāli, the most prominent Vinaya teacher after the Buddha, was from a barber family. He occupied a very high position in the Buddhist fraternity (Saṅgha).

There is no discrimination at all in terms of being low or high, well-born or ill-born, big or small etc. The discriminating order (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra existing immediately before the advent of the Buddha and the slightly changed order of Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa, Vessa and Sudda at his time[9]) had no valid ground for existence so far as the nature of human beings is concerned. "It is merely the empty sound, says the Buddha, that the Brāhmaṇas are superior, others are inferior; Brāhamaṇas are of high caste, others are low caste,"[10] which can be translated to mean: "The people of all the four castes are equal and I see no difference in them."[11] Distinctions, however, may be seen in various species because of their observable distinguishing marks:

> "You know the worms, and the moths, and the different sorts of ants, the marks that constitute species are for them and their species are manifold." "Know you also the birds that are born along on wings and move through the air, the marks that constitute are for them, and their species are manifold." "But as in these species, the marks constitute species are abundant, so in men the marks that constitute species are not abundant." "There is no difference as regards head, ears, eyes, mouth, nose, tongue, etc., difference there may be, if any, of their bodies, and that is also nominal."

This can be seen among humans as professional names—"One, who lives by different mechanical arts, is an artisan, and so also whoever amongst men lives by serving, is a servant. One is named so because he lives on archery; one is merchant because lives by trade etc."[12] According to this, one

is named because of one's deeds. The reality is that – "not by birth does one become an outcaste, by deeds one becomes a Brāhmaṇa."

> "A Brāhmaṇa, born in a preceptor family, friend of the hymns of the Vedas, when continually indulge in sinful deeds, is blamed in this world, and goes to the hell after death; his birth neither save him from birth in hell nor from the blame in the world." On the other hand, Sopāka, born in a low caste family, did virtuous deeds and attained the status of a sage Mātaṅga by name, reached the highest fame, such as was very difficult to obtain, as well as many Khattiyas and Brahmaṇas went to serve him. Further, being free from the dust, having abandoned sensual pleasures went to the Brahma-world after expiry of his life. His birth neither prevented him in getting highest fame nor in entering into the Brahma-divine world after death.[13]

In the *Vāseṭṭha sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*, the Buddha proves scientifically that there are no distinguishing marks in men, whether they are black or yellow, as are found in different species of animals and plants. Beetles, ants, moths and termites are different because each species is distinguished by different marks. Quadrupeds both small and large, snakes, fish and birds are different from one another because of different marks found in them. So is the case with different kinds of plants. But where are such distinguishing marks in men?

> Not by hair, nor head, nor ears, nor eyes, nor nose, nor mouth, nor lips, nor eyebrows, nor neck, nor shoulder, nor belly, nor back, nor buttock, nor chest... nor fingers, nor nails, nor calves, nor thighs, nor colour, nor voice is there a distinguishing mark arising from their species as in other species.[14]

All *Homo sapiens* constitute one species. According to the Buddha, *jāti* is primarily a biological term that means "species." The biological test of distinction between two species is that a male of one and female of the other are unable to mate for the purpose of procreation. It is to this sense the Buddha asserted, "*Aññamaññā hi jātiyo.*" The social division among men cannot be treated as *jātis* in the above sense. These divisions are occupational and congenital. The Buddha's view of caste is different. According to him, a man is high or low by virtue of his action.[15] *Kamma* is to be understood in its widest possible sense as occupation of all kinds, including traditional culture.

Thus, becoming low or high socially depends on immoral and moral deeds. One can be a Vasala because of immoral deeds and a Brāhmaṇa

because of moral ones.[16] Expressions like Mahāsammata, Khattiya, Brāh-maṇa, Jhāyaka, Ajjhāyaka, Vessa, Sudda, etc. came to be accidently by way of conventional communications and not based on some basic principle of inheritance of a lineage or birth in a particular family. There is no solid ground of truth conveying the sense of superiority or inferiority in them. "*Dhamma* or righteousness alone is the Superior here in this world and hereafter."[17] What is *Dhamma*? It is the *Vijjā* and *Caraṇa*. One, who is endowed with them is superior to men and gods alike—"*Vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno, so seṭṭho devamānuseti*."[18]

In the *Assalāyanasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*,[19] the Buddha discusses Brāhmaṇas' claims of being superior and the best varṇa, of being as white in colour, as pure, and the real sons of Brahmā, born from his mouth. The Buddha challenges the claim that they are birthed from the mouth of Brahmā by pointing out that they are born from the wombs of Brāh-maṇa women who conceive them, deliver them and feed them in the natural course of things. The Buddha also exploded the claims by Brahmins of inherent superiority with reference to several points. Brahmins were believers in the law of *kamma*. The Buddha pointed out to them that, like others, they have to suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. If there is any inherent superiority in Brahmins neither would they commit such deeds nor would they suffer for them. But Brahmins do commit them and suffer the consequences thereof.

With reference to this point, Mahākaccāna, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha, says to Avantiputta, King of Madhura, "If a noble kills, robs, fornicates, lies, slanders, a bitter of tongue, tattles, covets, harbours ill-will, and has a wrong outlook, will he, after death at the body's dissolution, pass to a state of misery and woe?"

"Such a noble will pass to a state of misery and woe, this is my view, and this is what I have heard from sages."

"Would the like doom await a Brahmin, or a middleclass man, or a working class man of like disposition?"

"Yes, it would."

"If this be so, do you think all classes are on precisely the same footing herein or not?"

"Undoubtedly, if this be so, all four classes are on precisely the same footing, and I see no difference between them."[20]

The same holds good with reference to their righteous conduct. This very argument has been used by the Buddha to convince Assalāyana and other Brahmins of the emptiness of their pretensions. Equality before moral law belies the claim by the Brahmins of inherent superiority.

In addition, the penal code of the country made no distinction with regard to different castes. For the same offence, members of different castes underwent the same punishment. This is again evident from the discussion between Mahākaccāna and Avantiputta. The former says to the king, "If

a noble is a burglar; thief, house breaker, footpad or adulterer, and if your people catch him and haul the malefactor before you for sentence, what would you do to him?"

"I should put him to death or confiscate his goods or banish him or otherwise deal with him as circumstances required, for the noble is now a malefactor."

"Would the same apply to the malefactor from any of the other three classes?"

"Yes, it would."

"If this be so, are all four classes on precisely the same footing herein or not?"

"Undoubtedly, all four classes are on precisely the same footing, and I see no difference between them."[21]

So this point also disproves the superiority of Brahmins.

Mahākaccāna, after advancing many points in refutation of the supremacy of the Brahmins, points out to the king that a wealthy man of one caste could employ the service of a man of any other caste. Thus he says, "If a noble grows rich and wealthy, can he have as his servant another noble, or a Brahmin or a middle-class man, or a working-class man to get up early, to go late to bed, to serve him diligently and to carry out his orders?"

"Yes, he could."

"And if it were a Brahmin who had thriven, could he likewise have as his servant a Brahmin, a middle-class man, a working-class man, or a noble?"

"Yes, he could."

"And if it were either a middle-class man or a working-class man who had thriven, could he likewise have his servant someone of the three other classes?"

"Of course, he could."

"If this be so, do you think all four classes are on precisely the same footing?"

"Undoubtedly, if this be so, all four classes are precisely on the same footing, and I see no difference at all between them."[22]

So a poor Brahmin could wait upon a rich Shudra to earn his bread. This point too proved false the claim of inborn superiority on the part of Brahmins. Winternitz calls the *Assalāyana sutta* "excellent" because of this reasoning and further remarks that "such dialogues about that problem of caste as the between the young Brahmin Assalāyana and Gotama Buddha must frequently have occurred in real life."[23]

The Buddha points out that in Yona, Kamboja and other frontier countries there are only two varṇas – *ārya* and *dāsa*, and a person can change from one to the other. He brings out the similarity in the four varṇas by pointing out that all can progress morally and that a Brāhmaṇa who has good conduct and does good to all is respected. Buddhism recognized that the caste system arose historically due to racial prejudice and socioeconomic

conditions. It was indeed a revolution in social thought when the Buddha proclaimed that caste and class prejudices are obstacles to higher morality and knowledge and, therefore, to salvation.[24]

Some discrepancies and later degenerations

The Buddha is very much explicit in stating that in the Buddhist order all castes lose their distinctions and become one. With regard to lay people, there was no preaching against caste or observance of caste regulations. In fact, in the *Mahāpadāna sutta*, it is said that the Buddha could be born only in the two higher castes, Brahmins and Kshatriya.[25] The commentator of the *Suttanipāta* says that a Buddha is born either in a Kshatriya or Brahmin family and a Paccekabuddha can be born even in the Gahapati family in addition to the two mentioned above.[26] This view of caste where even spiritual hierarchy based on caste is inbuilt makes the caste system look fundamental and eternal, and regards it a basic factor to make a distinction between the high and the low. In the *Apadāna* text, it is stated that Bhagwan Kassapa and other Buddhas are shown to have been always born in Brahmin families. The intention here is to perpetuate the caste system and say that it is not a structure made by man to smoothly and efficiently organize society, as claimed by people who are not conservative. There is definitely some kind of vested interest from which such theories are propounded.[27] In some dialogues like *Ambaṭṭha sutta*, the Buddha even takes pride in being a Kshatriya. This does not appear consistent with his alleged "no caste" teaching. According to the *Jātaka* commentary, the Bodhisatta is said to have surveyed the world prior to conception, considering a few factors including the caste recognised as the highest at the time. This is significant. It is also important that, according to the Buddhist tradition, Buddhas are born as Brahmins when that caste is considered the highest, and as Khattiyas when they are the highest. It was in keeping with this traditional law that Gotama Buddha selected the Khattiya caste.[28]

There was also no distinction of caste in the Buddha's orders of monks and nuns. The Buddha's chief disciples belonged to even the so-called lower castes, such as barbers, sweepers and Caṇḍālas, who attained *arhathood* and became the teachers of people at large.[29] But in the later Pāli commentarial texts, Caṇḍālas were treated in a different manner. In one of the *Jātakas*, a Caṇḍāla is mentioned as a mongoose-trainer (*koṇḍa-damaka*)[30] and in another, Caṇḍālas learn *caṇḍālavaṃsadhopana*.[31] One *Jātaka* calls a person an "odious Caṇḍāla" (*mahācaṇḍāla*).[32] Originally, the Caṇḍālas seem to have been an aboriginal tribe. This is clear from the use of their own argot.[33] Gradually, they came to be looked upon as "untouchables." One *Jātaka* describes the Caṇḍālas as the vilest people on the earth.[34] In one *Jātaka* story, when a Caṇḍāla enters a town, people pound him with

blows and render him unconscious.[35] The extent to which the Caṇḍālas were abhorred could be deduced from the various mentions of them in some of the Jātakas.[36] Contact with air that touched a Caṇḍāla's body was regarded as contamination. Even the sight of the Caṇḍālas from a distance was enough for high caste people, especially women, to wash their eyes with scented water (*gandhodaka*) to remove the contamination, as narrated in the *Citta-Sambhūta Jātaka*.[37] Same sort of incident is related in the *Mātaṅga Jātaka*[38] when the daughter of a Seṭṭhi of Vāranasi upon seeing a Caṇḍala washed her eyes with perfumed water, as she had been contaminated by a mere glance at that despised person.

Upāli, who was the most prominent teacher of Vinaya, belonged to a barber family and occupied a very high position in the Buddhist Saṅgha. But Dharmananda Koshambi, quoting from the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, has tried to prove that caste discrimination occurred in the Saṅgha.[39] The scholastics among the monks, who formed a very powerful group in the order under the leadership of Brahmin converts to Buddhism (of them only a fraction was genuine) during the life time of the Buddha, had acquired prominent positions by the dint of their proximity to the Buddha. After the passing of the Buddha, that same group became more powerful. They made the exegetical study of the teachings of the Buddha and formulated the Abhiddhammic terms and consequent details.[40]

Concluding remarks

These discrepancies and degenerate views were inconsistent with the Buddha's original message. His attitude towards the caste system was concerned with the welfare of all human beings without any discrimination. Many Indian and western scholars have discussed the social aspects of Buddhism. Swami Vivekananda was the first Indian to recognize the "social element" of Buddhism as its "unique element."—"The Buddha was the first to preach universal brotherhood of man"; he was "the only great Indian philosopher who would not recognize caste;" he was "the great preacher of the equality of man."[41] The second Indian to recognize this aspect of the Buddha's teachings was P. L. Narasu, whose writings had an impact on B. R. Ambedkar. Narasu (1912, 7) says that the "spirit of Buddhism is essentially socialistic." Anagarika Dharmapala, one of the great revivalists of Buddhism in India, was one of the first to speak about "the social gospel of the Buddha." In a lecture at Shanghai in 1913, Dharmapala declared: "A progressive evolution with a definite ideal, its realization here and now, making life cheerful, energetic, serene, worth living for the sake of doing good for the welfare of others, this the Tathāgata proclaimed."[42] Modern scholar Richard F. Gombrich (1988, 81) says that the Buddha was not concerned with politics, but Trevor Ling (1973, 418) assesses that the Buddha may justly be

described as a social and political theorist. The Buddha's approach follows from his concentration on the problem of suffering at an individual level. His concern was neither political nor social, but purely salvific.[43] Several studies have contributed to social aspects of Buddhism, especially those of R. S. Sharma (1958), G. C. Pande (1984, 4–8), Uma Chakravarty (1987), Vijay Kumar Thakur (2001) and K. T. S. Sarao (2002), who do discuss some Buddhist arguments concerned with the social and historical data found in Pāli literature.

Notes

1 The two terms *jāti* and *varṇa* must be distinguished, even if the Sanskrit term *Jāti* is used in both cases. It should be noted the Tibetans used the word *rigs* to render alternatively *jāti* and *varṇa*, but also *kula* (which can in fact have the same meaning as *varṇa*), or even *gotra* (also often translated by the Tib. *Rus*). When the Sanskrit is lacking, the Tibetan term *rigs* remains ambiguous. Cf. Eltschinger (2012, xvii–xviii).

2 *Majjhima Nikāya* II, pp. 155–6.

3 'Ime cattāro vaṇṇā samasamā honti. Samaṇo Gotamo cātuvaṇṇiṁ suddhiṁ paññāpeti"- ibid., p. 89.

4 "Svāyaṁ evaṁ bhāvanāsampanno ……-yadi khattiyaparisaṁ yadi brāhmaṇaparisaṁ yadi gahapatiparisaṁ yadi samaṇaparisaṁ –visārado upasaṅkamati amaṅkubhūto"-Paṭisambhidāmagga, p. 511. "It has been argued that the four varṇa scheme, consisting of Khattiyas, Brāhmaṇas, Vaiśyas are theoretical, and that the Buddha talks about it only during his conversations with the Brahamaṇs and the kings. However, when he talks with the laity, the expressions such as Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa and Gahapati are used"- See Chakravarti (1987, 104–5).

5 Aṭṭha parisā-khattiyaparisā, brāhmaṇaparisā, gahapatiparisā, samaṇaparisā, catumahārājikaparisā, tāvatiṁsaparisā, māraparisā, brāhmaṇaparisā"- Dīghanikāya, Vol. II, (Nalanda) p. 86. Vol. III, p. 200.

6 Cf. "Seyyathāpi, Bhikkhave, yā kāci mahānadiyo seyyathīdaṁ-, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, Mahī, tā Mahāsamuddaṁ pattā jahanti purimā nāmagottāni, Mahāsamuddo tvaveva Saṅkhaṁ gacchanti. Evameva kho, Bhikkhave, Cattāro me vaṇṇā — Khattiyā, Brāhmaṇā, Vessā, Suddā. Te Tathāgatappavedite dhammavinaye agārasmā anagāriyaṁ pabbajitvā jahanti purimamāni…" - Cullavagga, p. 356.

7 Cf. Vasala Sutta, Suttanipāta, in Khuddaka Nikāya I, p. 290.
   "Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo
   Kammunā vasalo hoti, kammunā hoti brāhmaṇo."

8 Kammassakā, Kammadāyādo, Kammayoni, Kammabandhu, Kammapaṭisaraṇo.

9 Majjhima Nikāya II, 310–16.

10 Ibid., p. 110.

11 Dīgha Nikāya I, p. 80.

12 "kassako kammunā hoti, sippiko hoti pi kammunā/
   vānijjo kammunā hoti, pessiko hoti kammunā"//
   na jaccā brāhmaṇo hoti, na jaccā hoti abrāhmaṇo/
   kammunā brāhmaṇo hoti, kammunā hoti abrāhmaṇo" - Khuddaka Nikaya I, p. 368.

13 "Tadaminā pi jānātha, yathāmedaṁ nidassanaṁ/
   caṇḍālaputto sopāko, mātaṅgo iti vissuto//

    so yasaṁ paramaṁ patto, mātaṅgo yaṁ sudullabhaṁ/
    āgacchuṁ tassupaṭṭhānam, khattiyā brāhmaṇā bahu//
    devayānaṁ abhirūyha, virajaṁ so mahāpathaṁ/
    kāmarāgaṁ virājetvā, brahmalokūpago ahuṁ/
    na naṁ jāti nivāresi, brahmalokūpapattiyā" - ibid, pp. 289–90.

14 Ibid., pp. 364–55.

15 "*na jaccā bhāhmaṇo hoti, na jaccā hoti abrahmaṇo/*
     kammunā brāhmano hoti abrāhmaṇo//" ibid., pp. 289–90.

16 "*na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo/*
     kammunā vasalo hoti, kammunā hoti brāhmaṇo" // ibid., p. 290.

17 *Dīgha Nikāya* III, pp. 72–75.

18 *Dīgha Nikāya* I, pp. 86–91.

19 *Majjhima Nikāya* II, p. 88.

20 *Majjhima Nikaya* II, p. 44.

21 Ibid., p. 45.

22 Ibid., p. 44.

23 Winternitz (1933, 50).

24 "*Ye hi keci jātivādavinibaddhā vā gottavādavinibaddhā vā…ārakā te anuttarāya vijjācaraṇasampadāya. Pahāya kho, jātivādavinibaddhā cā gottavādavinibaddhā cā…anuttaāya, vijjācaraṇasampadāya sacchikiriyā hotī ti*"-*Dīghanikāya*, I, p. 87.

25 "*Vipassi, Bhikkhave, Bhagavā arahaṁ sammāsambuddho khattiyo jātiyā ahosi, khattiykule udapādi. Sikhī, Bhikkhave, Bhagavā arahaṁ sammāsambuddho khattiyo jātiyā ahosi, khattiyakule udapādi…. Kassapo, bhikkhave, Bhagavā arahaṁ sammāsambuddho brāhmaṇo jātiyā ahosi, brāhamaṇakule udapādi. Ahaṁ, bhikkhave, etarahi arahaṁ sammāsambuddho khattiyo jātiyā ahosi, khattiykule uppanno.*" - *Dīghanikāya*, Vol. II, pp. 3–4.

26 "*Evaṁ imāya patthanāya iminā ca abhinihārena yathāvuttappabhedaṁ kālaṁ pāramiyā puretvā Buddha loke uppajjanta khattiyakūle va brāhmaṇakūle vā uppajjanti, paccekabudha khattiyabrāhmaṇagahapati- kūlānaṁ aññatarasmiṁ, aggasāvakā pana khattiyabrāhmaṇakulesseva Buddha iva vivattamāne kappe uppajjanti*"- *Sutta Nipāta Aṭṭhakathā*, Vol. I, p. 64.

27 Chaudhary (2009, 117).

28 *Jātaka (with commentary)*, (1962), p. 46.

29 For reference to the outcastes admitted into the Buddhist order, See Dhammaratana, (1969, 20–30).

30 *Jātaka*, (1877–1897) Vol. IV, p. 389.

31 Ibid., p. 390.

32 Ibid., p. 200.

33 Ibid., p. 391f.

34 Ibid., p. 397.

35 Ibid., pp. 376, 391.

36 "Staying to the Windward and Washing Eyes with Perfumed Water: An Examination of the Brahmanical Attitude Towards Caṇḍāḷas and Other Outcastes as Reflected in the Pali Literature" - (Sarao 2009, 24).

37 *Jātaka*, (1877–1897) Vol. IV, pp. 390–401.

38 Ibid., pp. 375–90.

39 Cf. Koshambi (2009, 166–81).

40 Cf. Singh (1984, 110).

41 Cf. Vivekananda (1963, Vol. V, p. 309; Vol. II, p. 486; Vol. VIII, p. 98).

42 Quoted in Murty (1984, viii); Cf. Thakur (2008, 107).

43 Mudagamuwe (2005, 29–30).

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CASTE IN CLASSICAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Some ontological problems

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The system of Cāturvarṇya, according to which Indian society was divided and arranged hierarchically into four groups (viz. brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra), has been one of the most obnoxious and baneful features of the latter. Despite the rule of foreigners who did not observe the system, and the emergence of some indigenous reformist religions like Buddhism and Jainism that flourished in the pre-Christian era and later social phenomena like Sikhism and the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj movement that challenged this system; the grip of this oppressive system—in which some people known as *nirvasita śūdra*s in Indian society were once considered to be untouchable (*aspṛśya*) and even more impure than some sub-human creatures—is still intact. The accounts of the emergence of this classification as given in the *Puruṣasūkta* of *Ṛgveda* (10/90/12), *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (3/12/13), *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (7/1/1) or *Bhagavadgītā* (4/3) are too well known to be recounted here. Among the Brahminical schools, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā maintain the view that properties like brahminhood, kṣatriyahood, etc. are natural and mutually incompatible characteristics like "cow-ness," "horse-ness," etc., and hence, one has to accept this four-fold classification of human beings as given fact and not subject to any change that may be brought about by human effort. A similar view is found also in some grammatical works like the commentaries and sub-commentaries on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini. Just as one cannot obliterate or deny the 'property' of "cow-ness" that all cows possess and that also distinguishes cows from other animals like horses, buffalos, dogs, cats, etc., one has also to admit brahminhood as the natural "property" that exists in all brahmins, whether present, past or future, and that is also absent in all non-brahmins. Similar is the case with properties like kṣatriyahood, etc. Each such property is one, eternal and located in a number of individuals (*vyakti*s) that exemplify it. Such natural properties that help us classify objects are admitted as "universals" (*sāmānya/jāti*) in many philosophical systems. In this chapter we will briefly survey accounts of the

concept of universal (*sāmānya/jāti*) and universal properties like brahminhood, etc. in the philosophical systems such as Grammar, Pūrvamīmāṃsā, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Buddhism and Jainism.

Discussion of Brahminhood in grammar texts

The Aṣṭādhyāyī aphorism "nañ"

Our discussion of the grammatical texts begins with the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* Aphorism *"nañ"* (2/2/6), which expresses similarity, negation, difference, etc. and, along with another word, can form nominal compounds (*samāsa*s) known as "*nañ-tatpuruṣa*" (i.e., a determinative compound with a negative component). In *tatpuruṣa samāsa*, usually the meaning of the second term becomes predominant. When *nañ* occurs as the first component of such a compound, the question arises—which of these two terms would have the dominant meaning? Patañjali has chosen the word "*abrāhmaṇa*," which has been formed with the first component *nañ* and the second component "brāhmaṇa," which means a brahmin. The compound word "*abrāhmaṇa*" means someone who is not a brahmin but resembles one, e.g., a kṣatriya; who, like the brahmin, studies the Vedas, wears the sacred thread and performs sacrifices; but unlike a brahmin, cannot act as a priest or a teacher of the scriptures. In this case, the word "brāhmaṇa" is employed as praise, which indicates the presence of some good qualities or virtues in that person. While discussing such issues, the meaning of the term "brāhmaṇa" has come up and one response is that it stands for "universal brahminhood" (*brāhmaṇatva/brāhmaṇya*). Then the issue arises—is brahminhood dependent on birth alone, or also on some other factors such as good conduct, knowledge of scriptures, etc.? Physical attributes like having fair complexion, tawny eyes and reddish brown hair, along with pure conduct, are also sometimes considered to be factors that identify a person as a brahmin. Patañjali has said also here that a person who is as dark-complexioned as a heap of black beans and who is sitting in a shop is not ascertained by any one as a Brahmin. Patañjali has also quoted a verse that says the brahminhood of a person depends on (i) practice of austerities, (ii) learning and (iii) birth from a brahmin couple. One who lacks the first two factors is said to be a brahmin by birth alone (*jātibrāhmaṇa*, i.e., one who is born of brahmin parents).[2] Patañjali has said that sometimes, when the usage of a term depends on a member of certain conditions, one observes the term being used even when it satisfies only some of those conditions. For example, one says, "oil has been consumed," "clarified butter has been consumed," even though what has been consumed is only a portion and not the whole quantity. Likewise, the term "brāhmaṇa" is used even when the person is a brahmin by birth alone. But there are also cases where in the absence of conduct, etc., or in the absence of being born of

brahmin parents, a person is said to be an "*abrāhmaṇa*" (which may mean either someone who resembles a brahmin or one who is different from a brahmin). Thus, a brahmin whose conduct is not pure (i.e., in accordance with the rules laid down in scriptures), e.g., a brahmin who urinates or eats while standing, is castigated as "*abrāhmaṇa,*" i.e., one who is not a brahmin proper (and hence, does not deserve the respect that is shown to a brahmin), since his conduct is contrary to scriptural injunctions. But in some cases, due to resemblances in terms of physical characteristics or conduct, one may mistake a non-brahmin for a brahmin. Likewise, due to wrong instructions, e.g., "a brahmin resides in such and such place, go and bring him," one may bring a resident of that place who is actually not a brahmin. In both these cases, one comes to know subsequently that the person concerned is *abrāhmaṇa*, since he is not born of parents who are both brahmins. Once brahminhood is thus primarily decided on the basis of birth, it is but natural to think that it is a universal like "cow-ness," "horse-ness," etc., the presence of which in some individual is determined solely by birth. No wonder, that Kaiyaṭa considered the possibility of treating brāhmaṇa as a *jātiśabda*, i.e., a word that has some universal as its referent, and that Nāgeśa also supported this view.

The Aṣṭādhyāyī *aphorism* "alpāctaram"

We now consider Pāṇini's aphorism "*alpāctaram*" (2/2/34). Aphorism 2/2/32 is "*dvandve ghi,*" and as per the rule of *anuvṛtti*, the word "*dvandve*" has to be understood to be repeated in this aphorism as well. The meaning of aphorism 2/2/34 has to be that while forming nominal compounds (*samāsas*) known as *dvandva samāsas* (i.e., copulative compounds) by joining together two or more words, the word that contains the lesser number of vowels must occur as the first member of the compound. This phenomenon is known as "*pūrvanipāta.*" For example, if a *dvandva* compound is formed by joining the words, "*plakṣa*" (the Sanskrit name of the Indian holy fig tree) and "*nyagrodha*" (the Sanskrit name of the Indian fig tree), then the resultant form would be "*plakṣa-nyagrodhau;*" which is in dual number since it is formed out of two words—the word "*plakṣa*" occurs first as it has fewer vowels than the word "*nyagrodha.*" Similarly, the *dvandva* compound formed by combining the words "*dhava,*" "*khadira*" and "*palāśa*" (all three being names of different trees) would be "*dhava-khadira-palāśāḥ*," which is in plural number since it contains more than two components—the word "*dhava*" occurs first, since it has fewer vowels than the other two words. However, the seventh supplementary rule (*vārttika*) of Kātyāyana (viz. "*varṇānām ānupūrvyena pūrvanipātaḥ*") points out that an exception has to be made in the case of a *dvandva* compound formed by putting together the names of the four castes, viz. "brāhmaṇa,"

"kṣatriya'," "viś" and "śūdra," because in the resultant form, these names have to be arranged in accordance with the superiority and inferiority of these castes as indicated by the places of their origin.[3] It has been stated in the Vedas that Prajāpati created brāhmaṇa from his mouth, kṣatriya from his arms, vaiśya from his thighs and śūdra from his feet. Accordingly, the copulative compound formed by these four names would be "*brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-viṭ-śūdrāḥ*," even though the number of vowels present in "brāhmaṇa" and "kṣatriya" is greater than the number of vowels present in "viś" and "śūdra." Since the supposed place of origin determines the hierarchy of the four-fold classification of men according to their castes, the names of these castes are likely to be treated as examples of *jātiśabda*, i.e., a word that has some universal as its referent.

The Aṣṭādhyāyī aphorism "puṃyogād ākhyāyām"

The aphorism of *Aṣṭādhyāyī* to be discussed next is "*puṃyogād ākhyāyām*" (4/1/48) along with the vārttika no. 10 (*avadātāyaṃ ñīpprasaṅgaḥ*) on it. The aphorism no. 4/1/48 states that the suffix "*ñīṣ*" has to be added to words for males in order to form the words that denote their wives. Thus, by adding the suffix *ñīṣ* to the word "*gaṇaka*" (meaning an astrologer), we derive the word "*gaṇakī*" (meaning the wife of an astrologer). Vārttika no. 10 (*avadātāyāṃ ñīpprasaṅgaḥ*) points out that the expression "*avadātā brāhmaṇī*" is grammatically correct. The problem here is that as per the aphorism "*varṇādanudāttāttopadhātto naḥ*" (4/1/39), which states that each of the words like "*eta*," "*śveta*," etc. that (i) are the names of colours, (ii) have an unaccented letter at the end, and (iii) have "t" as their penultimate letter, can have two alternative forms in their corresponding feminine gender, i.e., it can be (i) "*etā*" or "*enī*," (ii) "*śvetā*" or "*svenī*" and so on. Since the word "*avadāta*," meaning the colour white, also satisfies the two other conditions mentioned above, along with '*avadātā*', we should also have the alternative form "*avadānī*" that would be the adjective of the substantive "*brāhmaṇī*," which is in the feminine gender and means "the wife of a brahmin." In defence of the usage of "*avadātā brāhmaṇī*," Patañjali has said here that here the word "*avadāta*" means "pure" and not "white." In support of this claim, Patañjali quoted a verse that said a brahmin whose learning, birth and conduct are pure can be treated as a respectable brahmin.[4] In this verse, the word "*avadāta*" has been used to mean "pure." In *Pradīpa* and *Uddyota*, it was said that the word "*avadātā brāhmaṇī*" is correct, irrespective of whether the brahmin woman concerned has a fair or dark complexion, provided her birth and conduct are pure, i.e., free from any blemish. Here it is also said that purity of birth is an essential condition for being a brahmin, which in turn suggests that for the authors, brahmin-hood is a universal.

The Aṣṭādhyāyī aphorism "jāterastrīviṣayād ayopadhāt"

Finally, while commenting on the aphorism "*jāterastrīviṣayād ayopadhāt*" (4/1/63), Patañjali gave a definition of "*jāti*," i.e., universal. This aphorism means that if a word (i) expresses some universal, (ii) is not invariably in the feminine gender, and (iii) does not have "y" as its penultimate letter, then by adding the suffix "*ṅīṣ*" to it, we can derive the corresponding word in feminine gender. Thus, from the word "*sūkara*" (hog) one can derive the word "*sūkarī*" (sow), and likewise, from the words "*kukkuṭa*" (cock), "*mayūra*" (peacock), "*brāhmaṇa*" (brahmin), "*vṛṣala*" (śūdra), etc., we can derive corresponding words in the feminine gender like "*kukkuṭī*" (hen), "*mayurī*" (peahen), "*brāhmaṇī*" (a woman who is brahmin by caste), "*vṛṣalī*" (a woman who is śūdra by caste), and so on. These illustrations have been taken from *Kāśikā*; while the examples given in *Mahābhāṣya* of such words in the feminine gender are "*kākī*" (a female crow), "*pikī*" (a female cuckoo), "*śukī*" (a female parrot), "*ulūkī*" (a female owl) and so on. With the inclusion of words like '*brāhmaṇī*' and '*vṛṣalī*' in this list, it becomes clear that for these grammarians, words like "brāhmaṇa," "śūdra," etc. are *jātiśabda*s, i.e., words that have universals as their referents. Words like "kṣatriya" and "vaiśya" are counter-examples in explanations of this aphorism, not because they are not *jātiśabda*s, but because they have 'y' as the penultimate letter.

Patañjali has also provided here a definition of *jāti* (i.e., universal) in a versified form. This verse has four parts, viz. (i) "*ākṛtigrahaṇā jātiḥ*," (ii) "*liṅgānāñca na sarvabhāk*," (iii) "*sakṛdākhyātanirgrāhyā*" and (iv) "*gotrañca caraṇaiḥ saha*."[5] The first quarter of this verse states that *jāti* is something that can be known through *ākṛti* (i.e., some specific configuration or arrangement of component parts). While this definition is applicable to universals like "cow-ness," "horse-ness," etc. that are instantiated by individuals having specific configuration, it is not applicable to universals like brahminhood, since it is not grasped through the presence of any specific configuration. That is why the second quarter of this verse provides another criterion for identifying *jātiśabda*. It has been said here that such words cannot be associated with all three genders (viz. masculine, feminine and neuter). The words "*brāhmaṇaḥ*" and "*brāhmaṇī*" are respectively in the masculine gender and feminine gender and they mean a male brahmin person and a female brahmin person respectively. But the word "brāhmaṇa" cannot be associated with the neuter gender (*klīvaliṅga*). Accordingly, brahminhood, which cannot also be associated with *all* three genders, satisfies the second definition provided in this verse. The same is true for properties like kṣatriyahood, vaiśyahood and śūdrahood. This conclusively shows that for these grammarians, properties like brahminhood are genuine universals and not complex properties (*sakhaṇḍa dharma*) that are constituted of a number of simpler properties.

The views of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa on universals
and brahminhood

Let us now note the view of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa on the issue under consideration as expressed in his two main works, *Ślokavārttika* and *Tantravārttika*. In the *Pratyakṣasūtra* section of *Ślokavārttika*, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa admitted the perceptibility of universals like "cow-ness," while commenting on some sentences of Śabarasvāmin's *Bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1/1/5, which states (i) the nature of perception and (ii) the reasons for *not* treating perception as a source of knowledge through which *dharma* and *adharma* can be known. While discussing the nature of perception, this aphorism stated that perception occurs due to a specific connection (*samprayoga*) between a sense-organ (*indriya*) with some existent object (*sat*) that can be grasped by that sense-organ. Not all entities can, however, be perceived by us; hence, a proper account of perception should also state the types of the entities that may be perceived and also the relations obtained in such cases between the sense-organ and the objects perceivable through them. In the *Pratyakṣasūtra* section*,* Kumārila Bhaṭṭa clearly stated that in a determinate perception, which occurs after an inderterminate perception, the perceived object can be cognized as characterized by features like universals, etc.[6] In this connection, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa also stated in the section *Vanavāda* of *Ślokavārttika,* that universals like brahminhood can be perceived by us, since otherwise we would not be able to explain why, after seeing a person, we sometimes have a doubt of the form, "Is this person a brahmin or not?"[7] In the context of this doubt, brahminhood and its absence are the two mutually incompatible alternatives that are presented to us, just as in the case of, "Is that a man or a tree trunk?" which sometimes occurs after seeing a distant object, the alternatives (called *koṭi*), are (i) the property of being a man and (ii) the property of being a tree-trunk. Now, one who has never perceived these two last mentioned properties cannot have a doubt in the form, "Is this a man or a tree trunk?" Likewise, unless one has previously perceived brahminhood and its absence, one cannot also have a perceptual doubt such as, "Is this man a brahmin or not?"

Here, one may legitimately raise the question that supposing brahminhood *is* a universal, like the property of being a man or "cow-ness" or "horseness," why does not one immediately perceive brahminhood in a person who actually *is* a brahmin? In that case, just as the thing seen is known with certitude as a man, the fact that the man concerned is a brahmin would also be known with certainty and there would be no scope for doubt in the form, "Is this person a brahmin or not?" The very fact that unlike the property of being a man, the brahminhood of that man is not grasped immediately, proves conclusively that brahminhood *cannot* be perceived.

In the verses nos. 26–29 of *Vanavāda*, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa tried to show that in certain cases, universals can be perceived only when the sense-organ

concerned is associated with some other factor. In many cases, awareness of properties like colour, taste, smell, touch and spatial and temporal features as well often help us in comprehending universals present in the things we perceive. Thus, the property of gold (*suvarṇatva*) in a piece of metal can be ascertained through its colour, weight, etc. Molten butter, which resembles oil, can be identified by its specific smell and taste. The presence of fire covered by ash can be ascertained by touch. That an animal at a distance is a horse (i.e., characterised by "horse-ness") can be ascertained by the neighing sound it makes. The presence of pot-hood in a utensil can be ascertained by its configuration. Likewise, brahminhood located in a person can be ascertained when it is known that both his parents are brahmins; and in certain countries, where the king compels each of his subjects to observe the rituals and customs specific to the caste he/she belongs to, one can ascertain brahminhood from the conduct of that person concerned.[8] This knowledge comes from spatial factors. Likewise, from seeing someone perform the *agnyādhāna* ritual in the spring, it can be ascertained that this person is a brahmin. This is due to temporal factors.

In *Tantravārttika* connected with Śabarasvāmin's *Bhāṣya* on the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1/2/2 (*śāstradṛṣṭavirodhācca*)—which discusses how one can establish the authority of the vedic sentence "*na caitad vidmo vayaṃ brāhmaṇā vā abrāhmaṇā vā*" [*Taittīrīya Brāhmaṇa* 2/1/2 (i.e., "we do not know whether we are brahmins or not")] and which, according to Śabarasvāmin, is contradicted by perception since the brahminhood of a person can be known perceptually—Kumārila Bhaṭṭa reiterated most of the claims stated above. But he denied that brahminhood can be determined merely from the conduct of a person because, under such a condition, when a person behaves like a brahmin he would be ascertained a brahmin and if the same person behaved like a śūdra, he would be ascertained a śūdra, which would result in the absence of caste distinctions.[9] He has also tried to meet the criticism that when our sense-organs need to be assisted by other factors for knowing something, that knowledge ceases to be perceptual. Even when we visually perceive things placed before us, our visual organ requires the assistance of light, a centain proximity to the object, contact of sense-organ with mind and so on. In order to see something situated on top of a mountain, we have to climb the mountain. Does that render the knowledge of that thing non-perceptual? But there are passages also in *Tantravārttika* on *Śābarabhāṣya* 1/2/2 that mention some scriptural passages that do not seem to be consistent with the view that brahminhood is a universal. One of them is from *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*[10] and a half-verse from an unknown source.[11]

Kumārila has quoted only the initial parts of these verses. The verse from *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* means that if a kṣatriya is married to a man who is brahmin by caste and if a daughter is born to them, then the daughter would be treated as *mūrdhāvasikta,* someone superior to kṣatriyas in

caste, but inferior to brahmins. If she is married in turn to a brahmin and a daughter is born to them, then that daughter would be superior in caste to *mūrdhāvasiktas*. If this process goes on for four generations, then the daughter born in the fifth generation would attain brahminhood. In the case of women who are vaiśyas, this change would occur in the sixth generation, and in the case of a śūdra woman, this change would occur in the seventh generation. Contrarily, if a son who is *mūrdhāvasikta* marries a kṣatriya woman, then any son born to them would be inferior in caste to *mūrdhāvasiktas*. If such a son again marries a kṣatriya woman and a son is born to them, then the caste of such a son would be even more inferior. If this process continues for four generations, then the son born in the fifth generation would be treated as a kṣatriya. (This is how Someśvara Bhaṭṭa explained this verse in his *Nyāyasudhā*.[12]) But such an increase or decrease in status cannot hold in the case of universals, which are considered eternal and immutable. The second half-verse quoted above means that if a brahmin continues to sell milk for one month, then he becomes a śūdra in this very birth. This, too, is inconsistent with the claim that brahminhood, etc. are universals—because an individual instantiating a universal U_1 cannot, all of a sudden, become bereft of U_1 and become an instance of another universal U_2. According to Kumārila, however, this second half-verse merely means that selling milk is unbecoming on the part of a brahmin.

It may, however, be noted here that Kumārila Bhaṭṭa has *not* taken into account a few scriptural passages, some of which maintain that brahminhood depends primarily on specific good qualities and the practice of virtues, and not on birth. There are also some other passagess that specifically maintain that through the practice of *dharma*, a person born in a lower caste can be elevated to a higher caste, while through the practice of *adharma*, a person born in a higher caste can be downgraded to a lower caste.

Some examples of these are found in the *Mahābhārata*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Āpastambadharmasūtra*. For instance:

1   "Oh Devī, by performing these actions in this way, a śūdra attains brāhmaṇa-hood and a vaiśya attains kṣatriya-hood."[13]
2   "All these brāhmaṇas are made so by conduct. A śūdra established in conduct attains brāhmaṇa-hood."[14]
3   "He is known as a brāhmaṇa, in whom are seen truthfulness, charity, absence of hatred, kindness, humility, compassion and austerity."[15]
4   "If this (list of virtues) is seen in śūdra and it is not there in a twice-born one, then the śūdra will not be a śūdra and the brāhmaṇa will not be a brāhmaṇa."[16]
5   "Whichever varṇa-indicating sign has been stated in the case of a person, if it is seen in another person, then one should designate that person by that respective varṇa."[17] (Śrīdharasvāmin, while explaining this

verse says, "The primary usage of the word brāhmaṇa is in respect of calmness, etc. and not just in respect of birth."[18])

6   "By meritorious behaviour a lower varṇa reduces to prior and prior varṇa in the next birth."[19]

7   "By bad behaviour a prior (that is, higher) varṇa reduces to lower and lower varṇa in the next birth."[20]

Jayanta Bhaṭṭa on brahminhood as a universal

Jayanta Bhaṭṭa defended the perceptuality of brahminhood on two occasions. In *Āhnika* III of his *Nyāyamañjarī*, he stated and rejected the view of Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas, who maintain that the property of being sound (*śabdatva*) that is present in all sounds is not *jāti*, i.e., a universal proper—it is nothing but the property of being audible, i.e., being perceptible by the auditing sense-organ (*śrotrendriyagrāhyatva*), which is only an imposed property (*upādhi*). In this connection, he has said that just as brahminhood is a perceptible property, so too is the property of being a sound.[21]

Again, in *Āhnika* VI of *Nyāyamañjarī*, in regards to the question of whether grammatical correctness (*sādhutva*) and grammatical incorrectness (*asādhutva*) can be known perceptually, Jayanta Bhaṭṭa has said that these properties too can be perceived by a person who has received proper training in grammar—just as one can perceive the brahminhood in a brahmin when one is told that the person has been born of brahmin parents. His arguments very much resemble the arguments given by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and he also quoted from *Ślokavārttika* and *Tantravārttika* in defence of his views. He also noted the view of some unidentified thinkers who maintain that one may perceptually know the brahminhood present in a person simply after seeing his/her pleasant and placid appearance.[22]

The opposition between Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Buddhist views on universals and brahminhood

According to the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools, the relation through which a universal is situated in the individual instantiating it is known as "inherence" (*samavāya*), which is also one and eternal and which occurs between two relata that are "inseparable" (*ayutasiddha*). Five pairs of relata are regarded as inseparable: (i) a composite substance (*avayavin*, e.g., an earthen pot) and its component parts (*avayava*s); (ii) a substance (*dravya*) and its qualities (*guṇa*s, e.g., colour, touch, smell, etc.), (iii) a substance (*dravya*) and the movements (*kriyā*s) characterising it, (iv) a universal (*jāti/sāmānya*) and an individual (*vyakti*) that instantiates it and (v) an eternal substance (*nitya-dravya*) and the "differentiator" or "particularity" (*viśeṣa*) that differentiates each such substance from other eternal substances. The Bhāṭṭa

Mīmāṃsā school does not admit the existence of inherence—instead, they admit the relation of *tādātmya*, which is identity that is compatible with difference (*bheda-sahiṣṇu-abheda*). They also do not admit the existence of particularities. According to the Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā schools, if an individual is perceptible, then the universal present in such an individual is also perceptible. In accordance with this view, these three schools maintain that common properties like brahminhood, which are universals, are also perceptible, just as universals like "pot-hood" are. In this way, these three schools try to show that the system of varṇas is natural and not man-made.

Such a view has been severely criticised by Buddhists who belong to the Svatantra-Yogācāra school developed by Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti and their followers. According to these Buddhists, all real entities are momentary, and hence the reality of universals, which are supposed to be eternal, cannot also be admitted. The same opinion is expressed about inherence, which is also supposed to be eternal. As to the reality of the relation known as *tādātmya* admitted in Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, they point out that the very notion of identity-in-difference involves a logical contradiction; and hence, the question of admitting its reality does not arise. Thus, neither the universals nor their alleged relation to individuals can be treated as real. The individuals, who are devoid of any common character and who are also unrelated due to their momentariness, happen to be unique particulars (*svalakṣaṇas*). Some of them have the capacity of producing similar effects and accordingly are grouped together and given a common name on that basis. There is no eternal and identical property known as "cow-ness" that is present in all cows in an identical manner, though all cows are capable of yielding milk and carrying loads.

Those who admit universals as real entities point out that unless we admit universals, we cannot satisfactorily explain why the same expression is employed while describing a certain group of individuals, nor can we explain why those individuals, despite their mutual differences, are perceived in the same manner with respect to a certain aspect. Thus, the twin phenomena of uniform cognition (*anugatapratīti*) and uniform usage (*anugataśabdaprayoga*) that are not sublated by subsequent cognitions cannot be due to those individuals alone, which, according to the Buddhists, are unique particulars. If things which are totally different from each other are capable of producing such uniform cognition or uniform usage, then the latter could also happen in the case of a non-homogenous collection consisting of a man, a triangle, a table and a mosquito. But this never happens. Hence, only some identical thing that (i) is different from those individuals and (ii) is at the same time related to those individuals, can cause such uniform cognition and uniform usage. The possibility of such cognitions and usages cannot be restricted only to the present. Accordingly, such properties should be treated as eternal. In this way, the admission of universals as

real and eternal entities becomes unavoidable. It should, however, be kept in mind that even though all universals are abstract and common properties, all common or abstract properties are not universals. Thus, a common property cannot be treated as a universal under the following conditions:

i   If an abstract property, due to its abstractness, seems to be a common property and yet resides in only *one* locus;
ii If admitting a common property as a universal leads to a vicious infinite regress;
iii If admitting a common property as universal results in denying the very nature of the loci in which it is located;
iv If a common property fails to be related to its loci through the relation of inherence;
v   Again, if two common properties p_1 and p_2 are such that both of them are instantiated by exactly the same set of individuals, we cannot treat both of them as separate universals—only one of them may be admitted as a universal.
vi Besides, if two common properties p_1 and p_2 are such that p_1 is present with the absence of p_2 in a locus L_1; p_2 is present with the absence of p_1 in another locus L_2; and yet, both p_1 and p_2 are co-present in a third locus L_3; then they are said to be vitiated by the defect called "cross-division" (*sāṅkarya*) and none of them can be treated as a universal. Such conditions, under which some abstract or common properties fail to become a universal, are known as *jātibādhaka*s.[23]

Two conditions that a common property must satisfy if it has to qualify as a universal are that (i) it should be simple or unanalyzable (*akhaṇḍa*), i.e.. it should not be a composite (*sakhaṇḍa*) property that is analyzable into simpler component properties (*ghaṭaka-dharmas*) and (ii) it should not also vitiated by any of the six *jātibādhaka*s. The common properties that cannot be regarded as universals are known as "imposed properties" (*upādhi*s), which may be again of two types—viz. analyzable (*sakhaṇḍa*) and unanalyzable (*akhaṇḍa*). Such stipulations are admitted for the sake of parsimony (*lāghava*), so that there is no unnecessary multiplication of entities.

Buddhists are not, however, impressed by these arguments. They try to point out that one cannot explain how the relation supposed to connect a universal with the individuals instantiating it can obtain in the first place. Take, for instance, the property of being a pot, i.e., "pot-ness" (*ghaṭatva*) that is regarded by the Naiyāyikas and others as a universal. This property is supposed to be present uniformly in all the pots that exist at present. But how would it be related to a pot that is not existent as yet but is going to be produced in the near future? An earthern pot is made from two pot halves, viz. the lower one called "*kapāla*" and the upper one called "*kapālikā*." Now, "pot-ness" is not present in any one pot half; because had it

been present in any one, then that pot half would have to be treated as a pot. Yet, when the two pot halves are joined together, they produce a pot, where "pot-ness" is present in a pervasive manner. Now, how can this fact be explained, since "pot-ness" was previously absent in the places occupied by those two pot halves? Has it come from some other location or has it been produced there? Neither of these two alternatives can be admitted, since an abstract entity like "pot-ness" cannot have any movement and, being eternal, it cannot also be produced. Moreover, movement on its part is also ruled out by the fact that it does not abandon its earlier substrata, which continue to be pots even when a new pot is produced. Nor can it be said that it exists in its earlier substrata through some parts and becomes related to the new pot by virtue of some other part, because "pot-ness" does not have any such component parts. Besides, if "pot-ness" is absent in both the constituent parts of a pot, then how can it be pervasively present in that very pot? Can it be the case that each thread of a cloth is black while the cloth as a whole is white?

Again, if this earthen pot happens to be broken, then "pot-ness" does not reside in any of the shards that are left behind. How can this be explained? Does "pot-ness" go away somewhere or is it destroyed? Once again, none of these alternatives is admissible, since universals are supposed to be immobile and eternal things cannot be destroyed. Thus, the admission of universals as distinct entities over and above individuals creates more problem than it solves. Dharmakīrti, a famous Buddhist thinker, summed up these arguments in four verses of his *Pramāṇavārttika*.[24]

Moreover, as the Naiyāyikas themselves have admitted in many cases, uniform cognition and uniform usage can also be explained with the help of "imposed properties" (*upādhis*) like the property of being a cook (*pā-cakatva*) that can be analysed into some other entities [e.g., (i) agency (*kartṛtva*), (ii) the relation of being conducive (*anukūlatva*) and (iii) the act of cooking (*pākakriyā*)] that one must admit (*avaśyakḷpta*) under all circumstances, and so admitting a large set of eternal and additional entities called universals for explaining these two phenomena goes against the principle of parsimony (*lāghavatarka*). Buddhists maintain that the functions of classification, uniform cognition and uniform usage can be explained in terms of *anyāpoha*, i.e., difference from other entities.[25] If universals are rejected in this manner, then the claim that properties like brahminhood, etc. are universals and, hence, natural principles of classification becomes totally untenable. Accordingly, Dharmakīrti has included pride due to belonging to a particular caste among the five things that, in his opinion, are five inferential marks of stupidity, the other four such marks being (i) admitting that the Vedas are authoritative, (ii) admitting that there is a creator of this world, (iii) treating ritual bath as a means of attaining purity and (iv) undergoing mortification of the body to get rid of sin.[26]

Jaina critique of brahminhood as a universal

Another critique of treating brahminhood, etc. as examples of universals is found in some Jaina texts like *Prameyakamalamārtaṇḍa* of Prabhācandra, which is a commentary on the *Parīkṣāmukhasūtra* of Māṇikyanandī. Unlike Buddhists, Jainas admit the existence of universals, even though they do not share all the views of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school regarding these universals. To start with, the Jainas do not maintain that universals and particulars are totally distinct and independent things that are somehow connected through some relation. Every entity has a dual nature—one aspect of it is universal while the other is particular. This Jaina view is somewhat similar to the Bhāṭṭa view that a particular without universals or a universal that is unrelated to a particular is as unreal as the horn of a hare.[27] Jainas maintain that even if causal efficacy is admitted as a mark of reality, one has to admit that an entity having both common and uncommon features can produce some effect and, hence, both these aspects have to be accepted as real. Universals are, again, of two types—(i) "horizontal universal" (*tiryak-sāmānya*) and (ii) "vertical universal" (*ūrdhva-sāmānya*).[28] But even while conceding universals, Jainas point out that properties like brahminhood (*brāhmaṇya/brāhmaṇatva*) cannot be treated as universals, since there is no evidence in favour of such a claim. Those who admit that brahminhood, etc. are universals, claim that such properties can be established by perception, inference and verbal testimony. That brahminhood is a common property can be claimed on the basis of uniform cognitions like "this person is a brahmin," "this person is also a brahmin" and so on, which are perceptual in nature. In such cases, the fact that such persons are known as brahmins also depends on the knowledge that their parents are brahmins. Such perceptions are not illusory as they are not sublated. Nor are they cases of doubt, since they do not ascribe incompatible properties to the same entity. Hence, just as veridical and certain uniform perceptual cognitions like "this is a cow," "this is also a cow," etc. establish universal "cow-ness" (*gotva*), uniform perceptions like "this is a brahmin," "this is also a brahmin," etc. establish that brahminhood is a universal.[29]

The inference employed for establishing brahminhood as a distinct entity is of the following form:

i   The term "brahmin" is related to a single property that is different from individuals, and is also the ground of application of that word to those individuals,
ii because it is a word,
iii for example, the word "cloth."[30]

Scriptural statements like "a brahmin should perform sacrifices" (*brāhmaṇena yaṣṭavyam*), "brahmins should be fed" (*brāhmaṇo bhojayitavyaḥ*),

etc., also show that brahminhood is a common property like "cow-ness" and hence should be admitted as a universal.[31]

Jainas, however, reject such claims. Contradicting the claim that brahminhood can be established through perception, they ask—"Is this perception indeterminate/non-qualificative (*nirvikalpaka*) or determinte/qualificative (*savikalpaka*)?" The first alternative is not admissible, because in an indeterminate perception non-attributive in nature and also ineffable, one cannot apprehend universal and particular features *as* universal and particular respectively. This has been admitted by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, the founder of Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, in his well-known work *Ślokavārttika*.[32]

The second alternative is also not acceptable, because even in a qualificative perception, persons who are said to belong to groups of brahmins like Kaṭha, Kalāpa, etc. are perceived and identified as human beings and not as brahmins, unless the person perceiving them is told by somebody else that they are brahmins. But one does not need such a statement from some other person to apprehend "cow-ness" in a cow. Nor can it be said that once we know that the parents of a person are brahmins we can ascertain that the person concerned is also a brahmin, because on what basis can someone tell us that the parents of a person are brahmins? It cannot be said that the basis of such a statement is perception because in that case, it would be a clear instance of mutual dependence (*anyonyāśraya*), since perception of brahminhood would be dependent on such an utterance and such an utterance would be, in its turn, dependent on perception.[33] Moreover, ascertainment of brahminhood on the basis of parentage is not always possible, because sometimes brahmin women who are unfaithful may enter into adulterous relations with non-brahmin men, and the children born from such unions are not in any way distinguishable from children whose parents are both undoubtedly brahmins. When there is a union between a mare and a stallion, the offspring is a horse; and in the case of a union between a mare and a male donkey, the offspring is a mule. But such is not the case in the issue under condition.[34] Moreover, sages like Vyāsa, Viśvāmitra, etc. were said to be brahmins, although it cannot be said that both the parents of such sages were brahmins. Hence, brahminhood cannot be decided on the basis of the parentage of a person.[35]

Moreover, a property that is supposed to be a universal is always present in the individual that instantiates it. It cannot be the case that an animal that was a cow at the time of its birth suddenly becomes a horse under certain circumstances. But a brahmin ceases to be a brahmin and becomes a śūdra if he ingests food prepared by a śūdra, establishes familial ties with a śūdra and so on, as has been stated in some brahminical scriptures. This clearly shows that brahminhood is not an unchanging property like "cowness" and hence it is not a universal.[36]

Likewise, brahmin women who enter brothels and become prostitutes are considered impure and unfit for marriage to brahmin grooms. If

brahminhood is a universal, then that property, being eternal, would be very much present even in those women; and since brahminhood is supposed to be the grounds for the purity and respectability of brahmins, such women also should be considered pure and respectable. If it is said that they lose their purity and become outcastes since they have ceased to observe the rituals and customs of brahmins, then the same condition should apply to a *vrātya*, i.e., a brahmin who has not received initiation and sacred thread within the stipulated period and who has also not studied the Vedas. It is, however, maintained that the universal called "brahminhood" is present in the *vrātya*.[37]

In this way, Jainas attempt to show that brahminhood is nothing but a non-natural and composite property ascribed to a certain group of human beings on the basis of the performance of certain rituals, like officiating as priests at religious functions, recitation of the Vedas, offering sacrifices, etc., and also some distinguishing marks like the sacred thread (*upavīta*). The conclusion drawn by them on the basis of the arguments stated so far is that brahminhood is not a natural, eternal and unanalyzable property like "cow-ness" and hence, it is not also a universal. It is, on the other hand, an "imposed property" (*upādhi*), i.e., a property that has been artificially constructed out of simpler elements. Accordingly, Prabhācandra stated that the usage of the property brahminhood (*brāhmaṇatva*) is *aupādhika*.[38]

Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas on brahminhood

Finally, we may note here the views of Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas regarding the ontological status of properties like brahminhood. Unlike Buddhists and Jainas, Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas are staunch supporters of the caste system, just as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka thinkers are. Like these three group of thinkers, they also admit the existence of universals; and in agreement with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, they also admit that universals are located in their respective substrata through the relation of inherence. They, however, reject some Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika views regarding universals and inherence. According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, all substances, qualities and actions/motions are characterised by universals, which can be arranged hierarchically in accordance with their pervasiveness (*vyāpakatva*). The universal called "*sattā*," which resides in every substance, quality and motion is the most pervasive among all universals, and, accordingly, it is called "*parasāmānya*" or "*parājāti*." Next in order of pervasiveness are the three universals substancehood (*dravyatva*), qualityhood (*guṇatva*) and motionhood (*karmatva*), which are present in all substances, all qualities and all motions respectively. At the lowest rung of this hierarchy are universals like "pot-hood" (*ghaṭatva*), which do not pervade any other universal. (It may be noted that for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school the two universals *sattā* and *dravyatva* are related as pervader [*vyāpaka*] and

pervaded [*vyāpya*]; while the two universals *dravyatva* and *guṇatva* are opposed [*viruddha*] to each other, since they can never be present in the same locus. Hence, if two properties P^1 and P^2 are such that neither of them is pervaded by the other and that both of them have at least one common locus, then they cannot be universals. This explains why the defect known as "*sāṅkarya*" is treated as one of the *jātibādhakas*.) Inherence, the relation through which these universals reside in their respective substrata, is one and eternal.

But for Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas, a property cannot be admitted as a universal unless it is perceptible, and such perceptible universals are manifested (*abhivyakta*) only by the perceptible configuration (*ākṛti*) of the individual where that universal is located. Such a "configuration" is nothing but "the arrangement of component parts" (*avayavasanniveśa*), which can be present only in composite (and hence, non-eternal) substances. Eternal substances like atoms, the self, etc. are devoid of component parts, and so are all the qualities and movements. For Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas, common properties like *sattā*, *dravyatva*, *guṇatva*, etc. are only "imposed properties" (*upādhis*) constructed out of simpler properties. Thus, in their opinion, *sattā* is nothing but the property of being the object of some veridical cognition (*pramāṇaviṣayatva*), substance-hood (*dravyatva*) is nothing but the property of being the locus of some quality (*guṇāśrayatva*) and so on.[39] Inherence, the relation through which universals are located in their substrata is also not one, but many; since it is (a) eternal only if *both* its relata are eternal and (b) non-eternal in other cases. Now, once we admit this doctrine, it becomes clear that brahminhood cannot be a universal; since there is no specific configuration that is peculiar to brahmins alone—the configuration of their limbs is also present in persons who are non-brahmins. According to Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas, from time immemorial certain people, who perform certain acts and observe certain rituals, were known as brahmins. A child born from a brahmin couple is also known as a brahmin. In cases where it has been ascertained that there has been no mixture of castes, one can know with certainty that the child is also a brahmin. Thus, for Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas, properties like brahminhood, kṣatriyahood, etc. are nothing but "imposed properties" (*upādhis*).[40] This Prābhākara view is presented in the *Jātinirṇaya* section of *Prakaraṇapañcikā* by Śālikanātha Miśra. Subsequent Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Bhāṭṭa works like *Nyāyasāra* of Bhāsarvajña with (i) the auto commentary *Nyāyabhūṣaṇa* and (ii) the commentary *Nyāyamuktāvalī* by Aparārkadeva; *Nyāyakandalī* of Śrīdhara Bhaṭṭa, *Nyāyakusumāñjali* of Udayana, *Nyāyalīlāvatī* of Śrivallabhācārya and *Mānameyodaya* of Nārāyaṇa have either stated the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view about *brāhmaṇatva* or tried to reject the Prābhākara view regarding the nature of universals, and also to re-establish the claim that brahminhood is a universal.[41] Several copies of unpublished manuscripts of later Nyāya works by unknown authors, all of which are

entitled *Brāhmaṇatvajātivicāra* and that are deposited in various manuscript libraries, also try to justify the claim that brahminhood is a universal. The space at our disposal here does not allow a discussion of these additional arguments.

Criticism of caste in the Avadāna texts[42]

Criticism of caste in **Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna**

The question about the alleged superiority or inferiority between different castes has also been discussed at length in *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, one of the longest stories included in *Divyāvadāna* (pp. 314–425). It narrates the dispute between Triśaṅku, a Caṇḍāla chieftain, and Puṣkarasārin, a Brahmin learned in the three Vedas. Triśaṅku had proposed the marriage of his son Śārdūlakarṇa to Prakṛti, the daughter of Puṣkarasārin. Puṣkarasārin was enraged, since he considered this proposal a grave insult, and rejected it outright as something as impossible as placing a mustard seed on the tip of a hair or as binding air in a trap. He pointed out that just as one can never equate gold with ash or obliterate the distinction between light and darkness, one cannot also treat a Caṇḍāla, (who is the lowest even among untouchables) as equal to a Brahmin, who belongs to the highest caste and who is honoured by all the other castes. Marriage can take place only between equals, and hence, the proposal of Triśaṅku was preposterous and not worth considering.[43]

After listening to the enraged brahmin's tirade, Triśaṅku answered that a brahmin does not differ from a non-brahmin in the same manner in which gold differs from ash, or light differs from darkness. He further pointed out that unlike fire that is generated by the rubbing of two sticks known as "*araṇi*," brahmins are not born from elements like earth, air, or *Ākāśa*— brahmins are born from the wombs of their mothers, just as non-brahmins are also born from the wombs of their mothers. Hence, there is no reason to claim that brahmins are superior to non-brahmins like Cāṇḍāla-s because of their birth. Again, after the death of a brahmin, his corpse is considered as impure and defiled as the corpse of a non-brahmin. What, then, are the grounds for treating a brahmin as intrinsically superior to a non-brahmin?[44]

Thereafter, Triśaṅku pointed out that brahmins have promulgated many cruel and sinful acts like killing animals in sacrifices on the pretext that animals thus killed go to heaven. But in that case, why do they not kill themselves, or their near and dear ones, to ensure their safe passage to heaven? Even after performing such cruel and sinful acts merely to satisfy their craving for meat, brahmins claim that they are pure by birth. Moreover, a brahmin can be expelled from his rank for committing grave offences like stealing gold, drinking wine, committing adultery with the wife of his

preceptor, and killing another brahmin. Any brahmin guilty of such an offence becomes a non-brahmin and must practice severe penances for 12 years before such a "fallen" person can again be treated as a brahmin. This obviously shows that brahmins are not intrinsically superior to others. Hence, all human beings should be treated as equals.[45]

With the help of a suitable example, Triśaṅku explained here that expressions like "brāhmaṇa," "kṣatriya," etc. are purely arbitrary and are not based on any objective factors. Children playing on the street often make heaps of dust and then attach different names to them, e.g., "this is condensed milk," "this is yoghurt," "this is meat," "this is clarified butter" and so on; but by assigning such nomenclature, dust does not actually turn into things that can be eaten. Human beings are indistinguishable in respect of their anatomical details and, hence, no distinction can be drawn between them on account of their birth; especially in comparison to the distinctions that can be drawn between different non-human creatures in terms of their different modes of birth, food habits, (e.g., some are oviparous and others are viviparous; some are graminivorous, while others are carnivorous); and different physical features. Moreover, if all human beings are offsprings of Prajāpati, as is claimed by Puṣkarasārin, then all of them should be of the same type.[46]

Criticism of caste in *Aśokāvadāna*

It seems to me that in some instances, the attitude of Buddhists towards the question of caste was somewhat ambivalent. We may recount here one story of Emperor Aśoka found in *Aśokāvadāna* [which is actually a collection of four legends: viz. (a) *Pāṃśupradānāvadāna*, (b) *Kuṇālāvadāna*, (c) *Vītaśokāvadāna* and (d) *Aśokāvadāna*; all of which deal with the different phases of the life of the famous Emperor Aśoka] and that is also included in *Divyāvadāna*, a larger collection, where they have been assigned the numbers 26, 27, 28 and 29 respectively. As is well known, people from all strata of society were admitted as monks and nuns in the Buddhist Saṅgha, irrespective of their castes and provided they were found otherwise fit for ordination. Whenever Emperor Aśoka met a Buddhist monk, he used to bow down to them. This was disliked by Yaśa, the emperor's trusted minister. He pointed out that since Aśoka was a kṣatriya by caste, it was improper for him to bow to monks who were members of lower castes earlier. Emperor Aśoka used a clever strategy to convince Yaśa about the propriety of his own acts. He ordered that the heads of different birds and beasts be brought to him, while Yaśa was asked to bring a human head. Once they were brought, Aśoka ordered them to be sold in the market. All these heads except the human head were sold. When this was reported to Aśoka, he ordered that the human head be given to someone free of cost. But nobody agreed to accept it because of its repulsiveness (*aprāśastya*). Then Aśoka

asked whether only that human head was repulsive or whether all human heads, irrespective of their owners, were repulsive. When Yaśa admitted the second alternative, Aśoka asked: "Is my head also repulsive?" When Yaśa was forced to give an affirmative answer, Aśoka said, "What is the harm if this repulsive head is lowered before persons who are spiritually superior?" Then he told Yaśa that one should consider the issue of caste only in matters of marriage, not in matters pertaining to religion.[47]

Aśoka indicates that he respects the Buddhist monks because of their virtues and good qualities that are not in any way related to their castes. In the next three verses, Aśoka points out to his minister that the defects or bad qualities of people are censured, even if they are of a higher caste. In that case, why should we not appreciate the good qualities of people even if they belong to a lower caste? The body of a person is dependent on birth in a certain family and is either praised or censured according to the mental states associated with it. Since the mental states of the Buddhist monks are pure, they deserve the respect of others. People born in higher castes are declared as "fallen" or excommunicated from society if they are devoid of good qualities. In that case, people born in lower caste should also be honoured by bowing down to them if they are endowed with good qualities.[48]

The story from *Aśokāvadāna* shows that even for people who had a lot of respect for Buddhism, the issue regarding castes could not be ignored in social matters like marriage, though it was not a significant factor in matters of religion. In his *Nyāyamañjarī*, Jayanta Bhaṭṭa also criticised Buddhists for adopting a double standard regarding the issue of caste, since they decry the caste system on one hand and avoid touching caṇḍālas on the other— which is certainly a glaring inconsistency.[49]

Notes

1 I express my gratitude to Dr. Nrisingha Prasad Bhaduri for giving me the exact references of some quotations.

2 "*atha vā sarva ete śabdā guṇasamudāyeṣu vartante—'brāhmaṇaḥ', 'kṣatriyaḥ', 'vaiśyaḥ', 'śūdra' iti—*
    tapaḥ śrutaṃ ca yoniścety etadbrāhmaṇakārakam|
    tapaḥśrutabhyām yo hīno jātibrāhmaṇa eva saḥ ||
    tathā—'gauraḥ śucyācāraḥ piṅgalākṣaḥ kapilakeśa' ityetān apy abhyantarān brāhmaṇye guṇān kurvanti." [*Aṣṭādhyāyī* (2006), Vol. III, pp. 175–76].

3 "*varṇānāñ cānupūrvyena pūrvanipāto bhavatīti vaktavyam. brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviṭśūdrāḥ.*"
    (*Māhābhāṣya* as in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (2006), Vol. III, p. 243). Also see Pradīpa and Udyota on the same. Also see *Kāśikā with Nyāsa, Padamañjarī* and *Bhāvabodhinī* as in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (1987), Vol. II, p. 390.

4 "*avadātāyāntū ñīpprāpnoti —'avadātā brāhmaṇī'. 'varṇādanudāttāttopadhātto naḥ' iti. naiṣa varṇavācī. kiṃ tarhi? viśuddhavācī. ātaśca viśuddhavācī—evam hyāha:*

*trīṇi yasyāvadātāni vidyā yoniś ca karma ca| etac chive! vijānīhi brāh-
maṇāgryasya lakṣaṇam||"* (*Māhābhāṣya*: as in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (2006), Vol. V, p. 73).

5 " *'jāter'ity ucyate, kā jātir nāma?*
    ākṛtigrahaṇā jātir liṅgānāñca na sarvabhāk/
    sakṛdākhyātanirgrāhyā gotrañca caraṇaiḥ saha//"
    (*Māhābhāṣya* as in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (2006), Vol. V, pp. 86–87).

6 "*tataḥ paraṃ punar vastu dharmair jātyādibhir yayā| buddhyā'vasīyate sā'pi
   pratyakṣatvena sammatā||"* *Ślokavārttika*, *Pratyakṣasūtra*, 120.

7 "*arād dṛṣṭe ca puruṣe sandeho brāhmaṇādiṣu| na syād yadi na gṛhyeta sāmān-
   yaṃ cakṣurādinā ||"* ŚV, *Vanavāda*, 25.

8 "*tasyopalakṣaṇaṃ cāpi kvacit kenacid iṣyate| rūpādīnāṃ viśeṣeṇa
   deśakālādyapekṣayā||*.
       *suvarṇaṃ bhidyate rūpāt tāmratvāder asaṃśayaḥ| tailād ghṛtaṃ vilīnaṃ ca
   gandhena ca rasena ca || bhasmapracchādito vahniḥ sparśanenopalabhyate|
   aśvatvādau ca dūrasthe niścayo jāyate svanaiḥ || saṃsthānena ghaṭatvādi brāh-
   maṇatvādi yonitaḥ| kvacid ācārataścāpi samyag rājānupālitāt ||"* [ŚV, *Va-
   navāda*, verses 26–29. Also see *Nyāyaratnākara*, as in ŚV pp. 439–40].

9 "*yeṣām apy ācāranimittā brāhmaṇatvādayas teṣām api dṛṣṭavirodhas tāvad
   asty eva, na tv ācāranimittavarṇavibhāge pramāṇaṃ kiñcit. siddhānāṃ hi brāh-
   maṇādīnām ācārā vidhīyante, tatretaretarāśrayatā bhavet— brāhmaṇādīnām
   ācāraḥ, tadvāsena brāhmaṇādaya iti. sa eva śubhācārakāle brāhmaṇaḥ, punar
   aśubhācārakāle śūdra ity anavasthitam. tathā ekenaiva prayatnena parapīḍān-
   ugrahādi kurvatāṃ yugapad brāhmaṇatvābrāhmaṇatva-virodhaḥ*" [TV, p. 22].

10 "*jātyutkarṣo yuge jñeyaḥ pañcame saptame'pi vā| vyatyaye karmaṇām sāmyaṃ
   pūrvavaccādharottaram||"* [*Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, 1.96].

11 "*māsena śūdrībhavati brāhmaṇaḥ kṣīravikrayāt"* | [Source Unknown].

12 "*asyārthaḥ—kṣatriyāyāṃ brāhmaṇād utpannā kanyā mūrdhāvasiktā brāh-
   maṇāya dīyamānā mūrdhāvasiktajāter utkraṣṭāṃ kanyāṃ janayati, sā'pi
   brāhmaṇāya dīyamānā kanyāntaram evety evaṃ pañcame yuge puruṣāntare
   brāhmaṇyotpattyā jātyutkarṣaḥ. evaṃ 'vā' śabdāt ṣaṣṭhe vaiśyāyāṃ saptame
   śūdrāyām iti. mūrdhāvasiktaputraparamparāyāstu kṣatriyādistrīṇāṃ tathaiva
   pañcamādiṣu kṣatriyādijātyāpatter apakarṣa iti pūrvavaccādharottaram
   ityuttaratrātideśāt*" [*Nyāyasudhā*, p. 27].

13 "*ebhistu karmabhir devi subhair ācaritais tathā| śūdro brahmaṇatāṃ yāti
   vaiśyaḥ kṣatriyatāṃ vrajet||"* (MB, *Anuśāsana Parvan*, 146.26).

14 "*sarvo'yaṃ brāhmaṇo loke vṛttena tu vidhīyate| vṛtte sthitastu śūdro'pi brāh-
   maṇatvaṃ niyacchati ||"* (MB, *Anuśāsana Parvan* 146.51).

15 "*satyaṃ dānamathādroha ānṛśaṃsyaṃ trapā ghṛṇā| tapaśca dṛśyate yatra saḥ
   brāhmaṇa iti smṛtaḥ||"* (MB, *Śāntiparvan*, 189.4).

16 "*śūdre caitad bhavel lakṣyaṃ dvije tac ca na vidyate| na vai śūdro bhavec-
   chūdro brāhmaṇo brāhmaṇo na ca||"* (MB, *Śāntiparvan*, 189/8).

17 "*yasya yallakṣaṇaṃ proktaṃ puṃso varṇābhivyañjakam| yadanyatrāpi dṛśyeta
   tattenaiva vinirdiśet||"* (BP, 7.11.32).

18 "*śamādibhir eva brāhmaṇādivyavahāro mukhyaḥ, na jātimātrād*" (*Śrīdhar-
   asvāmin* on BP, 7.11.32).

19 "*dharmacaryayā jaghanyaḥ varṇaḥ pūrvaṃ pūrvaṃ varṇam āpadyate jāti-
   parivṛttau*" (ĀDS, 2.5.11.10).

20 *adharmacaryayā pūrvo varṇaḥ jaghanyaṃ varṇam āpadyate jātiparivṛttau.*
   (ĀDS, 2.5.11.11) (All the above passages have been quoted in Viśvarūpānanda
   (1988) pp. 776–7.)

21 NM, Vol. I, pp. 550–2.

22 NM, Vol.II, pp. 253–4.

23 The six conditions, each of which prevents an abstract property from being a universal proper, and are known as *jātibādhakas*, have been enumerated in the following verse by Udayana in his *Kiraṇāvalī*, "*vyakter abhedas tulyaṃ saṅkaro'thānavasthitiḥ| rūpahānir asambandho jātibādhakasaṃgrahaḥ||*" (*Kiraṇāvalī*, p. 23).

24 "*nāyāti na ca tatrāsīd asti paścān na cāṃśavat| jahāti pūrvaṃ nādhāram aho vyasanasantatiḥ||152|| anyatra vartamānasya tato'nyasathānajanmani| svasmād acalataḥ sthānād vṛttir ity atiyuktikam||153|| yatrāsau vartate bhāvaḥ tena sambadhyate na hi| taddeśinaṃ ca vyāpnoti kim apyetan mahādbhūtam ||154|| vyaktyaivaikatra sā vyaktyā bhedāt sarvatragā yadi| jātir dṛśyeta sarvatra na ca sā vyaktyapekṣiṇī||155||*" (*Pramāṇavārttika*, Chapter on *Svārthānumāna*, pp. 77–78).

25 For a detailed discussion regarding the doctrine of *Apoha*, see Siderits et al. (2011).

26 Dharmakīrti has stated these "five inferential marks of stupidity" in the following verse of *Pramāṇavārttika*: "*vedaprāmāṇyaṃ kasyacit kartṛvādaḥ, snāne dharmecchā jātivādāvalepaḥ| santāpārambhaḥ pāpahānāya ceti, dhvastaprajñānāṃ pañca liṅgāni jāḍye||340||*" (*Pramāṇavārttika*, Chapter on *Svārthānumāna*, auto-commentary, p. 176).

27 "*nirviśeṣañca sāmānyaṃ bhavec chaśaviṣāṇavat| sāmānyena rahitāś ca viśeṣās tadvad eva hi||*" [ŚV, *Ākṛtivāda*, verse no. 10].

28 The following aphorisms of PMS state these views:
   (a) "*sāmānyaṃ dvedhā*" (4.3); (b) "*tiryagūrdhvatābhedāt*" (4.4); (c) "*sadṛśapariṇāmas tiryak khaṇḍamuṇḍādiṣu gotvavat*" 4/5; (d) "*parāparavivartavyāpi dravyam ūrdhvatā mṛdiva sthāsādiṣu*" 4/6 [PMS, pp. 466–88].

29 "*nanu ca 'brāhmaṇo'yaṃ' 'brāhmaṇo'yam' iti pratyakṣata evāsya pratipattiḥ. na cedaṃ viparyayajñānam, bādhakābhāvāt. nāpi saṃśayajñānam, ubhayāṃśānālambitvāt. pitrādibrāhmaṇayajñānapūrvakopadeśasahāyā cāsya vyaktir vyañjikā, tatrāpi tatsahāyeti…*" [PKM, p. 482].

30 "*'brāhmaṇa'-padaṃ vyaktivyatiriktaikanimittābhidheyasambaddham, padatvāt, paṭādipadavat*" (PKM, p. 482).

31 "*tathā 'brāhmaṇena yaṣṭavyam', 'brāhmaṇo bhojayitavyaḥ' ityādyāgamāc ceti*" (PKM, p. 482).

32 "*atrocyate—yat tāvat uktaṃ 'pratyakṣata evāsya pratipattiḥ', tatra kiṃ nirvikalpakāt, savikalpakād vā tatas tatpratipattiḥ syāt? na tāvan nirvikalpakāt, tatra jātyādiparāmarśābhāvāt, bhāve vā savikalpakānuṣaṅgaḥ.*

   "*asti hyālocanājñānaṃ prathamaṃ nirvikalpakam|bālamūkādisadṛśam vijñānaṃ śuddhavastujam|| na viśeṣo na sāmānyaṃ tadānīmavasīyate|tayorādhārabhūtā tu vyaktir evāvasīyate*"; "*tataḥ paraṃ punar vastu dharmair jātyādibhir yayā|buddhyā'vasīyate sāpi' pratyakṣatvena sammatā||*" *iti vaco viruddhyeta*" (PKM, p. 482) (Here, Prabhācandrasūri is referring to ŚV, *Pratyakṣasūtra*, verse nos.112–3, p. 120).

33 "*nāpi savikalpakāt, kaṭha-kalāpādivyaktīnāṃ manuṣyatvaviśiṣṭayeva brāhmaṇyaviśiṣṭayāpi pratipattyasambhavāt. 'pitrādi-brāhmaṇyajñānapūrvakopadeśa-sahāyā vyaktir vyañjikā'sya—ity'apy asāram…..' brāhmaṇatvajāteḥ pratyakṣatāsiddhau yathoktopadeśasya pratyakṣahetutāsiddhiḥ, tatsiddhau ca tatpratyaksatāsiddhiḥ' — ity anyonyāśrayaḥ*" (PKM, p. 482).

34 "*prāyeṇa pramadānāṃ kāmāturatayeha janmany api vyabhicāropalambhāc ca kuto yoninibandhano brāhmaṇyaniścayaḥ? na ca viplutetarapitrapatyeṣu vailakṣaṇyaṃ lakṣyate. na khalu vaḍavāyāṃ gardabhāś'vaprabhavāpatyeṣv iva brāhmaṇyāṃ brāhmaṇaśūdraprabhavāpatyeṣv api vailakṣaṇyam lakṣyate*" (PKM, p. 483).

35 *"kathaṃ caivaṃvādinaḥ Brahma-Vyāsa-Viśvāmitra prabhṛtīṇāṃ brāhmaṇyas-
iddhiḥ, teṣāṃ tajjanyatvāsambhavāt. tan na pitror aviplutatvaṃ tanimittam"*
(PKM, p. 484).

36 *"kriyāvilopāt śūdrānnādeś ca jātilopaḥ svayam evābhyupagataḥ--.śūdrānnāc
chūdrasamparkāc chūdreṇa saha bhāṣaṇāt\ iha janmani śūdratvaṃ mṛtaḥ śvā
cābhijāyate\|"* (PKM, p. 483).

37 *"…tan na paraparikalpitāyāṃ [brāhmaṇatva] jātau pramāṇam asti yato'syāḥ
sadbhāvaḥ syāt. sadbhāve vā veśyā-pāṭakādi-praviṣṭānāṃ brāhmaṇīnāṃ brāh-
maṇyābhāvo nīndā ca na syāt, jātir yataḥ pavitratāhetuḥ; sā ca bhavanmate
tadavasthaiva, anyathā gotvād api brāhmaṇyaṃ nikṛṣṭaṃ syāt. gavādīnāṃ hi
cāṇḍālādigṛhe ciroṣitānām api śiṣṭair ādānaṃ, na tu brāhmaṇyādīnām. atha
kriyābhraṃśāt tatra brāhmaṇādīnāṃ nindyatā; na… kriyābhraṃśe tajjātini-
vṛttau ca vrātye'py asya nivṛttiḥ syād bhraṃśāviśeṣāt"* (PKM, p. 486).

38 (a) *"kiñca—aupādhiko'yaṃ brāhmaṇaśabdaḥ, tasya ca nimittaṃ vācyam…."*
(PKM, p. 483); (b) *"tataḥ kriyāviśeṣādinibandhana evāyaṃ brāhmaṇādivyava-
ahāraḥ"* (PKM, p. 486).; (c) *"tataḥ sadṛśakriyāpariṇāmādinibandhanaiveyaṃ
brāhmaṇakṣatriyādivyavasthā….."* (PKM, p. 487).

39 *"atra kecid gavādituḷyatayā dravyaguṇakarmaṣvapi sattājātim aṅgīkurvanti,
bhavati hi sarveṣv eva 'sat', 'sad' iti pratyayanuvṛttir iti saṃvatantaḥ. tad idam
aparāmṛṣṭajāti- tattvānām uparyupari jalpitam. pūrvarūpanukāriṇi yadi dhīr
udīyate, tato'bhyupeyetaiva jātiḥ. na ca nānājātīyeṣu dravyeṣu sarṣapa-mahī-
dharādiṣu, guṇeṣu gandharasādiṣu vā samānākārānubhāvo bhavati. kevalaṃ
tu 'sat', 'sad'iti śabdamātram eva prayujyate. bhavati ca vināpi jātyā-'pācaka'
'mīmāṃsakā'diśabdapravṛttiḥ. nanv evaṃ śabdapravṛttir api naikanibandh-
anam antareṇopapadyate. satyam, asty evopādhir ekaḥ pramāṇasambandha-
yogyatā nāma"* (Prakaraṇapañcikā, p. 97).

40 *Prakaraṇapañcikā*, pp. 100–2.

41 (a) *Nyāyabhūṣaṇa* (as in *Nyāyasāra* (1968)), pp. 336–7; (b) *Nyāyamuktāvalī*
(as in *Nyāyasāra* (1961)), pp. 251–2; (c) *Nyāyakusumāñjalī*, pp. 285–6; (d)
Nyāyakandalī, pp. 34–35; (e) *Nyāyalīlāvatī.*, pp. 226–9.

42 In many places of the Pāli Tripiṭaka, Buddha has discussed the issue of caste
with various persons; and in all such cases, he has rejected the claim of some
brāhmaṇa-s that by virtue of their birth, they are superior to non-brahmins.
The suttas like *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* and *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Vasala
Sutta* and *Vāseṭṭha Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta* and *Brāhmaṇavagga* of *Dham-
mapada* are relevant in this context. I am not discussing the Buddha's critique
of caste expressed in these canonical texts here to avoid repetition as it has been
dealt with elsewhere in this book, for example by Bimalendra Kumar (Chapter
1) and by Mahesh Deokar (Chapter 5).

43 Some of the verses containing the statement of Puṣkarasārin are to be found in
Divyāvadāna. See DA pp. 320–1.

44 See the verses 15–19, DA, p. 323.

45 See verses 20–23, 29, 30, 36 and 37, DA p. 323. Verse 37 is followed by the sen-
tence, *"tad idaṃ brāhmaṇa te bravīmi—saṃjñāmātram idaṃ lokasya yadidam
ucyate 'brāhmaṇa' iti vā 'kṣatriya' iti vā, 'vaiśya' iti vā, 'śūdra' iti vā. sarvam
idam ekam eva…"*

46 DA, pp. 324–5.

47 *"āvāhakāle'tha vivāhakāle, jāteḥ parikṣā na tu dharmakāle\ dharmakriyāyāṃ
hi guṇā nimittā, guṇāś ca jātiṃ na vicārayanti \|4\|"*, DA, p. 242.

48 For these verses, see DA, pp. 242–3.

49 Jayanta Bhaṭṭa has castigated Buddhists for denying caste distinctions on one
hand and avoiding the touch of people like Cāṇḍālas, who were treated as

untouchable by vedic society, on the other. Buddhists, he alleges, also prohibit the admission of such "untouchables" as monks in the Buddhist Saṅgha:

i "*yathā caite bauddhādayo'pi durātmānaḥ vedaprāmāṇyaniyamitā eva caṇḍālādisparśaṃ pariharanti. niraste hi jātivādāvalepe kaḥ caṇḍālādis-parśe doṣaḥ*"? NM, Vol. I, p. 638.

ii "*yad api bauddhāgame jātivādanirākaraṇam, tad api sarvānugrahaprav aṇa-karuṇātiśaya-praśaṃsāparaṃ na yathāśrutam avagantavyam. tathā ca tatraitat paṭhyate—'na jātikāryaduṣṭān pravrājayet'iti,*" NM, Vol. I, p. 643.

In this connection, my Pāli scholar friends pointed out that Vinaya texts do not make any such rule recommending avoidance of touching Caṇḍālas (or persons belonging to any specific castes for that matter). The Buddha regarded persons belonging to the lowest castes, such as Caṇḍāla and Pukkasa, equally eligible for the life of self-control and attainment of Nibbāṇa as persons from high castes. In many dialogues in the Pāli Tripiṭaka, the Buddha rejected the claim of some Brāhmaṇas that by virtue of their birth, they are superior to non-brahmins. *Ambaṭṭhasutta* and *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* and also *Dhammapada* (*Brāhmanavagga*) may be referred to in this context. The *Sutta Nipāta*, (e.g., *Vasala Sutta*, verses 137–42, *Vāseṭṭha Sutta*, verses no 600–11, 620–50) states that while there are physical distinctions in terms of specific configuration, col-our, food, etc. among different types of non-human creatures, the same is not true of human beings belonging to different castes. "Brāhmaṇa," "Kṣatriya," "Vaiśya" and "śūdra" are mere names. One is treated as a brahmin due to moral excellence, and not due to birth. Prof. Bimalendra Kumar suggests that originally the Caṇḍālas seem to have been an aboriginal tribe. This is clear from the use of their own argot (*Jātaka*, Vol. IV, 391f). Gradually, they came to be looked upon as untouchables. One *Jātaka* describes the caṇḍāla as the vilest people on the earth (ibid, 397). In a *Jātaka* story, when a caṇḍāla enters a town, people pound him with blows and render him unconscious (ibid, 376, 391). The extent to which the caṇḍālas were abhorred can be seen in various mentions in some of the *Jātakas*. Contact with air that touched a caṇḍāla from a distance was enough for high caste people, especially women, to wash their eyes with scented water (*gandhodaka*) to remove the contamination, as told in the *Citta-Sambhūta-Jātaka* (ibid, 390–401). A similar incident is related in the *Mātaṅga Jātaka* (ibid, 375–90) when the daughter of a Seṭṭi of Varanasi, seeing a caṇḍāla, washed her eyes with perfumed water, as she was considered to have been contaminated by a mere glance at that despised person. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's comment could be based on such references which are contrary to the Buddha's own intentions.

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EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CASTE IDENTITIES

A review of Buddhist critique of classical orthodox Indian realism

Ajay Verma

One of the foremost tasks of philosophers is to look for order in the way things are or to suggest ways that may make a better order possible among things. But the question, "How are things ordered?" is secondary to the question, "What is the actual nature of things?" In general, "what" questions come before "how" questions since order of things (how) cannot be studied in isolation from our ontological presumptions regarding those things (what). Similarly, it is important to first study the ontological nature of society in order to theorize about the order of society. Further, the reasons for what we do are invariably ingrained in what we believe to be fact. Thus, there are reasons to believe that there is an inextricable link between epistemology and ethics. In recent years Habermas (1998: 228) has explicated this link more explicitly than ever before. He maintains that a correct understanding of the meaning of an action is tantamount to correctly grasping the reasons for which it is performed. Further, he argues that these reasons are embedded in the linguistic character of our being. Since language is a shared phenomenon, the action, its meaning and the reasons for which it is performed should, in principle, be accessible both to the interpreter and the agent, rather than being in the domain of the agent alone. One could take this a step further and argue that how the meaning-generating process becomes possible in language has an intimate connection with how knowledge becomes possible in language. Further fallout of this conception would be that our ideas regarding knowledge and language have an important bearing upon how we act and how we understand actions. If understanding actions rests upon problems of meaning and language, then the arena of our inquiry into meaning of actions becomes much wider. In this chapter, I attempt to examine Nyāya epistemology and Buddhist Mahāyāna

criticism with these assumptions regarding the interrelationship of episte-
mology and (social) action in mind.

Mahāyāna Buddhism against essentialism and realism

When it comes to examining Buddhism as a philosophy and religion chal-
lenging Brahmanical oppression against the lower castes, scholars have
generally paid more attention to Pāli canon than Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts.
It has even been argued by some that Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts, instead
of challenging Brahmanical Hindu notions of castes, etc., were influenced
by some orthodox systems of the time, resulting in religious practices that
were marred by the same practices that the Buddha was always against. I
argue in this chapter that some of the foundational texts of Mahāyāna phi-
losophy do pose implicit challenges to orthodox classical thought systems
in India.[1] These texts represent a fundamental challenge against the or-
thodoxy of the day by confronting their epistemic tenets. Since orthodoxy
and orthopraxy (knowledge and practice) have an ineluctable connection,
Buddhist Mahāyāna critique of orthodox schools also clear the ground for
alternate *epistemes* to emerge which could be more conducive to *praxis*
devoid of any kind of essentialism or logo-centricism.

Before we examine how some of the basic Mahāyāna texts challenge
epistemic and ontological foundations of essentialism we must look at the
popular definition of essentialism:

> **Essentialism** is the view that, for any specific entity (such as an
> animal, a group of people, a physical object, a concept), there is a
> set of attributes which are necessary to its identity and function…
> An *essence* characterizes a substance or a form, in the sense of the
> Forms or Ideas in Platonic idealism. It is permanent, unalterable,
> and eternal; and present in every possible world.[2]

With this understanding in mind, let us examine some of the fundamental
tenets of different brands of Indian Realism. The Nyāya school is proba-
bly the best representative of realism amongst Indian schools of philoso-
phy. Naiyāyikas believe that the world is objectively real, that is to say that
world exists independently of our mind. Secondly, they believe that objects
in the world represent themselves in their entirety, as they actually are and
are knowable in their entirety as such. This means that the representation
of objects is always total in terms of its universality, particularity and its
relationship with its own parts and other entities and that linguistic under-
standing fully captures it. This understanding of the world makes it look
like a tightly woven fabric/matrix of objects and their interconnections at
the micro as well as macro level. Furthermore, the categories that put this
matrix together as it appears to us are not transcendental categories to

enable our judgments but are rather viewed as natural entities existing out there, always available for cognition. Thus, by providing us a metaphysical framework of objectively real categories, Nyāya philosophy achieves a huge philosophical feat. In doing this, Naiyāyikas naturalize our subjective ways of looking at things and foreclose any hermeneutic possibility of understanding our world. One might comment at this point that there is apparently nothing wrong with this process. If there were no objective basis to our subjective modes of thinking, it would lead to loss of any commensurability principle to argue for right from wrong, which was one of the main agendas of Nyāya thinkers. The main aim of the Nyāya system, as the name itself suggests, is to investigate what constitutes right knowing and argumentation. The term "*nyāya*" in its axiological sense means fitness, propriety or justice. Justice comprises of looking at the actual state of affairs of an event and subsequently judging them in terms of normative principles with legal binding. Thus, facts are not merely epistemological entities, their importance extends to how they are subsequently viewed as a part of more overarching entities like society and state. Thus, looked at this way, general meaning and current usage of the word "*nyāya*" is indicative of the actual philosophical pursuit that these thinkers were following. Subsequently, it also makes the epistemological enterprise more amenable to analysis through methodology that is available to us after Habermas.

On language

Now to understand the challenge posed by Śūnyavāda to a realist worldview of this kind, let us imagine a world where everything is in a constant flux. It is a world absolutely indifferent to our modes of intelligibility. By the time we propose a name for it, it is already else-way. It is a world constantly poised as "yet-to-be." Can our ordinary language function in such a world? The answer, I believe, should be both yes and no, depending on what we want to achieve with language. If we suppose the main task of language is to refer to the world, then on close analysis we find that at metaphysical level there is a gap between the two. Our words seem to but do not have any real point of correspondence with the outside world. To understand this, we need to focus on the fact that we are born into a language and do not actually create one for ourselves. Language with its definite set of presuppositions is a pre-given mode of existence. One of the most fundamental features of language that is not so much the concern of linguists or philosophers of language is the fact that "names" presuppose permanent or static referents. For example: we would retain an understanding or meaning of the word "chair" even if all the chairs in the world were to disappear for a few hours. Actual so-called chairs in the world come and go, but the word "chair" in language would stay. Buddhists point out that the so-called chair is *actually* not there because it is in a state poised to disappear in the

next moment. Therefore, its "chair-ness" with its implicit features of stability and permanence is only a projected imposition of something in the mind. What this means is that the source of illusion of permanence is in our minds and, further, it is in the mind because the mind feeds upon language. But the next problem this leads to is that the world is unmistakably *there*, indifferent to any language. Therefore, to say that there is something wrong with it would presuppose the aforesaid connection between the language and the world, which is precisely what Buddhists put at stake. Buddhists might further argue that the fundamental existential fact of human suffering as represented in the first Noble Truth could be viewed as an indirect consequence of this presupposed connection between the language and its referent. This point can be understood as follows: Language beguiles us into thinking that there is something permanent about the world. This happens because language proclaims its self-presence along with the claim that it has a direct correspondence with the world; that it refers to the world outside as being "so-and-so." This belief that the world is there to stay with us along with its essences is gradually reinforced in our minds. It gives birth to clinging and the desire to possess. This can lead to frustration, *dukkha*, which takes hold of us when the object of clinging—which by very nature is momentary—disappears, leaving its referents behind as apparently still meaningful. Language as a set of concepts is not under any obligation or duress to remain faithful to particulars. But our actual world is housed not with universals but particulars. Our emotions are evoked not by universals but by particulars. One does not love "womanhood" in the actual world but a particular woman. Thus, the claim that language refers to the particulars and it actually failing to do so leaves us with an unbridgeable gap. For Buddhists, a proper understanding of this gap between the universals that make language work and the particulars that expose the limitation of language in actually corresponding with the world is the first step towards a more liberal understanding of the world.

Let me rephrase the argument from the point of view of essentialism. Actual nature or *svabhāva* of an object should refer to something that would stay always, but since it is possible to imagine the object as not-to-be, how can we ever have a view of the so-called actual nature or *svabhāva* of an object? Therefore, language works with, works in and works through an implicit contradiction that Śūnyavādin sets out to explicate. This contradiction is that language apparently claims to expose an object as an actual so-and-so as if the so-and-so-ness were an essential feature of the object. However, whereas "object-ness" of the object is supposed to be universal and apodictic in nature, it claims to refer only to a particular, which lacks both these features. Śūnyavādin is more concerned about the psychological implications of this point than the epistemological ones. The implicit assumption in the function of language is that it refers to permanent definitive features of impermanent objects. The repeated use of such language

function reifies this belief in us that there is something permanent about the objects being so referred. What is permanent is also considered essential to the object. This linkage lends epistemological justification to our cognition of the object as essentially so-and-so. The object thus seemingly signifying itself as so-and-so evokes a specific psychological response from us like *rāga* (attachments), *dvesa* (disinclinations) or prompts certain behaviour in us through *saṁkalpas* (ideas or determinations) thus aroused in mind.

Thus, the issue of language is affronted by Mahāyāna Buddhists on the following counts:

a   Language by psychological reification of referring to permanent entities covers up the temporary nature of things.
b   By offering us a linguistically conceptualized definitive worldview it prevents us from seeing the world with its alternate possibilities.

Further, one of the main ways of essentializing, objectifying and reifying the idea of *svabhāva* is to present a transcendental argument from causality. According to *Satkāryavāda*, essence may undergo modifications in manifestation but intrinsically/substantially remains immutable and same. One of the main arguments for the caste system comes from the *Puruṣa-sūkta* from *Ṛgveda*, according to which the four varṇas are manifestations of Puruṣa, the eternal cause. Since the distinctions of varṇa are inherent in the ultimate cause, they are therefore immanently inherent in its various manifestations and are all the same immutable. Similarly, though Nyaiyāyikas through their conception of *asatkāryavāda* argue for new creation of things, newness for them only means negation of its prior absence. Thus, examined closely, the Nyāya conception of the newness/novelty of an entity is essentially a temporal notion. Thus an entity is only laterally new or has a new beginning only along the horizontal axis of time, but along the vertical axis it is definitive and makes itself amenable to our understanding of it qua *sāmānya* or universal that inheres in it and marks the periphery/frontier of what it could ever be. Nāgārjuna presenting it as *pūrva-pakṣa* writes:

> An essential property is something an object cannot lose without ceasing to be that object. Nāgārjuna observes that "*svabhāva*" [in the sense of essence] cannot be removed, like the heat of fire, the fluidity of water, the openness of space.
>
> (Westerhoff, 2009: 22)

Existential and notional aspect of an object

The Mahāyāna distinction between *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* and *svalakṣaṇa*[3] is of paramount importance in this regard. According to Mahāyāna tradition, there are two main ways in which we take an object into consideration.

Svalakṣaṇa means an intrinsic feature of an object without which it cannot be the kind of object we consider it to be. We could call it the "existential aspect" of an object. As opposed to this, one could have a notional aspect of an object. Here this would mean a semantic aspect of it. The important difference between the existential and notional aspects of an object is that whereas the former refers to the ontological aspect of our understanding of an object, the latter pertains to the belief-aspect of the same. Mahāyāna Buddhist thinkers recognize these two aspects as two different epistemological realms altogether. The difference between the two for them is not one of degrees but of kind. The notional aspect according to them is imbued with linguistic categories that evolve out of countless changing contexts of our empirical lives. Accordingly, we view objects as subject to our notions regarding them. But it stands to reason that the notional aspect of objects is based solely upon how they are negotiated within our contexts of living. In other words, this view of objects is solely based upon the utility value of the object concerned. This way the ontological/existential sphere of enquiry is clearly and unequivocally delineated and distinguished from its notional/empirical sphere by Mahāyāna Buddhists. One of my aims in this chapter is to explicate that an omission to make this differentiation on the part of orthodox realists results in consequences that not only have soteriological but certain social implications as well.

For any socio-political collectivity we need to mutually recognize and respect two kinds of identities. First, we have identities that are absolutely fundamental to us as a part of that collectivity and in virtue of which we become a recognized part of that collectivity with the same rights and duties as all other members. On the other hand, we may also have some, other more temporary identities that are subservient to some shifting contexts in life. We have certain human rights ascribed to us as virtue of our being humans. This is something that we essentially are and signifies a bare minimum that we must acknowledge, recognize and respect in all human beings as much as in ourselves. On the other hand, my profession, my nationality, my religion, my gender and now even my sex provide to me temporary affiliations that may all seem important to me depending on the context but that are not definitive of me all the same. An important point I wish to bring out here is that these temporary affiliations do not in any way formalize my core identity as a human being. Epistemologically, this distinction could be viewed in several ways. Though not an exact parallel, this distinction could also be viewed in some way as similar to Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Whereas primary qualities in Locke's view reside within the object irrespective of our vantage point, secondary qualities are those ones amenable to our view of them. This notwithstanding, the overall point I am trying to make here is that how we are viewed in a social collectivity inevitably draws upon epistemological questions/inquiry and this is where an enquiry into orthodox realist schools' theory

of *pramāna* and their Buddhist opponents holds a key to understanding what kind of social collectivities they envisaged. In this regard, the schools of realism in classical India propose metaphysic that is more conducive to obfuscation of such distinctions in identities rather than their explication. As Prabal Kumar Sen points out, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school as well as the Pūrva-mīmāṁsā school maintain that properties like brahminhood, kṣatri-yahood, etc. are *sāmānya*s like cowness, horseness etc., and hence, one has to admit this four-fold classification of human beings as a given fact, not subject to any change that may be brought about by human effort.[4] Even though Naiyāyikas make a distinction between "contingent" and "neces-sary" with regard to their conception of the relationship amongst objects, there is no such distinction in their metaphysics with regard to the "what-ness" of objects. Furthermore, the Nyāya theory of *pramāṇa-samplava* suggests that the nature of the object of cognition remains the same irre-spective of the epistemological means employed for the same. This notion is challenged by the Buddhist notion of *pramāṇa-vyavasthā*.

Thus, language is viewed as having fixed designations by most orthodox schools. One could even say that the post-Heideggerian hermeneutical turn in western European philosophy does not have any counterpart in Indian thought. There are fixed ways of knowing the Other, whether as an object or as a person, such that the Other has a fixed unalterable status in the matrix of collectivity. Dominant trends in Indian philosophy allow internal pluralism but do not give an adequate and balanced account of dynamism, growth and mobility, which are essential indices of liveliness of things.[5] Much like some early Greek ideas, Indian orthodox thought systems show one-sided emphasis on essentially defined ways of epistemological access to an object.

Identity politics: subjective and objective identity

Another important point that emerges here is that from the perspective of identity politics, there can be two types of identities, as many philos-ophers including Bilgrami (2007) maintain. On one hand there are "ob-jective identities" that are affixed to an individual. The constructions of such identities draw upon certain structures of meaning that are projected upon a person in virtue of her caste, creed, nationality and other affiliations without her subjective approval. In virtue of their source in linguistic prac-tices, these structures are often considered immutable and non-negotiable just like words are. It could be interesting to note in this regard that social practices or "*lokavyavahāra*" is considered almost on par with *pramāṇa* in Nyāya philosophy. And although Naiyāyikas regard words as non-eternal and word-meaning relations as conventional, in order to maintain the au-thority of the Vedas, they regard word-meaning relations concerning the Vedic literature as instituted by God (Potter, 1977: 153). Mīmāṁsakas, on

the other hand, regard words as well as their relation with meanings as eternal. Universals are eternal and they are meanings of words according to both. This underscores the immutable structure of language as advocated by these realist schools. Hence the conceptions of language and reality of the realist schools in classical Indian philosophy provide the groundwork for presumably unalterable or immutable objective identity attributions.

As opposed to objective identities, subjective identities are those that have their basis in either the life-world or subjective inclinations of the concerned individual or whatever else,. but what differentiates them is that these identities are not affixed or projected upon an individual from outside of themselves; rather, they are consciously chosen by the person concerned and therefore have the personal approval and even assertion of the individual concerned. This further requires that the subject under consideration be viewed as having her own historical consciousness that projects itself as the rudiments out of which the subject constructs her identity. Needless to say, that formation of such identities may only be possible with a hermeneutical view of the subject, where the subject is reflexive and reflective at the same time and constantly emerges and constructs herself from within this dialectical tension and is therefore never complete. On examination of the above, it seems that there is a general lack of epistemological models available in classical Indian philosophical traditions that would support the notion of subjective identity. In other words, given rigid notions of "what-ness" of things as we find in the Nyāya system or in case of varṇa-based identities, there seems to be insufficient hermeneutical space for more flexible notions of identity to evolve within the epistemological and ontological fabrics of classical Indian orthodox realist worldviews.

I have attempted to argue here that as opposed to such conceptions of the world, Śūnyavāda philosophy is more akin to existentialist notion of *being*, where the "what-ness" of an object is not defined by the universal or *sāmānya* residing in it; rather, it evolves in and through our engagements and negotiations with others in specific contexts. Since the caste system builds itself upon reification of our contingent temporary affiliations, treating them as ontologically essential to our being, Mahāyānist critiques of essentialism expose and hit at the epistemological foundations of caste identities.

Furthermore, it should not be out of place to mention here that even though there is an explicit mention of different varṇas and a critique of the discrimination based on that in many early Pāli Buddhist literary sources, some scholars have pointed out that in the context of *nirvāṇa* varṇa distinctions are irrelevant as presented in early Pāli Buddhist literature (Krishnan, 1986: 71–84). But even though these distinctions are considered irrelevant once a seeker or *bhikkhu* gives himself up to the pursuit of *nirvāṇa*, these caste hierarchies are not put into question on ontological or epistemological

grounds specially in the Buddhists Pāli texts. Moreover, the scholars like Y. Krishan (1986) and Bimalendra Kumar (2020) have pointed out that there are passages in Pāli Buddhist canons that can be construed as uncritically descriptive of caste hierarchies, if not outright supportive of it. Bimalendra Kumar (2020), however, counters such a position by making a distinction between the Buddha's own approach as reflected in Pāli literature and the views attributed to the Buddha or developed by Buddhists later on. He concludes, on the basis of several citations from different Pāli sources, that such misconceptions can arise only when one fails to take into consideration the distinction he amply demonstrates between the Buddha's own approach to varṇa hierarchy and later Buddhist developments on this issue.

In modern times, however, B. R. Ambedkar was of the opinion that since the varṇa system provides the main bedrock for the formation of caste hierarchies, Hindus (notably among them Gandhi), should give up the notion of varṇas if they were at all serious about upliftment of oppressed castes. Ambedkar's position in this context would be best argued if there could be a possible criticism of the philosophical ideas that lend ontological and epistemological credibility to the varṇa system. Such critiques of epistemic support to the varṇa system are conspicuously available in Mahāyāna-śūnyavādin tradition as pointed out earlier.

Possibilities beyond Śūnyavāda

Society as a form of collectivity may have only a virtual existence that has an important practical purpose but it has to also have some idea of individual units that hinges upon and is invested with some notion of reality in terms of their experiences, sheer physicality or whatever else. Critics of Śūnyavāda philosophy therefore argue that some minimal idea of reality is indispensable for the formulation of rules of collectivity. Without such rules, no credible conception of collectivity can be constructed and subsequently any idea of social reformation would be, at best, good fiction. Therefore, one could argue that a *śūnyavādin* achieves the goal of challenging varṇa hierarchies only half way through, if at all. Critics may also point out that a *śūnyavādin* does not make direct reference to the notion of varṇa. Their critique in the texts is primarily directed against the classical realist's notion of *pramāṇas* in the epistemological context and also towards their conceptualization of *sāmānya* (universal) in the ontological context.

A possible reply to such criticisms could be to bring the critic's attention to *śūnyavādin's* suggestion of a two-fold distinction between *saṃvṛti-satya* and *paramārthataḥ satya*. For *śūnyavādins* all concepts exist at the level of *saṃvṛti* or at the level of practical utility alone and their truth has only provisional value within certain contexts. In this regard, they even point out that their negation of essences is also significant within the context of their

effort to destabilize any metaphysical foundations of the very notion of essence (*svabhāva*) and therefore should not be considered as a philosophical position or thesis outside that context. That being so, having presented an insurmountable challenge to realist notion of essences, a *śūnyavādin* would not close himself to suggestions regarding what would be best forms of collectivities given the practical utility value of those rules. But an important question that arises here is whether such a position is explicitly available in Mādhyamika texts. Mādhyamika tradition, originating as it does in the Buddha's silence, leaves more unsaid in terms of their actual philosophical stance—if they have any—on such issues. In the absence of the latter, no robust critique of the notion of caste, which would also lend itself to ethical and social considerations, can be developed.

This lacuna is filled by latter Buddhist logicians, notably amongst them Diṅnāga, who carries the *śūnyavādin*'s lineage in a direction that positions itself on a better epistemologically and ontologically delineated ground than Śūnyavāda itself. This in turn makes the Buddhist Mahāyāna position in its realist garb more robust in taking on the challenge posed by Naiyāyikas' brand of realism. But before we delve further into the debate, it would be worthwhile to take a closer look at the very idea of realism. In this connection, Pradeep Gokhale (1996) presented an interesting take on the issue. He points out that *śūnyavādin* is mainly concerned with the critique of *svabhāva* or the alleged essence of objects that not only lends ontological ground to their being so but also thereby makes these objects amenable to intelligibility. Gokhale asks in this connection, "But what about existence as *svabhāva*? If a thing exists by its very nature, by its essence, then it cannot cease to exist," and argues that "Advaitins and Mādhyamika Buddhists agree with this implication though they use this implication in opposite directions." He further points out that later Buddhist logicians like Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti contend that 'existence' "as an object of inference and language has a logico-linguistic status and not the ontological status like the one alleged to be that of *sāmānya* or *jāti*." The only basis of reality of "*sat*" or "existence" is its depositional status or "*arthakriyākāritva*." On such a conception of "existence" Dharmakīrti stipulates that something that is real must have some dispositional character or functionality. But functionality as the only mark of reality is precisely what would also render the being of an object non-eternal. According to Gokhale (1996: 209):

> If productivity or functionality is the very nature of everything real, then a real must itself undergo change. The thing which does not change itself cannot produce anything. And a thing which does not produce anything cannot be real. By an argument of this kind Dharmakīrti shows that everything real must be changing. Now a

changing thing must change immediately. If change is *svabhāva* of a thing, it cannot remain unactualized. Secondly, change being contrary to the idea of sustenance, a thing cannot change and yet retain its identity. So, a thing which is real and therefore changing by its very nature, must be momentary.

Thus, even though the Śūnyavāda doctrine of "no-essence" provides an important critique to disrobe the classical realist position—whether in its eternalistic garb in Advaita or in its common sense garb in Naiyāyikas—it leaves vacuous the space for any discourse on the collectivity that is so important to the Buddha's notion of Saṅgha. The notion of *saṃvṛti-satya* initially developed in Śūnyavāda is rather unintelligible. It provides no ground for explaining the so-called practical utility insofar as something that does not exist cannot be useful or the so-called alleged practical utility of an object is equally imaginary. As such, it could be argued that it cannot go together with Ambedkarism. According to Ambedkar, the opposite sides of the equation in his critique of Brahmanism are Brahmanical realism and some Buddhist counterpart of the same (realism), and not so much realism and anti-realism (Śūnyavāda). Ambedkar's critique of caste and its concomitant demand for deconstruction of the epistemological and ontological ground of caste therefore can better be developed on Sautrāntika lines in comparison to their Śūnyavāda counterpart.

Notes

1 Though it is true that Vajrayāna system does show dominant influence of the Hindu *Tantra* tradition, some Buddhist Tantras exhibit an explicit anti-caste approach. Shrikant Bahulkar (2020) has shown this with special reference to *Kālacakra-tantra* and its commentary *Vimalaprabhā* edited by Vrajavallabh Dvivedi and him (1994).
2 http://www.artandpopularculture.com/Essentialist.
3 This distinction was first introduced by Diṅnāga and then elaborated by Dharmakīrti. It was adopted by later Mahāyāna thinkers.
4 See "Nature of Caste: Some ontological problems," by P.K. Sen (2020). Here it can be noted that recognition of *brāhmaṇatva*, *kṣatriyatva*, etc. as *jāti*s has an interesting social implication. Naiyāyikas, while giving a special ontological status to *jāti*, also introduce the restrictions on something being regarded as *jāti* (*jātibādhaka*s). One such restriction is that any two *jāti*s should not overlap each other; that is, they should not have *saṅkara*. This gives an additional reason for Naiyāyikas to oppose the admixture of varṇas ('*varṇa-saṅkara*').
5 I believe that this trend is unfailing even up to Gandhi who, though influenced by Jaina philosophy of non-violence, was a strict adherent of *varna-ashrama* system for the large part of his life. B. R. Ambedkar realized that unless this orthodoxy in the Hindu way of life is given up, it does not have any space for consensus and dialogue—the true hallmark of any democratic setup.

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4

CASTING AWAY THE CASTE

A Buddhist standpoint in the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakra* tantra

Shrikant Bahulkar

Tantric Buddhism is a branch of Mahāyāna, generally denoted by the terms "*Mantrayāna*" or "*Vajrayāna*." The Mahāyāna tradition believes that the teachings in the *Mantrayāna* were given by the Buddha when he turned the Wheel of Law for the second time. While he gave the teachings of the *Pāramitānaya* at Gṛdhrakūṭa, he manifested himself at the same time at Śrīdhānyakaṭaka and gave the teachings of the *Mantrayāna*.[1] The tradition also believes that all the Buddhist Tantras were taught by the Buddha, who manifested himself in different forms. According to the historical view of modern scholars, one of the earliest Buddhist Tantric works, namely the *Guhyasamājatantra*, dates back to the 3rd or 4th century CE, while the last one, the *Kālacakratantra* (KC), was disseminated in the 10th or 11th century CE. Buddhist Tantric literature thus marks the last phase of Indian Buddhism and possesses some unique characteristics in relation to their contents and language. These works furnish details of Tantric ritual consisting of various rites such as the initiation of a disciple into a particular Tantric cycle, the worship of particular deities in the Maṇḍala, various consecrations or empowerments, yogic practices and so on. The path of enlightenment prescribed in the *Pāramitāyāna* would require many a lifetime to reach the goal, while the *Mantrayāna* is a quick path, through which it is possible to attain "complete enlightened Buddhahood" (*samyaksambuddhatva*) in the present lifetime and body. The language of Buddhist Tantras is supposed to be Sanskrit. However, it is not necessarily Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, it is much more corrupt.

While the Tantras are believed to have been taught by the Buddha himself, there are a number of secondary works evidently composed by Tantric masters, who came from different social backgrounds. They hailed from different castes and classes in Indian society and pursued different professions and lifestyles. For example, Sarahapāda, the author of the *Dohākośa*, was formerly a learned brāhmaṇa named Rāhula, master of the Vedas and the *Śāstras*. He decided to embrace Buddhism and became a monk. Some

came from royal families: Indrabhūti, the author of the *Sahajasiddhi* (Toh. 2260) was a king and his sister, Lakṣmīṅkarā, who wrote a commentary on that work (Toh. 2261), was a princess. Some masters came from low classes and had low professions. Some even belonged to tribal communities. Among these, there were arrow-makers, cobblers, rag-pickers, street-sweepers, entertainers and menial labourers of all types. The caste, the class, the profession or even the gender was not an obstacle in the path of Buddhahood. In this regard, there is a verse quoted in the *Vimalaprabhā* (VP), the celebrated, encyclopaedic commentary on the KC. The verse says:

> caṇḍālaveṇukārādyāḥ pañcānantaryakāriṇaḥ |
> janmanīhaiva buddhāḥ syur mantracaryānucāriṇaḥ|| (VP I, p. 15)

"Outcastes (*caṇḍāla*), flute-makers and so forth, and those who commit the five sins of immediate retribution (*ānantarya*), may become Buddhas in this very life, by pursuing the Mantra conduct" (VP I, p. 15).

In connection with the topic of this chapter, we come across, in the VP, a forceful argumentation aimed at refuting discrimination on the basis of one's caste, class and profession. The KC available to us at present is called the Concise *Kālacakratantra* (*laghukālacakratantra*), an abridged version of the Root-tantra (*mūlatantra*) called the *Paramādibuddha*.

According to the legend narrated in the KC and the VP, the Root-tantra was taught by the Buddha to King Sucandra, an emanation (*nirmāṇakāya*) of Vajrapāṇi, the tenth-stage Bodhisattva. King Sucandra in turn composed the Abridged Tantra in 12,000 verses in the *anuṣṭubh* metre and wrote an extensive commentary consisting of 60,000 *ślokas*, i.e., a unit consisting of 32 letters each. He gave the teachings of this Tantra to the people residing in the 960 million villages of the country called Śambhala.

The VP records the prophesy of the Buddha, according to which in future there will be born, into Sucandra's lineage, a descendant called Yaśas, the emanation of Mañjuśrī. He will compose a concise version of the Root-tantra in 1,030 verses in the *Sragdharā* metre. His son Puṇḍarīka will compose a commentary consisting of 12,000 *ślokas*. King Yaśas will be called "Kalkin" as he will bring the four varṇas into a single clan (*kalka*) by means of the Vajra-family initiation. Puṇḍarīka will be the second Kalkin. The word *kalka* has a peculiar meaning in this context; it means "a mixture of all classes into one single clan." And the word *kalkin* means "one who possesses the (single) clan." *Kalkin* appears to have been borrowed from Brahmanical Purāṇic sources, according to which Kalkin is the future and tenth incarnation of Viṣṇu. The Kālacakra tradition has, however, its own context and interpretation.

The VP narrates a story how King Yaśas effected the maturation of people by teaching them this Tantra and bringing them into one clan. The story echoes the attempt of Buddhists to refute Brahmanical proponents

of caste-class discrimination. According to this story, King Yaśas gave the teachings in the Concise Kālacakra Tantra to the 35 million brāhmaṇa sages, headed by Sūryaratha, residing in the 960 million villages in the country of Śambhala, at the Malaya Garden in the village Kalāpa, on the other bank of the Sītā river.

The story narrated in the VP shows how this Tantra came into being in order to convert the followers of the Vedic Dharma into Buddhism, particularly Tantric Buddhism. It also shows that it was necessary to convert first the brāhmaṇas so that those of other varṇas would follow them. It also aims at removing the ego for caste or class from the minds of the followers of the Vedic Dharma. The VP elsewhere quotes a verse that says that the Buddha gave the teaching into the Vajrayāna in order to remove one's clinging to one's family ("*kulagrahavināśāya*," VP I, p. 16).

In this connection, the VP also explains how the Tantra deliberately uses irregular or ungrammatical forms and construction in order to eliminate the ego or obsession with pure language on part of people belonging to high castes and classes. It reflects the conflict between the elites and the masses over the purity of language. Puṇḍarīka, the author of the VP, argues that King Yaśas, the composer of the Concise KC, relied on meaning and deliberately used faulty construction. The sole purpose behind that was to remove the obsession of a certain class with a grammatically correct word and its correct pronunciation. For instance, in some verses there are corrupt forms. In some verses, there is a violation of (a rule of metre named) *yatibhaṅga*. Somewhere there is a word without the case ending. In some words, letters and vowels are dropped. In some verses a long vowel is short and a short one is long. Somewhere the locative case is used for the ablative and the genitive for the dative.[2] The statement of the VP echoes the thought met with in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*. It says: "O one of great intelligence! a Bodhisattva, the Great Being, should rely upon the meaning and not upon the letters."[3]

This detailed explanation given by the author of the VP is aimed at attacking the followers of the Vedas and the Śāstras, the language of which is Sanskrit, prescribed by the Pāṇinian system of grammar. The Vedas have to be studied with great care and perfection so that there is no mistake in regards to the pronunciation of mantras, not even a mistake of a letter or an accent. Moreover, Patañjali, the author of the *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, says at the outset that Pāṇini's work is the "instruction into the words" (*śabdānuśāsana)* that includes both Vedic words as well as those used in the language of the people. He further lays great emphasis on the importance of proper words, as there are a number of corrupt forms of one word when uttered by a variety of people.[4] The language with ungrammatical words would not be called Sanskrit. Thus, the emphasis laid on the proper language represents the ego of high-class people towards their caste, class, family and gender. This might be one of the reasons for a norm

laid down in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, according to which inferior characters and women in Sanskrit plays speak Prakrit and not Sanskrit. The Prakrit languages are supposed to be the languages of the masses and not the elites in those days. In this regard, it is interesting to note how a Prakrit poet defends his language, praising the beauty of a Prakrit composition in the following words:

"The compositions in Sanskrit sound harsh, while that in Prakrit appears delicate. Whatever is the difference between a man and a woman, the same is the difference between these (two languages)."[5]

Clinging to the standard Sanskrit language is closely related to the Dharma and the Dharmaśāstra of high-class people. Common people belonging to the class of merchants and low castes do not understand Sanskrit. This is the reason why Lord Mahāvīra and Lord Buddha began to give their teachings in the languages of laymen and laywomen, in the vernaculars of those respective provinces. The Mahāyāna tradition maintains that both the Pālī Tripiṭaka and the Mahāyāna Sūtras are the sayings of the Buddha. The VP further elaborates this point and shows how the Buddha used a variety of languages to teach the Dharma to people residing in a variety of provinces.[6] The VP further explains how the Tathāgata gave teachings in various manners and remarks with the following words: "Because if this Sanskrit speech of limited extent (*prādeśika*), without the omniscient language having the nature of the utterance of all sentient beings, the Buddha would also be one of limited extent" (VP I, p. 34).

Though the first three of the four varṇas—namely, the brāhmaṇas, the kṣatriyas and the vaiśyas—are entitled to study the Vedas and the Śāstras, it appears that this precept was no longer in practice at the time of the composition of the VP. At some point in the medieval period, a notion came into being, which stated that in the Kali age there remains only two varṇas, the brāhmaṇa and the śūdra (*kalāv ādyantayos sthitiḥ*).[7] At the time of the composition of the VP, in the 10th or 11th century CE, it was believed that the brāhmaṇas and the kṣatriyas alone were entitled to the study of the Vedas. This belief can be corroborated by a statement in the Bhagavadgītā that says: "Women, the vaiśyas and the śūdras as well— these too can attain the supreme destiny, i.e., liberation."[8]

Thus, having attacked the Sanskrit language and the scriptures of the adherents of Vedism, Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas, that discriminate people of the four varṇas on the basis of their birth, the VP further attacks the very notion of the divine origin of the four varṇas. The oldest reference to this notion is found in the famous *Puruṣasūkta* of the Ṛgveda (X. 90.12). The verse in question mentions all four varṇas together and speaks of their origin. It is said in that hymn: "The brāhmaṇa was His mouth; the one of the royal race was made His two arms; as for the vaiśya, he was His two thighs; while the śūdra was born from His feet."[9] The KC refers to this mantra,

while mentioning the doctrine of Brahmā and Viṣṇu (KC II. 166). The VP refutes this doctrine, saying:

> Here the origin of brāhmaṇas is supposed to be the mouth of Brahmā. etc. Thus there are four varṇas. Now, there is the fifth varṇa, next to the four ones, namely that of the outcastes (*caṇḍāla*). Then what is the origin of that varṇa? And moreover, if it is indeed true that the brāhmaṇas were born from the mouth of Brahmā, then I ask—'Were the brāhmaṇa women too born from the same? If they were (born from the same mouth), they become the sisters of the brāhmaṇas, for they were born from one and the same womb. Thus, is it (not true) that the marriages of kṣatriyas and so forth are arranged with their respective sisters? How? And if so, then it is the upsurge of the Mleccha Dharma. On the upsurge of the Mleccha Dharma, there takes place the decadence of castes, and as a result of the decadence of castes, one attains the hell. This is the doctrine (of the Vedists and so forth).[10]

Thus, having ridiculed the belief in the divine origin of the four varṇas as expressed in the *Puruṣasūkta*, the VP attempts to show that the concept of caste cannot be justified on the basis of logic. It says:

> Here, if there is only one creator of (his) offsprings, how could then there be four varṇas? As for example, if there are four sons of one father, each of them does not have a separate caste. The same (can be said) in relation to varṇas. If you say that the difference (can be justified) on the basis of (their origin from different parts of Brahmā's body, such as) the mouth and so forth, then it cannot be proved logically. How? As for example, there is no difference between the fruits of the fig (*udumbara*) tree; (although they) are born at the bottom, at the middle part and at the top (of the tree). Similar is the case with the offsprings of Brahmā. And also, as there is not seen any difference between men, due to the difference in their colour, namely, white, red, yellow and black, and also there is not seen the difference as regards the seven basic constituents (*dhātu*s, i. e. *rasa*, *rakta* and so on), the faculties (*indriya*), happiness, sorrow, learning, knowledge and so forth; therefore, it is established that the caste cannot be determined (on the basis of birth).[11]

The VP elsewhere refutes the doctrines of Vedas, the *Gītā*, the Purāṇas, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* (VP III, pp. 94–95). The Dharma centred around horse sacrifice and other sacrifices is not a real Dharma. In order to show the futility of the pursuit of the Vedic Dharma, the author quotes a

verse ascribed to Śuka or Śukra, which says: "Having cut (a wood for) the sacrificial pole, having killed an animal (in the sacrifice), having created the mud of blood, if (by all these evil deeds) one attains the heaven, by what act does one attain the hell?."[12] The VP concludes—

> Therefore, the Veda is not self-born; the mouth and so forth (of Brahmā) is not the origin of people. The saying as to 'there is no Dharma other than the horse sacrifice' is all inconsistent utterance and (too) meaningless to be considered. Thus, the doctrine of Brahmā and the doctrine of Viṣṇu have to be discarded along with that of Īśvara (i.e. Śiva)[13]

The KC and its commentary VP were probably composed in the 10th or 11th century CE, against the background of the Islamic invasion. This is the only Buddhist Tantra that echoes the Islamic invasion and the advent of Islam in India. The expression "Mleccha Dharma" refers to Islam. The Tantra appears to have been composed with a view to defeating Islamic troops in battle and establishing the Dharma. This Tantra had a twofold task: On one hand, it had to refute Vedic tenets advocating the Dharma that supported the hierarchy among people on the basis of birth, caste, class and so forth. On the other, it had to confront the newly arrived Mleccha Dharma. By showing the similarities between these two Dharmas, it attempts in its unique way to refute doctrines supporting discrimination on the basis of caste, class and so forth.

Notes

1　This statement about the teaching of Mantrayāna is found in the *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*: "*gṛdhrakūṭe yathā śāstrā prajñāpāramitānaye | tathā mantranaye proktā śrīdhānye dharmadeśanā ||*" *Sekoddeśaṭīkā* (Sferra and Merzagora 2006: 66) ["As the Teacher (gave the teachings) into the way of Prajñāpāramitā on the Gṛdhrakūṭa (mountain), in the same manner, (he) gave the teaching into the Mantra way in the Śrīdhānyakaṭaka"].

2　This is a gist of the original passage, see, (VP I, pp. 29–30).

3　"*arthapratiśaraṇena mahāmate bodhisattvena mahāsattvena bhavitavyaṃ na vyañjanapratiśaraṇena |*" (Vaidya 1963: 79).

4　VB, Vol. 1, pp. 1 and 2.

5　"*parusā sakkaa-bandhā pāua-bandho-vi hoi suumāro / purisa-mahilāṇaṃ jettiam ihantaraṃ tettiam imāṇam //*" *Karpūramañjarī*, I.7.

6　For details see (VP I, p. 31).

7　This is an oft-quoted *pāda*. However, the source is not yet traced. Vaidya (1924: 312–7) discusses the dictum in detail. According to him, Kamalā-karabhaṭṭa at the end of his *Śūdrakamalākara* quotes the complete verse, referring to some Purāṇa text as the source (*purāṇāntare'pi*) but does not support it. Kamalākara cites the opinion of his father, Rāmakṛṣṇabhaṭṭa, according to whom, there are kṣatriyas and vaiśyas in the Kali age though their appearance is concealed and their karma and mode of life is defiled.

Vaidya argues that the statement must have emerged sometime between 1300 and 1600, though he was unable to trace its original source (1924: 314). Vaidya quotes the relevant passage (1924: 315). The work, although known as *Śūdrakamalākara*, is titled *Śūdradharmatattva*. The edition available to me is a Litho press edition, published in Mumbai in 1861 (śake 1783), jointly printed by Ganesh Bapuji Sahstri Malvankar and Vishnu Bapuji Shastri Bapat. The text reads:

    purāṇāntare' pi | brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ śūdravarṇās trayo dvijāḥ | yuge yuge sthitās sarve kalāvādyantayos sthitiḥ || (pp. 93–94). I have also consulted another edition in Marathi edited and translated by a group of scholars and published by Nirnaya Sagar Press, Mumbai. The relevant portion is found on p. 299. I am thankful to Prof. Patrick Olivelle and Dr. Michael S. Allen for sending me the reference to Vaidya's book.

8   *"striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parāṃ gatim |"* *Bhagavadgītā*, 9.32cd.

9   *"brāhmaṇo 'sya mukham āsīd bāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ |.*
    ūrū tad asya yad vaiśyaḥ padbhyāṃ śūdro'ajāyata ||" *Ṛgveda* (X. 90.12).

10 *"iha kila brahmamukhaṃ brāhmaṇānāṃ yoniḥ | tadutpannatvād iti | evaṃ bhujau kṣatriyāṇāṃ yoniḥ, ādiśabdād ūrudvayaṃ vaiśyānāṃ yoniḥ, pādadvayaṃ śūdrāṇāṃ yoniḥ, evaṃ catvāro varṇāḥ | eṣāṃ caturṇāṃ antimo varṇaḥ pañcamaḥ caṇḍālānāṃ; teṣāṃ kā yonir na jñāyate brāhmaṇais tāvad iti | kiṃ cānyat | iha brahmamukhād brāhmaṇā jātāḥ, kila satyam? ataḥ pṛcchāmi – kiṃ brāhmaṇyo 'pi tato jātāḥ? yadi syus tadā bhaginyo bhavanti, ekayonisamutpannatvād iti | evaṃ kṣatriyādīnām api vivāho bhaginyā sārdhaṃ bhavati? katham? atha bhavati, tadā mlecchadharmapravṛttir bhavati mlecchadharmapravṛttau jātikṣayaḥ, jātikṣayān narakam iti nyāyaḥ |"* (VP I, p. 261). The passages from VP cited here and below have been slightly edited by the present author.

11 *"iha yady ekaḥ sraṣṭā prajānāṃ tadā kathaṃ caturvarṇā bhavantīti? yathā ekasya pituś catvāraḥ putrās teṣāṃ na pṛthak pṛthag jātiḥ; evaṃ varṇānām api | atha brahmaṇo mukhādibhedena bhedaḥ, tadā sa eva yuktyā na ghaṭate | katham? yathā udumbaraphalānāṃ mūlamadhyāgrajātānāṃ bhedo nāsti, tathā prajānām api | aparo'pi śvetaraktapītakṛṣṇavarṇabhedena bhedo na dṛśyate; tathā dhātvindriyasukhaduḥkhavidyāgamādibhir bhedo na dṛśyate yasmāt, tasmāj jātir aniyateti siddham |"* (VP I, p. 261).

12 *"yūpaṃ chittvā paśuṃ hattvā kṛtvā rudhirakardamam |*
    yady evaṃ gamyate svargo narakaḥ kena gamyate ||" (VP I, p. 262).

13 *"tasmān na vedaḥ svayambhūḥ, na mukhādir yonir janasya, nāśvamedhāt parato dharmo'nya iti sarvapralāpaṃ nirarthakam vicāryamāṇam iti brahmamataṃ vaiṣṇavamatam īśvareṇa sārdhaṃ dūṣaṇīyam iti |"* (VP I, p. 262).

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Part II

NEO-BUDDHISM
Ambedkar on caste, class and gender

BUDDHA AND AMBEDKAR ON CASTE

A comparative overview

Mahesh A. Deokar

This chapter compares and contrasts the discussion on caste found in early Buddhist literature with the writings of Dr B. R. Ambedkar to understand their relationship. Scholars of Buddhism, sociology and anthropology often tend to study the Buddha's and Ambedkar's treatment of caste in isolation. As a result, they fail to notice the strong connection between the Buddha and Ambedkar on the matter of the refutation of caste and the remedy for overcoming it. They also miss the evolution in Ambedkar's treatment of caste. In the following pages, I have tried to show how Ambedkar's treatment of caste evolved over a period of time and how it was considerably influenced by early Buddhist critiques of caste. I have also shown how the remedies Ambedkar proposed for the annihilation of caste are fundamentally rooted in the Buddha's teaching.

In order to understand the early Buddhist approach towards caste, I have relied on the relevant discourses of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. My main sources for Ambedkar's approach to caste are his writings from three different periods, marking three stages in the development of his thesis on caste. These are:

1   *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*: a paper presented before the anthropology seminar of Dr A. A. Goldenweizer at Columbia University, New York, USA on May 19, 1916.
2   *Annihilation of Caste*: an article originally prepared as a presidential address for the 1936 annual conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore.
3   *The Buddha and His Dhamma*: posthumously published in 1957.

In addition to these, I have also consulted Ambedkar's unpublished work *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*, which was posthumously published in *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol. 3*. I will deal with the present topic in two parts, one devoted to early

Buddhism and the other to Ambedkar. Each of them will be further subdivided under the five following headings:

1 Understanding Caste
2 The Genesis, Mechanism and Spread of Caste
3 Evils of the Caste System
4 The Ground for the Refutation of Caste
5 The Remedy Adopted for the Abolition of Caste

Part 1. Early Buddhism on caste
Understanding caste

As a result of the interweaving of the two systems of varṇa and *jāti*,[1] often in older Pāli literature, the distinction in the usage of these words appears blurred. The word "varṇa" is generally used in the context of a four-fold social structure, e.g., "these are the four varṇas, namely, kṣatriyas, brāhmaṇas, vaiśyas, and śūdras."[2] However, while making an inquiry regarding one's social status, the question is always asked with the word *jāti*, which can be a reference to either the varṇa or a subdivision within it. A similar mixing of ideas is also found in the answer to such questions. For instance, while answering the question of King Bimbisāra—"Being asked, tell your *jāti*"[3]—Siddhārtha Gotama replied, "As per the *gotra*, I am *ādicca*, as per the *jāti*, I am *sākiya*,"[4] thus referring to his *jāti* as Śākya, quite fitting to the below mentioned features of *jāti*. However, answering a similar question asked by Sundarikabhāradvāja, "What is your *jāti*?"[5] the Buddha replied, "I am neither a Brahmin, nor a son of a king, i.e., kṣatriya, nor a vaiśya, nor anybody else,"[6] thus referring to the varṇas instead of their subdivision.

It is interesting to note that in the famous *Cullavagga* passage (p. 139) regarding *sakā nirutti*, the two Brahmin brothers are described as *brāhmaṇajātikā*—"belonging to the *brāhmaṇajāti*." Sometimes, the inquiry about *jāti* is even made directly with the question, "Are you not a Brahmin?"[7] The word "*gotra*," on the other hand, is generally used to refer to a family lineage or clan distinct from *jāti*, as mentioned above in the *Suttanipāta* (423ab). However, occasionally, it is also employed in a sense similar to that of *jāti*, as is found in the *Sundarikabhāradvājasutta*. Here, the Buddha, after being asked about his *jāti*, replied to the Brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja that asking him a question regarding his *gotra* was improper.[8] In a *Cullavagga* passage (p. 139), monks going forth from different social backgrounds are described as *nānāgottā nānājaccā nānākulā pabbajitā* ("[monks of...] various clans, various social strata have gone forth from various families") (*Cullavagga* translation, p. 194). These diverse usages indicate that there was an overlap in the ideas conveyed by the words "varṇa," "*jāti*," and "*gotra*" in Pāli literature.

Even though we do not find a clear-cut understanding of these ideas, the peculiar characteristics of the caste system, such as endogamy, caste-based forced division of occupation, graded inequality among the castes, and denying lower castes the right to education are discernible in Pāli *suttas* like the *Esukārīsutta*, the *Assalāyanasutta* and the *Lohiccasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, and the *Vāseṭṭhasutta* of the *Suttanipāta*. None of these *suttas*, however, attempt a formal definition of caste.

As per the early Buddhist literature, expressions like *saṃsuddhagahaṇiko* (of pure descent) and *akuṭṭho jātivādena* (not reviled on account of birth) (*Mahāvagga*, p. 115), *jātiyā suddho* (pure with respect to birth) and *ubhato sujāto mātito ca pitito ca* (well-born from both sides, i.e., from the sides of the mother and father) (*Dīghanikāya*, vol. I, pp. 113, 25) found in Pāli *suttas* point to the practice of endogamy.

The *Esukārīsutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* informs us that Brahmins believed that they were entitled to a superior social position and to regulate the privileges, duties and occupations of the members of the four varṇas. The Brahmin Esukārī presents the position taken by the Brahmins as follows:

a   Each varṇa is to be served by persons of its own varṇa and of the lower varṇas, but not by persons of higher varṇas.

b   Brahmins have fixed the occupations of each varṇa. The one who does not follow that (to use Ambedkar's term) "ancestral calling" is someone who does what he ought not do (*akiccakārī*) and is like a custodian committing theft. This idea of ancestral calling, which is the main feature of the caste system, is also discernible in the *Vāseṭṭhasutta*.

The *Lohiccasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* brings forth another important feature of the caste system, namely the denying of the right to knowledge to members of the lower castes. The Brahmin Lohicca held the view that one should not give knowledge to people of the śūdra class. Other features of the caste system, namely the prohibition of inter-dining and intermarriage, are clearly discernible in post-canonical Pāli as well as Sanskrit literature, though not so in early Pāli literature. (CF. *Viḍūḍabha-vatthu* of the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* vol. I, part 1. pp. 337–62 and *Lalitavistara*, p. 109)

The genesis, mechanism and spread of caste

It is noteworthy that questions of the genesis and mechanism of caste were not dealt with specifically in early Buddhist literature. As per the question of genesis, the *Assalāyanasutta* points to the theory of the divine origin of caste. The Brahmin Assalāyana believed that the Brahmins were born from the mouth of Brahma and, therefore, are his genuine heirs (Ambedkar 1957: 302). In a number of *suttas*, good or bad karma from the past life are

said to decide the birth of a person in a high or low caste (*Majjhimanikāya*, vol. III, p. 205). The *Esukārīsutta* suggests that being inspired by scriptural statements and eulogies, Brahmins started believing in their supremacy over the people of other varṇas and being carried away by it, and took up for themselves the task of defining the privileges, duties and occupations of the four varṇas. Although this explains how the scheme of—to use Ambedkar's words—"graded inequality" (1957: 87) was introduced along with the caste-based division of occupations and how the institution of caste claimed religious sanctity, it still does not explain, in real terms, how caste groups were formed in Hindu society.

The Buddha, as presented in Pāli canon, did not attempt to give his own theory of the genesis and mechanism of caste. What we find in the Pāli *suttas* is his refutation of Brahmins' belief in the theory of the divine origin of caste. This refutation clearly shows that for the Buddha caste was certainly a human creation and not a divine one. However, the deterministic theory of karma, used to explain and justify caste, contradicts this refutation since it makes caste unquestionable by maintaining its religious sanction. Moreover, the fact that the Buddha's entire criticism and advice over the issue of caste was directed towards Brahmins may imply that in his view they were the chief upholders and promoters of the caste system, if not the originators.

Although there is no clear mention, it can be inferred from Pāli *suttas* that the spread and strengthening of the caste system relied on:

a   the common acceptance of the theory of divine origination of varṇas and the theory of karma and rebirth,
b   promotion of rites and rituals in the religious life,
c   promotion of the esoteric and metaphysical ideas in the spiritual domain and
d   the eulogising of Brahmins by religious scriptures.

Evils of the caste system

The discussion, in clear terms, about the evil effects of the caste system on society is altogether missing in early Buddhist literature, with the sole exception of the *Lohiccasutta*. Only there, and later in the Tantric tradition in works like the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on *Kālacakratantra* (vol. I, pp. 40–41), it has been categorically stated that the caste system has forcibly kept lower caste ignorant by depriving them of the right to education. Besides this, the early Pāli discourses in general have been silent on the other deplorable social and ethical effects the caste system has had on society. As will be clear in the next section, these discourses simply showed that believing in caste is illogical and irrational. The *Assalāyanasutta* of the

Majjhimanikāya (vol. II, p. 155) considers the belief in caste discrimination to be an evil and false view (*pāpakam diṭṭhigatam*). Discourses such as the *Vasalasutta* of the *Suttanipāta* and the *Sunītattheragāthā* of the *Theragāthā* are, however, clear testimonies of the deplorable effects the caste system had on society at large. On one hand, it made the upper classes feel proud and arrogant while, on the other, it robbed the lower classes of their self-esteem.

Additional grounds for refutation of caste

Unlike the initial three points, early Buddhism has a whole inventory of arguments to refute caste. In order to refute the upholders of caste, the *Vāseṭṭhasutta* of the *Suttanipāta* argues that the institution of caste is unnatural, because unlike the marks of distinction that can be found in different species of animals, no such distinctions are found among human beings of different varṇas. Distinction among human beings is, however, possible only based on the work they do; for example, the man who takes care of cows can be called a cowherd, one who farms can be called a farmer and so on. Only by possessing high moral qualities and actions, not by birth, can one achieve high status in the society. Thus, according to the *Vāseṭṭhasutta*, since caste is not natural—to use Ambedkar's words—the worth of a person and not his birth alone should decide his status in society. The same is echoed in the *Vasalasutta* of the *Suttanipāta*. This basic principle advocated by the Buddha is at the core of even neo-Buddhists' argument against caste. In the *Assalāyanasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, the Buddha critically evaluates and criticizes Brahmins' false claim to superiority, purity and liberation. He refutes this view with the following arguments:

1   Like persons of other varṇas, Brahmins are also born of the same biological process.
2   In countries like Kamboja and Yavana, there are only two varṇas: that of *Ārya* and *Dāsa,* and it is possible for each one of them to change their varṇa. Hence the caste system is not a universally accepted and static social order.
3   Persons of all varṇas are equal before the moral law of karma and they equally bear the fruits of their evil or good deeds.
4   Persons of any varṇa have an equal capacity for self-culture.
5   Actions performed by persons of different varṇas yield the same result.
6   Intercourse between two people of different varṇas does not result in the birth of a being of a different species.
7   Between two persons of the same varṇa, society honours and respects the person who is superior in moral virtues and knowledge.

In the *Esukārīsutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, the Buddha challenges the authority of the Brahmins in determining and fixing the privileges, duties and occupations of the four varṇas. He refutes this position saying:

a   People of all varṇas have not given to Brahmins the right to decide their privileges, duties and occupations.
b   Moreover, imposing them unilaterally on people without their consent is improper and unethical.
c   Brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra are mere designations obtained from being born in a particular family, since an action performed by persons of different varṇas does not yield different results.
d   As per moral laws and the potential for self-culture, people of all the varṇas are equal.

The Buddha further adds that it is proper to serve a person, if through serving that person one acquires welfare and moral virtue. To follow the noble *dhamma* is the duty of all.

According to Kosambi (1989: 174–89), even after the passing away of the Buddha, his disciples continued to oppose the caste system. In support of this statement, Kosambi quotes the *Madhurasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. In this *sutta*, the Buddha's disciple Mahākaccāyana declares that the brahmins' claim to superiority is mere propaganda; for, if anyone acquires wealth or power, he will be served by people of all varṇas. Besides being equal before the moral law, people of all varṇas are equal even before the law of the state. Anyone who violates the law of the state ceases to be a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya or śūdra, and is simply treated as a defaulter by the law. It may be noted that the situation did not remain that way when the Smṛtis gained a stronghold on society. They prescribed differential punishment to the members of different varṇas for the same offence (cf. Kane 1941: 105–64). Thus, according to the *Madhurasutta*, the institution of caste is neither eternal nor unalterable and can be rendered meaningless by the changed economic and political status of a person. Moreover, the institution of caste cannot be justified from either a moral or legal point of view.

In the *Lohiccasutta*, the Buddha rejects the narrow outlook of the Brahmin Lohicca that only the higher varṇas should have access to knowledge. He advocates that knowledge should be freely distributed to people of all varṇas (male and female); for, those who deny the right to knowledge to the lower classes (śūdras and women), are danger-makers, unsympathetic and hostile towards those who depend on them. They are the followers of the wrong doctrine. The Buddha on the other hand admitted people of every varṇa to his Saṅgha, in order to give knowledge to all.

Thus, early Buddhist arguments refuting caste are focused on:

a   Proving caste distinction to be irrational and unnatural

b Declaring it to be neither universal, eternal nor unalterable in all circumstances
c Highlighting biological equality, equality of potential, and equality with respect to the law of karma among all classes
d Showing the importance of moral virtues and knowledge as the ultimate parameters of higher social status
e Pointing out how the denial of the right to education of the lower classes, a corollary of the caste system, is unethical and unlawful

However, early Buddhist literature does not discuss in explicit terms:

a Other socially and ethically deplorable implications of the institution of caste to the society that practices it
b Its unjust and unethical nature
c Its opposition to the universal principles of liberty, equality and fraternity
d Its failure as a social order

The remedy adopted for the abolition of caste

It may be noted that the mind plays an important role in the Buddha's religion. According to him, true religion exists in cleansing the mind of wrong notions and immoral thoughts. His discourses on caste indicate that he considered caste one such wrong views (cf. the *Assalāyanasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, vol. II, p. 155).

The Buddha adopted a dual policy for fighting caste: on one hand, he rejected the *śāstra*s and the divine authority behind the caste system and, on the other, he appealed to the reason of the intellectual class of society. This is exactly the line of thought adopted by Ambedkar in finding solutions to the problem of caste. The Buddha, through his teachings, refuted the theory of the divine origin of caste and challenged the authority of scriptures on rational grounds. In the *sutta*s like the *Tevijjasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, he questioned the infallibility of so-called religious texts. He invoked rational acumen among people through his discourses like the *Vīmaṃsakasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* and the *Kālāmasutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*.

The Buddha gave to people—to use the expression of Ambedkar—guiding principles of life instead of behavioural rules. He gave people parameters such as purity of intention, well-being of oneself and society[9] and the principle of *ātmaupamyatā*,[10] i.e., putting oneself in others' shoes to judge one's own behaviour. It is on this solid doctrinal foundation that the Buddha could dream of building an ideal society. However, this alone was not sufficient to actualize his ideal.

The Buddha backed up his ideology with an equally effective action plan, which shows his deep understanding of the problem of caste. He kept the

admission to his Saṅgha open to all, without any caste consideration. This not only opened the doors of knowledge and *saṁnyāsa* to people of all castes but also made possible the rehabilitation of all those foreign communities who otherwise did not have a place in the fixed caste framework of Hindu society.[11] It also helped people of different social backgrounds disown their past caste identity. In the *Aṭṭhakanipāta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, the Buddha takes pride in declaring that varṇa and *jāti* have no place in his Saṅgha. Just as all rivers lose their individual names when they enter an ocean and are simply called an ocean, similarly all those who join his Saṅgha would lose their earlier designations of family and caste, and are simply known by the name of Buddhist monks. This apparently simple move can well be taken as suggestive of the Buddha's understanding that caste consciousness cannot be removed without discarding the designations associated with it—the same point that Ambedkar later highlighted in the Annihilation of Caste when refuting the Arya Samajists.

Besides this, the Buddha adopted certain safeguards and healthy practices to ensure that there was no discrimination against any member of his Saṅgha, and that a feeling of solidarity and fraternity developed amongst them. These include:

1   Accepting the democratic model for his Saṅgha, where each member had an equal right of opinion, irrespective of their former varṇa or caste affiliation.
2   Adopting the ideal of common ownership, giving members an equal share in requisites such as clothing, food, beds, seats and medicine.
3   Acknowledging no special privileges to monks based on their birth or any other past background. Seniority in the Saṅgha was the only criterion on which monks were expected to show reverence to their colleagues.
4   Practice of the principle of *sapadānacariyā*, i.e., begging for alms from successive houses without preference and *saṁvibhāga*, i.e., distributing the gathered alms/food equally among members of the community; encouraging members of the Saṅgha to overcome their caste-consciousness by inter-dining.

These measures seem to have helped members of the Buddhist Saṅgha get rid of their caste-consciousness and function as a community with a sense of social binding. There is, however, no need to think that the Buddha's reforms were limited to the monk community alone. He was spreading his message among lay people through his teachings and actions. Many households that came into contact with him stopped practicing caste and treated their so-called low-caste colleagues with human dignity. The stories of Sujātā and Anāthapiṇḍaka setting their maid servants free are a good testimony of this fact.

Although there is not much on the issue of inter-caste marriages in the Pāli texts, in an interesting passage occurring in the *Lalitavistara* (p. 140), Śuddhodana asks his priests to find a suitable bride for the young Siddhārtha. He says:

"Inform me about such a girl who has these qualities, no matter whether she is a Brahmin or a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya or a Śūdra. My son is not proud of either clan or family. It is in the virtues, the truth and righteousness where his mind delights."[12]

This shows the Buddha's acceptance of inter-caste marriage.

According to Kosambi (1989: 174–89), there is no evidence that the other Śramaṇic schools and their leaders opposed the caste system as the Buddha did, even though they themselves did not observe caste discrimination in their own Saṅghas. Unlike the Jain Saṅgha, which later in its career partially accepted caste discrimination and prohibited the admission of untouchables into its Saṅgha, the Buddhist Saṅgha maintained its casteless nature until its disappearance from India. However, as can be seen in the literature, though the Buddha established a casteless community based on democratic principles, he was not able to make it the order of the day. Even though kings like Pasendi Kosala and Bimbisāra were his faithful followers, they did not adopt it as a state policy. As a result, in spite of all their efforts, *śramaṇa*s were unable to fully destroy the deep-rooted institution of caste.

Part 2. Dr. Ambedkar on caste

Understanding caste

In the paper entitled *Castes in India*: *Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*, Ambedkar (1982: 7) argued that caste should be defined in the context of endogamy. He defined it as "an artificial chopping off (*sic*) the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy." In his view, "prohibition, or rather the absence of intermarriage-endogamy, to be concise is the only one that can be called the essence of Caste when rightly understood" (1982: 7). In his opinion, caste can also be described as the "parcelling into bits of a larger cultural unit" (1982: 31).

In the same article, Ambedkar held that the varṇa system was essentially a class system, in which individuals when qualified could change their class. Caste, on the other hand, is an "enclosed class" (1982: 19). He felt that the subdivision of society based on the division of labour is natural. What is unnatural is that it "lost the open door character of the class system and became self-enclosed units called castes" (1982: 24).

Ambedkar maintained a similar view regarding the distinct characteristics of varṇa and jāti in his later writings. In 1936, in his response to

M. K. Gandhi's criticism of his article *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar states that the Vedic conception of varṇa as understood and preached by people like Swami Dayanand Saraswati was sublime. Its essence was "the pursuit of a calling, which is appropriate to one's natural aptitude" (1945: 22). The essence of caste on the other hand is a pursuit of an ancestral calling based on birth. Ambedkar admitted that although he opposed the varṇa system, he found the Vedic theory of varṇa to be sensible and an inoffensive thing. He held that varṇa and caste are fundamentally different. Varṇa is based on worth, whereas caste is based on birth (1945: 23). It is in the later period that the distinction between the two was lost, and varṇa too began to signify the ancestral calling.

In section IV of his article *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar refuted those who try to understand and justify caste in India as a division of labour system. He pointed out that it is not merely a division of labour, but a division of labourers. It is a watertight division with graded inequality, in which the division of labourers is graded one above the other. This division of labour is neither spontaneous nor based on the natural aptitude of labourers. In this system, people neither have the choice of selecting their occupation nor is there any place for their sentiments and preferences. Rather, it is based on the dogma of predestination.

Further in the same article, Ambedkar also rejected the theory that caste is based on the principle of eugenics to maintain racial purity. He argued that Indian society is a mixture of different races and has not maintained any racial purity.

Moreover, customs like prohibition of inter-dining, which is part and parcel of the caste system, has nothing to do with racial purity. He remarked that caste has no scientific origin and those who were trying to support it through science were attempting to give a eugenic basis to what is grossly unscientific.

In Chapter 7 of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*, Ambedkar underlined the similarities and differences between varṇa and *jāti*. According to him:

> [v]arna and Caste are identical in their *de jure* connotation. Both connote status and occupation. Status and occupation are the two concepts which are implied in the notion of Varna as well as in the notion of Caste. Varna and Caste however differ in one important particular. Varna is not hereditary either in status or occupation. On the other hand Caste implies a system in which status and occupation are hereditary and descend from father to son
>
> (2008: 285–6)

Following John Dewey (Democracy and Education, 99) he points out the difference between the natures of a class society and a caste society saying,

"[t]he difference between a society with the class system and a society with the caste system lies just in this namely the class system is merely non-social but the caste system is positively anti-social" (2008: 306).

In Ambedkar's magnum opus, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, which can be treated as the culmination of his search for a solution to the caste problem, he enumerated the following salient features of a caste-based society:

a division of society into four castes,
b unequal division of rights and privileges among the four castes based on the principle of graded inequality,
c division of occupations,
d denial of the right to education to śūdras and women and
e denial of the right to *saṁnyāsa* to śūdras and women (1957: 87–88).

It is noteworthy that unlike his previous two writings, in *The Buddha and His Dhamma* Ambedkar established a direct connection between these features of the caste system and different discourses of the Pāli canon. He has interpreted the views of the Brahmin Esukārī as propagating "the permanent division of occupations" (1957: 304). Based on the arguments against caste found in *Vāseṭṭhasutta*, Ambedkar deduced that the Buddha treated the division of society based on the division of labour as natural and acceptable, where mobility across the classes is possible. The Buddha, however, did not advocate the unfair principle of ancestral calling.

The genesis, mechanism, and spread of caste

In the *Castes in India*: *Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development* (1982: 9), Ambedkar observed that superimposing endogamy over exogamy is the mechanism of creating caste. According to him, customs like *satī* (enforced widowhood for life) and child-marriage are the means of maintaining endogamy. He believed that "strict endogamy could not be preserved without these customs, while caste without endogamy is a fake" (1982: 18).

Ambedkar maintained that the origin of caste is the origin of the mechanism for endogamy. He argued that since the existence of a definite class in a society is a fact, the answer to the question of the genesis of caste should be sought in the answer to the question, "What was the class that first made itself into a caste?" He showed that it was the Brahmin class that first enclosed itself to form a caste.[13] In his opinion,

> the strict observance of these [above mentioned] customs and social superiority advocated by the priestly class in all ancient civilizations are sufficient to prove that they were the originators of this 'unnatural institution' founded and maintained through these unnatural means
> (1982: 19–20)

As for the question of the growth and spread of the caste system, in the same article Ambedkar maintained that the institution of caste was neither imposed upon the docile population of India nor by a law-giver like Manu as divine dispensation nor was it grown according to some law of social growth peculiar to the Indian people. He held that the varṇa system was initially a class system allowing social mobility. Later, at some stage, the priestly class socially detached itself from the rest of the people and, through a closed-door policy, became a class by itself. The other classes, being subject to the social law of division of labour, underwent differentiation. Such groups became castes through imitation and excommunication. Thus, the origin of caste is due to the conscious enclosing of class by the "superior" community and its growth and spread is due to imitation by those inferior to it on the one hand and those closed out in society because of excommunication on the other (1982: 20ff).

In Chapter 7 of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*, Ambedkar clearly held Brahmins responsible for the genesis and strengthening of the caste system. Here, he explicitly states that Brahmanism converted varṇa into caste by making status and occupation hereditary. He envisaged three stages of this conversion. In the first stage, "the duration of Varna i.e., of status and occupation of a person was for a prescribed period of time only" (2008: 286). In the second stage, "the status and occupation involved the Varna of a person ensured during lifetime only" (2008: 286). In the third stage, "the status and occupation of the Varna became hereditary" (2008: 286). According to Ambedkar, in legal language, "the Estate conferred by Varna was at the beginning an Estate for a term only. Thereafter it became a life Estate and finally it became an Estate of inheritance which is tantamount to saying that Varna became Caste" (2008: 286).

In the same book, Ambedkar showed how through *Manusmṛti*'s legal code, the caste system was created and strengthened. In his view, the two laws of *Manusmṛti* against intermarriage and inter-dining created the caste system. Commenting on the close relationship between these two laws and the caste system he remarks:

> [p]rohibition of intermarriage and prohibition against interdining, are two pillars on which it rests. The caste system and the rules relating to intermarriage and interdining are related to each other as ends to means. Indeed by no other means could the end be realized
> (2008: 293)

According to Ambedkar, "[G]irl marriage, enforced widowhood and Sati had no other purpose than that of supporting the Caste System which Brahmanism was seeking to establish by prohibiting intermarriage" (2008: 301). He further points out that excommunication is another means used

by *Manusmṛti* to maintain the caste system. In his view, "once Brahmanism was determined to create the caste system the law against the outcast was absolutely essential. For only by punishing the outcast can the caste system be maintained" (2008: 304). Here, Ambedkar clearly spells out *Manusmṛti*'s role in legalizing the conventional caste system saying, "this old Chaturvarna was conventional. It was the ideal of the Society but it was not the law of the State. Brahmanism isolated the Varnas and sowed the seed of antagonism. Brahmanism made legal what was only conventional" (2008: 328).

Evils of the caste system

In the *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar presented a detailed analysis of the caste problem and suggested methods for abolishing it. While preparing ground for its abolition, he underlined the evils of the caste system from Section VI up to Section XIII of his article as follows:

a   The caste system has not done any good to improve economic efficiency nor has it improved the race. On the contrary, "it has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus" (1945: 25).

b   Although there are similarities of habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts, there is no sense of social binding among Hindus as the community is divided into castes: the "Caste-system prevents common activity, and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being" (1945: 27–28).

c   An anti-social spirit is the worst feature of Hindus: "The existence of Caste and Caste Consciousness has served to keep the memory of past feuds between castes green and has prevented solidarity" (1945: 29).

d   "Caste is... the real explanation as to why the Hindu has let the savage remain a savage in the midst of his civilization without blushing or without feeling any sense of remorse or repentance" (1945: 30–31), according to him. He further warned that if these savages and aboriginals have been claimed by other religions that are hostile to Hindus, these new converts could pose a big threat to the existence of Hindus. Similarly, Hindus have not made any effort to help low-caste people rise to their cultural standards.

e   The Hindu religion was a missionary religion in its initial stages. However, it ceased to be so with the strengthening of the caste system. The caste system made the process of *śuddhi*, i.e., the rehabilitation of converts into the Hindu religion as well as the *saṅghaṭana* (the feeling of forming a group) impossible. He wrote, "So long as Caste remains, there will be no Sanghatan and so long as there is no Sanghatan the Hindu will remain weak and meek" (1945: 35).[14]

f "Caste in the hands of the orthodox has been a powerful weapon for persecuting the reforms and for killing all reform" (1945: 37).

g Caste has a deplorable effect on the ethics of Hindus. It killed the public spirit. It has also destroyed the sense of public charity and has made public opinion impossible.

In Chapter 7 of his *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*, Ambedkar claimed that *Manusmṛti* was composed to re-establish Brahmanism by destroying Buddhism. Here, he enumerated the effects of the triumph of Brahmanism over Buddhism as follows:

a It established the right for the Brahmin to rule and commit regicide.
b It made Brahmins a class of privileged persons.
c It converted varṇa into caste.
d It brought about a conflict and an antisocial feeling between the different castes.
e It degraded Shudras and women.
f It forged a system of graded inequality.
g It made a legal and rigid social system which was conventional and flexible (2008: 275).

In the same book, Ambedkar opined that *Manusmṛti*'s object of converting varṇa into caste was "to make the high status enjoyed by the Brahmins from ancient times the privilege of every Brahmin and his progeny without reference to merits or qualifications" (2008: 289). According to him, this conversion had harmful spiritual and secular consequences. From a spiritual point of view, it placed the Brahmin in sole charge of the spiritual affairs of people, even though he did not possess learning or morality. From the secular perspective, it introduced a most pernicious mentality among Hindus to disregard merit and regard only birth. He further remarks, "Brahmanism in instituting Caste system has put the greatest impediment against the growth of nationalism" (2008: 304).

While highlighting the miserable state of Shudras and women due to the caste system Ambedkar says,

> [i]t is this huge mass of people that has been doomed by Brahmanism to eternal servility and eternal degradation. It is because of the colossal scale of degradation whereby 75% of her people were deprived of their right to life. liberty and pursuit of happiness that India became a decaying if not a dead nation
>
> (2008: 317)

Ambedkar took pains to show how the principle of graded inequality runs through the whole *Manusmṛti* and its successive Smṛtis, which pervade all

departments of life. According to him, because of the system of graded in-equality, "Hindus have been stricken with palsy" (2008: 320). He marked the difference between inequality and graded inequality. In his opinion, the latter is far more dangerous than the former, for it does not allow the crea-tion of the general discontent that forms the seed of revolution and does not make sufferers unite against a common foe and a common grievance, and thereby sustains the system of caste (2008: 320).

Thus, in his writings, Ambedkar enumerated a number of vices of the caste system and showed how it badly it has affected Hindu society in par-ticular and the country in general.

In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, in the section 'The Brahmanas' of the fifth part 'The Buddha and His Predecessors' of Book I (1957: 91), Ambedkar claimed that the Buddha did sense that graded inequality might spread in society "an ascending scale of hatred and a descending scale of contempt and might be a source of perpetual conflict." After examining the *cāturvarṇya*, the Buddha understood that it is based on a wrong philosophical foundation: "[i]t did not serve the interest of all, much less did it advance the welfare of all." It was deliberately created to serve the interest of a few "self-styled super-men." It was calculated to suppress and subjugate the weak.

It may be noted that what Ambedkar claimed was not directly stated by the Buddha in any of his discourses. It is rather a result of his own analysis and interpretation of the Buddha's opposition to the varṇa system. These claims can best be treated as possible logical conclusions of the early Bud-dhist approach to caste.

Additional grounds for refutation of caste

Besides the above-mentioned evils of the caste system, there are some ad-ditional grounds to call for its abolition. In Sections II and III of his de-liberation in the *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar highlighted that no political revolution is possible without a prior social or religious revolution. According to him, the political revolution by Chandragupta was successful as it was preceded by the religious and social revolution by the Buddha. Moreover, like political reforms, even economic reforms cannot solve so-cial problems, for, without social reforms, no political or economic reform is sustainable. Hence, according to Ambedkar, any successful political or socialist reform in India must be preceded by social reform in the form of abolishing the menace of caste.

In Section XIV of *The Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar discussed an ideal form of society. According to him, a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity—just another name for democracy—is an ideal society. The institution of caste is opposed to these cardinal principles as it neither al-lows a person the choice of his own occupation nor does it give him equal status in society as a human being nor does it promote a sense of fraternity

or democracy, which is an associated form of living among persons of different castes.

In Section XVI of the *Annihilation of Caste* Ambedkar has shown that as a system of social organization *cāturvarṇya* is not only impractical, but also harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure. He enumerated the causes of its impracticability, harmfulness and failure in Sections XVI–XVIII of his article as follows:

A   The adoption of *cāturvarṇya* to organize the society is not practical, for,

    1   The reduction of 4,000 castes based on birth into four varṇas based on worth is difficult.

    2   The qualities of individuals are so variable that it would not be possible to classify people accurately into four classes.

    3   To maintain *cāturvarṇya* in the wake of the problem of a transgressor is not easy.

B   The reorganization of Hindu society based on *cāturvarṇya* is harmful because the effect of the varṇa system is to degrade the masses by denying them opportunities to acquire knowledge and to emasculate them by denying them the right to be armed.

C   *Cāturvarṇya* has consistently failed since its inception in the Vedic period.

Moreover, in Section XIX of the *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar pointed out that caste in Hinduism is fundamentally different from the caste system found in other religions. Unlike other religions, caste has caused disintegration among Hindus. It has more social significance to Hindus than to non-Hindus. Caste is a sacred institution to the former, whereas it is just a practice to the latter. According to Ambedkar (1945: 53), "[r]eligion compels the Hindus to treat isolation and segregation of castes as a virtue." As a result, integrating forces, which would overcome the disintegration caused by caste, are not to be found in Hindu society. In spite of the fact that the Hindu society has survived long, the quality of its survival is deplorable owing to the evils of caste mentioned above.[15]

In Section XX (1945: 55), Ambedkar gave a clear warning that unless Hindus change their social order, they can achieve very little by way of progress. Neither can they mobilize society for offence or defence, nor can they build a society or a nation. Anything based on caste is going to crack and can never be whole. These additional grounds for the refutation of caste can be summarized as follows:

a   For the success of any political or socialist reform in India, social reform in the form of abolishing the menace of caste must precede.

b   As a system of social organization, *cāturvarṇya* has proved impractica-
      ble, harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure.
c   Hindus can achieve very little by way of progress unless they change
      their social order that is based on caste.

The remedy adopted for the abolition of caste

From Section XX onwards of *The Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar talked
of measures to abolish caste. Refuting those who feel that the first step to-
wards this it to abolish sub-castes, Ambedkar argued that doing so would
be erroneous, for the fusion of sub-castes is impossible due to the diversity
evident in them. Moreover, there is no guarantee that abolishing sub-castes
would necessarily lead to the abolition of castes overall. Thus, this remedy
is neither practical nor effective.

   Ambedkar equally rejected the idea of Ãryasamājists to reorganize the
Hindu society on the principle of *cāturvarṇya* based on worth instead of
birth, by doing away with the 4000 sub-castes and maintaining simply the
old labels of the four varṇas. He argued that if society is to be organized not
on the basis of birth but worth, then maintaining the labels of varṇas would
be futile. In fact, it would not only be futile, but rather would be the oppo-
site of the idea of equality in status, for, it is a common experience that cer-
tain names become associated with certain emotions and sentiments that in
turn determine a person's attitude towards people and things. The designa-
tions brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra are associated with a sense of
hierarchy based on birth. Hence, if new notions are to be inculcated in the
minds of people, it is necessary to give them new names. To continue with
old names is to make reform futile.

   Criticizing those who were in favour of inter-caste dining as the remedy
for caste, Ambedkar (1945: 57) said, "It is a common experience that
inter-dining has not succeeded in killing the spirit of Caste and the con-
sciousness of Caste." According to him, the primary remedy for the prob-
lem of caste is inter-marriage. Although, this would still not be the end.
One must try to find out why people do not inter-dine or inter-marry with
persons of different castes. The answer to this question, according to him,
is that inter-dining and inter-marriage are repugnant to the beliefs and
dogmas Hinduism regards as sacred. He further said that caste is a notion;
it is a state of mind. Hence, the destruction of caste would mean a notional
change.

   For Ambedkar, it was not the people who were wrong, but the religion
that inculcated the notion of caste. Hence, in order to abolish caste, one
should grapple with the *śāstra*s, which teach the religion of caste. Thus,
the real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the *śāstra*s, for, the
acts of people are merely the results of the beliefs inculcated in their minds
by the *śāstra*s. If people become free from the thrall of the *śāstra*s and if

their minds are cleansed of the pernicious notions of castes founded on the *śāstra*s, they will naturally inter-dine or inter-marry.

In Ambedkar's opinion, one should take the stand—also taken by the Buddha and Guru Nānak—to not only discard *śāstra*s, but also deny their authority. It may be noted that this is the only place in the *Annihilation of Caste* where we can find a reference to the Buddha or his teaching. Ambedkar (1945: 60) further observed that

> [c]aste is the natural outcome of certain religious beliefs which have the sanction of the Shastras, which are believed to contain the command of divinely inspired sages who were endowed with a supernatural wisdom and, whose commands, therefore, cannot be disobeyed without committing sin.... To ask people to give up Caste is to ask them to go contrary to their fundamental religious notions.

Since castes are believed to have a divine basis, Ambedkar appealed to people to destroy the sacredness and divinity with which caste has been invested, meaning that one must destroy the authority of *śāstra*s and the Vedas. According to Ambedkar, this is a difficult task for Hindus, since Brahmins, the intellectual class of Hindus, will not take this up as it would adversely affect their own class. Secondly, the destruction of caste is not possible, for the structure is such that each caste takes pride and consolation in the fact that in the hierarchical scale, it is above some other caste. Hence, it is impossible to organize a common front against the caste system. Moreover, it is also difficult for a Hindu to discard caste as being contrary to reason, because he is not free to follow his reason. Reason and morality are the two most powerful weapons in the armoury of a reformer. To deprive him of these weapons is to disable him from acting. Ambedkar said that religion must mainly be a matter of principles and not rules. The moment it degenerates into rules, it ceases to be a religion as it kills responsibility, which is the essence of a truly religious act. In his view, the Hindu religion is not mainly governed by principles, but by rules. He said that there is nothing irreligious in working for the destruction of religion, which is a mass of different types of rules and regulations. He believed that once the people realize that religion they are following is not a religion but a law, they will be ready either to abolish it or to amend it.

As per Ambedkar, after abandoning the religion of rules, one should replace it with the religion of principles. He appealed to the Hindus that they must give a new doctrinal basis to their religion, one that is in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity—in short, with democracy. In his reply to Gandhi's criticism of the *Annihilation of Caste* (published in *Harijan* of 11th and 18th July 1936), he cautioned that in the matter of eradicating

caste, one cannot totally rely on saints, as they were concerned with the relation between man and god; they did not preach that all men were equal. Rather, they preached that all men were equal in the eyes of the gods.

When Ambedkar became convinced that the Buddha's *dhamma* is the only one that meets all the parameters of an ideal religion and the only one that can fulfil the expectation of liberating oppressed people from their suffering, he—along with his millions of followers—decided to embrace Buddhism. He wrote *The Buddha and His Dhamma* as a blueprint of his ideal religion. In this book, he tried to unearth the social message of the Buddha. He pointed out the rational and moral values embedded in the Buddha's teachings, which the Buddha had used to fight the caste system. He showed how the Buddha challenged scriptural authority and established a new religion based on principles.

In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar tried to demonstrate that the Buddha cherished the democratic principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice and gave prominence to worth over birth. He highlighted that the Buddha founded his religion on the noble virtues of *dāna* (offering), *sīla* (morality), *khanti* (forbearance), *mettā* (loving kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (altruistic joy) and *paññā* (wisdom), which are necessary to create a truly righteous and democratic society (1957: 127). He demonstrated that in the Buddha's teachings, principles are the governing factors of human life, not rules. According to him, the Buddha differentiated between what is *dhamma* (religion) and what is *saddhamma* (ideal religion). He explained *saddhamma* to be those principles that turn *dhamma* into *saddhamma* (1957: 281ff). In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, he categorically stated that true religion should promote equality between man and man, so that the best would survive even if he was not the fittest, for society wants the best and not the fittest (1957: 308).

Without citing any particular text, Ambedkar suggested that the Buddha was in favour of conversion as the remedy for the problem of caste. He said that according to the Buddha, a religion that does not preach equality is not worth having (1957: 308). The Buddha also realized that since the caste system is believed to be a divinely ordained social system, it cannot be amended and can only be ended (1957: 92). Ambedkar is justified in inferring this implication from the Buddha's teaching, as the Buddha gave paramount importance to worth over birth. The facts that observance of varṇa and *jāti* has formed the core of Brahmanic religion and that the Buddha preached against it and was encouraged followers of that religion to abandon it in favour of equality, implies in a way that the Buddha suggested people abandon their old religion and accept a new life, by either becoming a member of the Saṅgha or a lay follower. Ambedkar asked new converts to give up their humiliating occupations and habits. In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, he interpreted the Buddha's advice found in the *Esukārīsutta*

to do only profitable service as his injunction, to refuse those services that make one bad and not good (1957: 304).

Wherever Ambedkar noticed logical inconsistencies in the presentation of traditional Buddhism, he did not shy away from removing them. He rejected the orthodox understanding of the notion of *saṁsāra* (transmigration of soul) and the doctrine of karma, since they not only contradict the basic principle of non-self, but also justify the untenable institution of caste. According to Ambedkar, the Brahmanic doctrine of karma is a part of the thesis of transmigration of the soul after death. As per their understanding, the doctrine of karma is "the determination of man's position in present life by deeds done by him in his past life" (1957: 103). We do find an echo of this traditional notion of how the law of karma works in some of Pāli *sutta*s like the *Kammavibhaṅgasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. Despite this, Ambedkar held that the Buddha repudiated such a fatalistic view of life. According to him, although the Buddha accepted the great law of cause and effect with all its corollaries, he did not believe that all deeds done in some previous life "have the potency to produce suffering," thereby leaving the "present activity impotent" (1957: 104). Ambedkar (1957: 91) felt that the Buddha recognised that the Brahmanical theory of karma was designed "to sap the spirit of revolt completely," and hence replaced it with a much more scientific view of karma. Keeping in view the Buddha's theory of non-self, he proposed a new and more scientific interpretation of rebirth. He held that in order to oppose the karmic justification of caste, the Buddha replaced the notion of transmigration with "the doctrine of rebirth" (1957: 104). According to this, it is not the person who is reborn, rather the elements that dissolve into nature at the time of death are reborn.

Just like the Buddha, Ambedkar also backed up his ideological fight against caste with institutional and constitutional remedies. As suggested in the *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar established a social organization called "The Buddhist Society of India" to train, examine and certify Buddhist priests with the purpose of actualizing the principle of giving prominence to worth over birth. In order to extend the benefit of the Buddha's Dhamma to the citizens of India, Ambedkar translated the Buddhist vision of an ideal society into a constitution based on the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice—the Indian one. Being the chairman of the constitution drafting committee, he incorporated a number of safeguards against any possible violation of fundamental human rights. Thus, he took his discourse on caste from a theoretical plane up to the height of practical implementation.

Ambedkar's remedies to the problem of caste can be summarized as:

a   Cleansing people's mind of the pernicious notions of caste.
b   Giving new names to people by discarding old ones, to inculcate new ideas in their minds.

c   Destroying the sanctity of caste and varṇa by grappling with *śāstra*s, which preach the religion of caste.
d   Denying the divine authority of the *śāstra*s.
e   Making an appeal to the reason and morality of people, to help them deny this authority.
f   Making people realize that real religion lies in principles, not in rules. Hence, there is nothing irreligious in abolishing or amending the rules.
g   Reorganizing society on a religious basis, which would recognize principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.
h   Converting to Buddhism and practicing a life of dignity based on worth.
i   Incorporating Buddhist ideals and safeguards of human rights in the Indian constitution.

To conclude, the comparison between the Buddha's and Ambedkar's approaches to caste can be summarised as follows:

In his analysis of caste, Ambedkar initially described caste from the point of the principle of endogamy. However, in *The Buddha and His Dhamma* the same is discussed in terms of its other features, such as graded inequality, division of occupation, etc., which he tried to trace back to the Buddha's discourses. His theory of the genesis, mechanism and spread of caste, as well as his detailed analysis of the negative effects of the caste system on Hindu society, has no parallel in early Buddhist literature. As for arguments refuting caste, those supporting the necessity of social reforms, and those proving the impracticability, harmful nature and failure of the *cāturvarṇya* system, are absent in early Buddhist discourse. However, other issues raised by Ambedkar in this context are present in early Buddhist discourse, at least in a nutshell. The section dealing with the refutation of caste exhibits more similarity between the two approaches than other sections. Ambedkar and the Buddha appear to have fought against caste on the same lines. Both of them challenged the authority of religious scriptures, appealed to the reason of their followers, encouraged conversion to a new life, and created safeguards against the violation of equality in their respective institutions.

The above-mentioned observations clearly show that Ambedkar's understanding of the issue of caste evolved over a period of time. His contact with Buddhism played a vital role in transforming and shaping his approach to the problem of caste and its solution. In his 1916 paper *The Caste in India* and in his 1936 address *Annihilation of Caste*, which came a year after his announcement of abandoning Hinduism, Ambedkar analysed the issue of caste as an ethnologist and a sociologist. We do not find any direct influence of Buddhism on his writing until this stage. However, when Ambedkar started studying the Buddhist religion seriously as one of the options he could convert to, he must have noticed the similarities in the Buddha's

rational criticism of caste and his own doctrine of the annihilation of caste. During this period, he must have also realised that values of liberty, equality and fraternity, which are fundamental to ensure the annihilation of caste and a democratic way of life, also form the basis of the Buddha's religion.

The Buddha's treatment of caste is of a religious and ethical nature. The Buddha was neither an ethnologist nor a sociologist. He mainly fought the menace of caste on the ground of reason and morality. He strongly opposed the unscientific explanation and justification of the varṇa system found in religious scriptures and its unethical practice in society. He created a rational and ethical ideological framework in the form of Dhamma and built an ideal society called Saṅgha, which were instrumental in removing caste-consciousness from the minds of people. Although the Buddha neither openly supported inter-caste marriages nor directly asked people to abandon their earlier religions, his arguments certainly suggest that there is nothing wrong in doing so.

Although we do not find any clear influence of Buddhism on Ambedkar's early works, in *The Buddha and His Dhamma* of 1956, he showed considerable change in his approach to caste. There, it is evident that he certainly took a religious and ethical turn. As he tried to unearth the social message preached by the Buddha, Ambedkar made clear the relationship between his and the Buddha's approaches to the issue of caste. Based on the Buddha's rational arguments refuting caste and remedies he suggested thereof, Ambedkar drew implications in line with his own understanding and solution to the caste problem. The Buddha and Ambedkar shared a common point of view, which was rational and humanistic. In their philosophy, there was no place for God, scriptural authority or orthodoxy of any kind. This commonality in outlook is responsible for the similarities in their approaches to the question of caste.

Ambedkar's presentation of the Buddha's teachings, however, is creative in nature. It does not simply echo traditional Buddhist thoughts, but rather reflects his own unique understanding of caste, which was deepened by his study of history, sociology and anthropology. It would not be wrong to say that Ambedkar took the early Buddhist discourse on caste to its logical conclusion. He realised that merely refuting the divine origin of caste is not sufficient to shake the foundation of the caste system. It is also necessary to reject the traditional Buddhist notion that one's birth in a particular caste is determined by one's good or bad past karma. Based on the Buddha's doctrine of non-self, Ambedkar rejected the traditional understanding of transmigration, and thereby redefined the karma theory from a social and materialistic point of view. Thus, by destroying the karmic basis of caste, Ambedkar completed the Buddha's mission of denying caste a religious sanction.

The Buddha was a religious teacher, not a lawmaker. Hence, his safeguards against inequality were only operational within the limits of his

Saṅgha. They could not become the law of the land. Ambedkar knew that fraternity—the foundation of liberty and equality—cannot be established by sheer force or law. He, however, believed that the law was necessary to protect the interests of minorities. For this reason he made safeguards against injustice available to all citizens of India by incorporating them into the Indian constitution.

Thus, the neo-Buddhist approach to the problem of caste is not fundamentally different from the early Buddhist approach. Rather, it issues forth and develops from the former. In other words, it is an advancement or a restatement of early Buddhist thoughts, made to suit the modern times. In addition to this, the neo-Buddhist approach has been enriched by the anthropological and sociological insights of Ambedkar. As he himself said, "An Anthropologist is the best person to study religion."

Notes

1 Irawati Karve described varṇa, which she prefers to translate as "rank," as made up of a "caste cluster." According to her, "The varṇa system was modified and the varṇa and *jāti* systems were interwoven together to form a very elaborate ranking system" (1991: 47).
2 "*cattāro 'me vaṇṇā khattiyā brāhmaṇā vessā suddā*" (*Cullavagga* p. 239).
3 "*jātiṁ c' akkhāhi pucchito*" (*Suttanipāta* 421d).
4 "*ādiccā nāma gottena sākiyā nāma jātiyā*" (*Suttanipāta* 423ab).
5 "*kiṁjacco bhavam*" (*Suttanipāta* p. 80).
6 "*na brāhmaṇo no 'mhi na rājaputto na vessāyano uda koci no 'mhi |*" (*Suttanipāta* 455ab).
7 "*brāhmaṇo no bhavam*" (*Suttanipātap* p. 81).
8 "*akalla maṁbrāhmaṇa pucchasi gottapañhaṁ*" (*Suttanipāta* 456d).
9 Cf. the *Ambalaṭṭhikā-Rāhulovādasutta* of the Majjhimanikāya (vol. I, p. 414ff).
10 "*yathā ahaṃ tathā ete yathā ete tathā ahaṃ, attānaṃ upamaṃ katvāna haneyya na ghātaye.*" (*Suttanipāta*, verse 705).
11 As stated by Kosambi, both the Buddhist and Jain sects did a great job by admitting foreigners into Hindu society. Foreign communities like the Greeks, *Śaka*s, *Hūṇa*s, *Mālava*s and *Gurjara*s came to India and, through the gateway of these two religions, entered Hindu society.
12 "*brāhmaṇīm kṣatriyākanyām vaiśyām sūdrīṃtathaiva ca |*
  yasyā ete guṇā santi tā me kanyām pravedaya ||
  na kulena na gotreṇa kumāro mama vismitaḥ |
  guṇe satye ca dharme ca tatrāsya ramate manaḥ ||"
13 Here it may be noted that although Kosambi discussed the Buddhist approach to caste in the tenth chapter entitled "*Jātibheda*" of his book *Bhagavān Buddha*, he did not attempt to figure out the genesis of the caste system in India. He simply observed that the belief that the problem of caste in India has its roots in the *Puruṣasūkta* of the *Ṛgveda* is wrong; for, like *ahiṁsā*, the institution of caste was also prevalent in the Saptasindhu region even before the Vedic period. As in Sumeria, the priest usually became king—Brahmins were at the head of the society even in this region.
14 The same ideas can be found in Ambedkar's earlier article *Caste and Conversion*, published in the *Telugu Samachara* Special Number in November 1926 (1989: 422, fn. 1).

15 It may be noted that a similar comment by Ambedkar on the survival of the Hindu religion is found in his article *Caste and Conversion*, published in the Telugu Samachar Special Number of November 1926, exactly ten years before the publication of *Annihilation of Caste* (1989: 422, fn. 1).

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6

NEO-BUDDHISM, MARXISM AND THE CASTE QUESTION IN INDIA

Gopal Guru

Both Buddhism and Marxism, two of the most formidable philosophies, have expanded in contemporary contexts through their emancipatory potential and theoretical rigour. The expansive nature of both these philosophical/political alternatives is indicative of their growth in in terms of location and discursive formation. In terms of location, one can see different incarnations of Marxism, such as Western Marxism, Eastern Marxism, Indian Marxism and so forth. There is a context specificity to this expansive character of Marxism. It is in the same logic one may discursively talk of Dalit Marxism. These versions of Marxism could be understood particularly in terms of the limits of the original Marxism. Hence, the re-contextualization of Marxism is prompted by the specific context-dependent need of a particular society and social groups within that society. One could claim that it is possible to develop Dalit Marxism in India. Dr B. R. Ambedkar's critical engagement with Marxism provides a necessary vantage point to envision such a project. However, the methodological and philosophical openings of Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism reveal that Dalit Marxism is a restricted discursive option, open only at the formative stage. Ambedkar seems to have adopted a particular version of Buddhism in order to prove that it is a far more superior alternative, not only to Hinduism but to other forms of Buddhism prevailing in residual forms during his time. Ambedkar's radical reading of Buddhism is also an attempt to offer an alternative to the hegemonies of Marxism in India. In this context, this chapter explores Ambedkar's account of the relationship between Buddhism and Marxism. As I have argued elsewhere,[1] the post-Ambedkarian reading of Buddhism has taken him away from radicalism towards a more spiritual or psychological version of Buddhism, whereas the conservative trend in the scholarship has always fanned tension between Buddhism and Marxism. At the other end of the spectrum, the rigid reduction of Buddhism to a Marxist essence has been a contentious issue within the left-leaning scholarship in contemporary India. It is in this discursive domain that an attempt will be made to locate Ambedkar's response to both Buddhism and Marxism.

In this essay, I will explore the relationship between Ambedkar's Buddhism and Marxism in three parts. The first discusses the moral and political/philosophical significance of the debate on Ambedkar's version of Buddhism and the Indian version of Marxism. It argues that in the post-Buddhism phase, Hinduism as a counter point loses its discursive capacity to engage with Dalit scholars. In fact, it is Marxism that becomes the point of attraction (*Dalit Panther Manifesto*, 1974; Kasbe, 1986), amusement and even fierce critique for Dalit, as well as, non-Dalit scholars. This chapter will confine itself to the Dalit critique of Marxism mounted from the point of view of defending Buddhism as a totally separate perspective. This in turn will suggest how to read Buddhist and Marxist texts in the light of Ambedkar.

This chapter proceeds to argue in its second part that it would also be interesting to explore the possibility of discovering the epistemic deficiencies in the Marxist understanding of social reality. What are the discursive spaces that entail the categories that provide an expansive meaning; meaning that is an enlarged version of the categories that are the part of Marxism? An attempt will be made to detect Marxism as deficient in making philosophical/theoretical sense of Indian reality, particularly in relation to caste and untouchability. The third section of this chapter will also highlight the distinct vocabulary that Ambedkar adopted to join issues with the ideologue of Indian Marxism. It will explore Ambedkar's inversion of the famous Marxist architectural metaphor of base–superstructure to unravel a conversation on the relationship between Marxism and Buddhism. The alienation of the shudra cannot be reduced to that of the proletariat for Ambedkar. It will demonstrate that one cannot reduce Marxism to Buddhism, as Indian scholars tend to do. Further, it will argue that the converse reductionism is not viable either.[2]

Ambedkar on "Buddha and Marx"

Let us then begin with a discussion on reading Ambedkar's text on Karl Marx and the Buddha. This reading becomes important in the context of the extrapolation that has been practiced in the process of reproducing Ambedkar literature.

"Or"/"And" and Ambedkar's text

This argument offered from a particular embattled[3] point of view receives its moral empowerment not merely from epistemological and hermeneutic confidence but from the passive injustice done to Ambedkar by people who failed to address their ontological wounds. Most oppressed castes in India are subject to personal, social and cultural indignity. But they are also exploited economically. Caste in India determines economic status; those at

the top of the hierarchy perform non-physical labour, while those at the bottom perform menial labour that oppresses both physically and psychologically. Thus, there is a close relationship between being humiliated on caste grounds and economic vulnerability. In the last 25 years, this wound has not been addressed by commentators on Buddhism and Marxism and hence it has become a kind of ontological wound. The celebration of Ambedkar without reading him or reading him mechanically has become a common practice among Dalits. Interestingly, this common practice has become so powerful that it has begun reshaping the original writing of Ambedkar. The most prominent evidence of such regulatory power is associated with Ambedkar's writings on the Buddha and Marx. As the editorial introduction to the concerned section suggests, the title of the original writing of Babasaheb Ambedkar must have been "Buddha *and* Karl Marx"[4] but in the government version it is "Buddha *or* Karl Marx"—"and" in the original seems to have been replaced by "or." The question that one needs to ask is why are Dalit scholars interested in situating the Buddha against Marx by inserting this "or" between the two thinkers of modern times? The widely discussed essay by Ambedkar on "Marx and Buddhism" has weathered many a dispute in the course of the fracture between or/and. This is because it has been, time and time again, emphasised by translators and commentators that Marx is separated from Buddhism with "or" as dividing bar, whereas in the original text of Ambedkar it is "and." These two words are not innocent; in fact, they are loaded with their integral respective qualities and discursive power. As the efforts show, "or" has been reinforced by the textually unsustainable exclusivity that has been allegedly induced between Marx and Ambedkar by interested parties. There is definitely a certain politics behind this, which seeks to epistemologically separate Ambedkar from Marx. "Or" assumes an almost absolute degree of certainty in meaning. It does not suffer from any kind of intellectual hesitation or a discursive self-doubt. It suggests a quite straightforward expression of a thought or the system of ideas. It suggests that there is only one kind of perspective, an adequate alternative that has to be adopted by people. It does not entertain any kind of epistemic pluralism. It treats a particular thinker as a single unitary vision, thus ruling out other constitutive intellectual traditions. Insistence on "or" in fact denies any genealogical connection of a thought. It rules out being part of any possibility of a *parampara* or intellectual tradition. It claims to be incomparable and rules out any overlap. It tries to follow the Greek tradition of dissociation. It suggests the individualisation of thought. It becomes almost like patent that assigns ownership rights in physical sciences, for example. "Or" makes one thought taller than other contending thoughts.

On the other hand, the word "and," opens the possibility of both sides leaning on each other. It disrupts the binary in the exclusivism of "or." In this sense, "and" is similar to Kierkegaard's "or" (1987). For Kierkegaard

"or" represents the arbitrariness of choice against the determinism of logic. In his *Either Or*, he hints that one cannot really deliberate the choice between the pursuit of aesthetic pleasure by A and that of moral responsibility by Judge Wilhelm. Arguments on both sides are ultimately random, defying the claims of logic. Hence, its choice is always a leap of faith and filled with contradictions. The latter allows for elements of one position (A and the Judge's) entering the other. Hence, it questions the law of identity by actually tacitly agreeing with Hegel (sublation). Kierkegaard's "or" is, thus, a critique of the binary version of "or" that persists in modern truth-functional logic. The latter logic has also dominated translations of Ambedkar's essay via "or". However, in the spirit of Kierkegaard's "or" or "and" there is an intertextuality between Marx and Ambedkar. These two important texts talk to each other. Ambedkar's *Annihilation of Caste* (1979), as well as, Marx and Friedrich Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* (1971) actually present two texts of resistance and emancipation. Similarly, Buddhism and Marxism begin to talk to each other at least in some major respect. This has been adequately demonstrated by Ambedkar in his "Marx and Buddhism." "And" enables the epistemic pluralism that creates the possibility of tradition.

Maharashtra has engaged scholars in building an emancipatory intellectual tradition represented by Jyotirao Phule, Ambedkar, Shahu Maharaj, V. R. Shinde and Tarabai Shinde. It has, however, not been able to build up and acknowledge the Marx-Ambedkar and Gandhi traditions. Indian Marxists do not seem to have a deep interest in building up such a tradition. Although they have been very sympathetic to Gandhi, their interest in Ambedkar has often only been rhetorical for the most part. They have been cognitively generous to Gandhi, but not as much to Ambedkar.[5] Ambedkar as a thinker never got adequate space in research journals such as the *Social Scientist* that have a leftist orientation.[6] Otherwise it's Gandhi who takes over the pages in the *Social Scientist*, which is a serious research journal indeed.[7] In this special number, scholars with leftist orientations do bring Gandhi into the textual context of Marx.[8] Ambedkar himself eased out the tension between Marxism and Buddhism. In this regard, we need to mention leftist scholars such as Sharad Patil from the Marathi universe, who has found an intertextual relationship between Marx, Jyotirao Phule and Ambedkar. Although, interestingly, he left out Gandhi from this combination.[9]

In this regard, it is important to acknowledge the efforts made particularly by Dalit literary figures from Maharashtra. The Dalit Panthers for the first time brought Ambedkar and Marx together. This is categorically recorded in the Panthers' manifesto. Their historical effort was to ease the tension between Marx and the Buddha by the restoring the emancipatory purpose that is at the core of both the philosophies.

Ambedkar seeks to compare the two by bringing to central focus dialectics as a common method between Marx and the Buddha. He acknowledges the centrality of class, which according to him has been overshadowed by caste. Ambedkar, however, suggests that the annihilation of caste is a necessary precondition for the annihilation of class. This formulation suggests insight into democratic revolution is the precondition for a socialist revolution. The Indian Left has also emphasised the importance of a democratic revolution. In this regard, it would be interesting to know what exactly the Left's conception of a democratic revolution is.

Indian Left and the caste question

Arguably, the Left suggests a stage theory for social revolution. This progressive development of revolution presupposes the role of liberalism as a mediating principle between the two positions in contention or consideration. Liberalism, I argue, would help us understand the special movement that Buddhism had made, thus escaping the power of Marxism that took root in different parts of India during the 20th century. (I am planning to defer this point to some other time.) I would, with methodological devices, explore history as a possible route to gauge the commonality between the two perspectives—Ambedkar's Buddhism and Marxism. In this particular section, we will explore whether Ambedkar prescribed to the stage theory of history or a non-linear progression of history. Here, I intend to bring in the novel insights that Ambedkar himself provided to us. In his speeches in *Janata*, Ambedkar clearly stated that for a democratic mobilization of people, addressing social issues such as caste and untouchability become unavoidable. At the same time, for him, taking up such a question is not enough to address the Dalit question, which has a bearing on the material deprivation of the masses. Ambedkar puts the social before the material or economic. Interestingly, Ambedkar uses the French Revolution as an initial political condition, while he treats the Russian Revolution as a middle condition and Buddhism as the moral ethical condition for the realization of decent society as desirable—the ought condition in the linear progression of society on a radical mode.

Ambedkar and Marx do believe in the stage theory of history. Ambedkar has categorically stated that Buddhism is a social revolution and that the Russian Revolution was a material revolution. In the historical sense, for him both revolutions were necessary. In fact, for him, a social revolution is a precondition for an economic revolution. One is impossible without the other. Ambedkar uses an apt metaphor from Marathi language—"*Purnachi Poli*"—in order to explain the logical sequence of social transformation. For him, Buddhism is the outer cover of stuffed sweet bread or chapatti and the Russian Revolution is the inner core of this bread (Kamble, 1992).

The relationship between Marxism and Buddhism has been mediated through the question of caste, which had paramount importance as far as Ambedkar's thought, action and movement are concerned. The question of caste seems to have remained undertheorized as far as Marxist scholarship in India is concerned. They have neglected how labour in India is mostly caste-based and that the caste system is one of exploitation and appropriation of the labour of the other. Although, leftist activists have been paying some attention to the question of untouchability off late. Leftist intellectuals by and large paid only rhetorical attention to the caste question. It is in this context, that the current chapter seeks to evaluate both the Ambedkar and post-Ambedkar responses to issues such as the question of caste. The response has to be evaluated at the methodological as well as conceptual levels. Let us discuss two different responses to possibility and impossibility in the textual and political relationship between Marxism and Buddhism.

I am going to argue that the Left's response to the caste question has been mainly strategic, while it is also true that the leftist historians have made a seminal contribution to the very understanding of the caste question.[10] The Left has an interest in forging a democratic opposition to the ruling classes in India. Hence, they professed to take the caste question seriously. However, the Left in India could not treat caste as a national question. Secondly, it treated caste as a question of identity and as a local issue. Third, it defined the caste question primarily in terms of the Dalit ontology. The caste question when viewed from the Left does not enjoy the same national importance as the question of communalism. Although, it must be said that the regional response to the caste question, particularly at the practical political level, has been very laudable; for example left-leaning parties at the state level in Maharashtra and in Tamil Nadu have established caste annihilation conferences, or in southern Tamil Nadu an "untouchability wing." It is because of this that rival parties in the state call leftist parties the Paraya Party (the party of the untouchables). However, this is not new in electoral politics in the country. In the early years, opponents of the communists in Bihar used to deride them as the party of Chamars. The Communist Party of India (CPI) indeed had Chamars as its major social base. Opponents seem to have used Dalits as a poison weapon against the CPI. Dalits on the other hand used Marxism as a menace to democracy.

However, in the sphere of electoral democracy, common Dalits did not consider individual communist leaders as menaces but as their true representatives.[11] But the CPI did not try and resignify this poison as a positive weapon so as to use it for building up the democratic front. Those leaders who enjoyed the support of Dalits did not fear the caste question as a divisive force. This is because working-class leaders defined working-class solidarity, which was vulnerable to division on account of the caste backgrounds of the working classes. During the last two decades, such working-class solidarity has become redundant, as the working-class movement has

dissipated along with the disappearance of textile mills from Mumbai, Ahmadabad, Kanpur and Chennai. Communist leaders had no reason to fear (as they did so earlier) that caste consciousness would have a fragmentary impact on working-class or proletarian solidarity in the field of electoral politics. But the communist party did not pursue this Dalit agenda. It lacked the necessary confidence as this was because of electoral politics and not subaltern substantive politics. In fact, the fear of fragmentation resulting from the caste question, which in the Left's perception appeared as a divisive force, lacked the complete emancipatory political vision of the Indian Left. R. B. More, a prominent Dalit from Maharashtra, wrote to the central committee of the CPI requesting it to accommodate an anti-caste agenda into its manifesto, although one could consider him to be more of a Dalit Communist. The Left response's to the caste question can be understood at many levels by raising several sets of questions, necessary in this context: First, how does leftist scholarship make conceptual and theoretical sense of the caste question? What has been the basis of such theorization? Has it been theoretically adequate? Secondly, what has been the nature of this response? Is it uniform or is there variation in such response?

Having said all this, it is also necessary to admit that the Left seems to have succeeded in creating only a moderate impact on the political sensibility of those social groups that are at the receiving end of caste exploitation and oppression. Although Dalits are at the receiving end of material exploitation, their struggle seems focused on social exclusion from opportunity structures. Hence, in the Dalit universe, the language of oppression has dominated their cognitive map much more centrally than material exploitation. It has been argued by certain scholars that the efforts of the Indian Left were not adequate enough to elicit a Dalit response to the efforts they made. For the Indian Left, caste annihilation does not seem to have become core of the political agenda. Although the Indian Left made some efforts to offer a few theoretical insights in understanding the caste question, they never gave it an independent theoretical status.[12] This is not to suggest that the Indian Left had an epistemic inability to understand the caste question. The bigger question is why the Left in India has not been able to develop a theoretically convincing understanding of the caste question. One could even argue that is it correct to say that the Left in India has had a deficient understanding of the caste question. Can one understand the Left's response to the caste question in terms of the evaluative mode, or do we require a more analytical mode to historicise it? In addition to these core questions, let me also raise the following subset of questions for further clarification:

1   Has the Left's perspective been self-referential to the extent that it sought to avoid the need for a serious and honest interlocutor like Babasaheb Ambedkar or Jyotirao Phule?

2   If, arguably, both Ambedkar and Marx belong to the same logical
    class, then why does the former fail to receive adequate intellectual
    attention from the Left? This question acquires validity in the context
    of Ambedkar treating caste as an ideology that, according to him, seeks
    to diffuse class consciousness.
3   Why is that the majority of Dalits do not treat both Marx and Ambed-
    kar as belonging to the same logical class of system builders?
4   If the Left and the Dalits share the same ground at the objective level,
    then can they produce a corresponding coherence at the subjective
    level? To what extent does liberalism as a fault line create a fragmen-
    tary impact on this cohesion at the subjective level?

These questions expose the limits of political power within a liberal frame-
work. Leftist parties could not affect structural changes in the states they
govern, as upper-caste and lower-caste localities are still separate in villages.

The element of caste sets the evaluative ground on which the relationship
between the Left and Dalits can be understood. Intellectual and historical
responses to the caste question singularly go to leftist historians. Whether
it is understanding the epics or the origin of caste, leftist historians have
made the most seminal contributions. This is, however, thanks to the ethics
of following protocols, which motivates leftist historians to factor the caste
question into their work. This is not to suggest that these historians have
no larger emancipatory interest in attending to the caste question. In fact,
they have a deep interest. On the other side of the spectrum, there are leftist
scholars who prioritize ideology over protocols, and even political neces-
sity, to give importance to the caste question.

The history of social and intellectual activism prevalent particularly
among Dalits in India has produced two adversaries to Ambedkar—Marx
and Gandhi. Marx stands in opposition to Ambedkar on the question of
understanding caste, while Gandhi is designated as Ambedkar's opponent
for the former's exclusive focus on untouchability rather than caste. The
opposition is more rhetorical rather than conceptual and analytical. Caste
in Ambedkar's understanding is an essence of social relation, and untouch-
ability is an essence of caste. The essence of caste operates on the maxim
that in the caste hierarchy there is an ascending sense of reverence for upper
castes and a descending sense of respect for lower castes. This response is
expressed through untouchability. As has been rightly argued by scholars,
caste hierarchy is the system of relations rather than element.[13]

Ambedkar's critique of caste acquires significance particularly in the
context of the dynamics of caste operation, which he analytically unfolds
to us and which involves the subjugation of Dalits to the social dominance
of the upper castes. Taking a cue from Ambedkar, it can be argued that
insight into social analysis of untouchability offers a theory of the caste
system. The essence of the caste structure remains the same across time

and space, while forms such as untouchability may change. Buddhism in case of Ambedkar acts as a guiding principle to keep the critique of caste alive. Buddhism provides grounds for both exposing the limits of caste and its transcendence. The teleological thrust in Buddhism seeks a solution to caste beyond legality. It seeks an emancipatory promise in Buddhism as the guiding principle for untouchables, while legality operates on the legal basis of the caste question. However, Ambedkar does try to address the caste question through the intervention of liberal institutions. Hence, one has to appreciate one's instrumental focus on a set of constitutional provisions and institutional mechanisms to create conditions for changing social relations on egalitarian lines. It is also true that Ambedkar certainly realised the limits of the Constitution. It is in this context that he embraced Buddhism not just for eliminating untouchability, but more importantly for liberating the upper castes from the ideology of casteism. Ambedkar suggests the social as an initial condition and ethics as the essential condition for the annihilation of social relations based on caste-induced hierarchy. Buddhism for him provides both social as well as ethical inputs for such a project. In a Marxist scheme, however, it is the dismantling of material structures that would lead to the resultant destruction of the caste system. Marx's *The Future Results of British Rule in India* (1853) does mention caste, though a class perspective will eventually abolish caste according to him. But he does treat caste as hereditary, exploitative and based on obsolete divisions in a premodern economy. His distinction between manual and mental labour is perhaps a little helpful here.

Ambedkar is well aware that this would not happen—his own experience of suffering caste discrimination despite so-called caste mobility shows as much. Here lies the basic difference in the methods Marx and Ambedkar suggested to address the question of caste annihilation. It, in fact, is less methodological and more a question of strategy. Ambedkar's response to the annihilation of caste can be understood using the metaphor of engineering. Engineering, at least in its less advanced phase, would suggest starting the demolition of a dilapidated structure from the top floor. A simple, mechanical reading of Marx could argue that if the demolition of the structure starts from the base, then the superstructure will automatically collapse. Similarly, once the material base is changed, caste as a superstructure will consequently be evaporated. Ambedkar treats the four-varna system as the four-storeyed building whose top floor is occupied by Brahmins. Hence, he starts the demolition at the top. But he does not maintain such a mechanical understanding throughout. He argues that on every floor, there is an element of Brahminism. Ambedkar treats Brahminism as a varna ideology that operates through several thousand castes and sub-castes. In Ambedkar's conceptual scheme, caste which has been arranged on the hierarchal or relative social superiority, renders any social or political consciousness difficult.[14] Hence, he suggests a total demolition of the caste system. However,

it is necessary not to lose sight of an important dimension of Ambedkar's thought— he also suggests the need to end material exploitation along with Brahminism. As he says, this can be done along with the change of property relations. So, Ambedkar attacks both capitalism and Brahmanism while Marx singularly attacks the bourgeoise. For Marxism, castes are simply feudal remnants to be annihilated along with the change in the base.

Let me put it more dramatically—in this regard, the leftist intellectual tradition invests their epistemic resources in theorising the category of class. Hence, we do have an ample degree of theoretical work available on this theme. While they adopt a rather democratic attitude that has a practical aspect to it, in the Indian context the Left can share and support the anti-caste struggle led by Dalits. Leftist theoreticians and their supporters do not have to carry an ontological burden of caste while theorising about Indian society. The ontological status of their proposition is based on a social reality that is suffused with class. Ironically, it is the theoretical aspect of modernity that comes to the rescue of the Left. After all, doing theory is an act of modernity.

Buddhism offers a metaphysical space for the transcendence of caste. Buddhism, as seen by Ambedkar, is the most egalitarian option to radically undermine caste. But leftist thinkers in India have treated themselves different from the democratic that is basically radically liberal. Secondly, leftist thinkers have not been aware of the categories that have different and much deeper meanings.

Untouchable and proletariat: two spheres of alienation

The concept of alienation that comes from Marxism, however, changes its meaning when it embarks upon Indian society. The roots of alienation arguably are in the modern form of labour and its relationship to production (Luckás, 83–222). The suggested variation in the meaning of this concept has a bearing on the traditional form of labour that continues to exist in India. These forms not only involve drudgery but defilement as well. Alienation occurring from untouchability is the result of the ideology of purity–pollution that continues to socially govern industrial relations as well as patterns and attitudes of social recognition in a hierarchal society like India. Alienation results from the loss of universal recognition, which in turn is based on the nature of work. For example, clean work has been considered the definitive source of universal recognition. In this regard, alienation when viewed in the particular Indian context acquires different meanings and essence. The nature of work such as scavenging rules out a metaphysical understanding of alienation. Put differently, it does not push the relationship beyond the realm of lived human interaction and lived social relationship. It does not treat scavenging as the rare spiritual privilege; work done in the service of God. The "touchable"—even untouchable

scavengers themselves—on the contrary, practically relate obnoxious, defiling work to himself or herself. When one relates the work to self in such a self-assessment and strong self-evaluation, one develops the sense of worthlessness, which is then endorsed by the upper caste on an everyday basis. Such perpetuation of the untouchable as a moving moral menace leads to his or her alienation and ultimately becomes an ontological wound. This is a deep moral wound that causes injury into the core or the soul of a being. It is in this sense that alienation does not result from materiality but from untouchability.

Thus, recognition is based both on the nature of work and its competitive quality in attracting job-seekers. If the nature of work is defiling, even if it is well paid it would not bring recognition, as is the case with scavenging in India. It could thus be true that social recognition cannot be bought by paying more for scavenging labour, because it is considered deeply defiling and cannot be compensated on utilitarian or instrumental grounds. In the Indian context, the untouchable worker and the worker, or the proletariat, as such are two different entities facing two different kinds of alienation. The untouchable feels alienated because of his/her ontological association with the dirty work while the worker in general develops alienation on account of his/her being reduced to a thing. One is reduced to an object while the other is reduced to dirt. But the proletariat has the possibility of becoming a spectre with positive power (Marx and Engels, 1971) while an untouchable can also become a spectre but with negative power. Let us see how.

Two conceptions of spectre: proletariat and the untouchable

Like alienation, there are two conceptions of "spectre" in the form of an untouchable and the proletariat. Although these spectres do have power of their own, it differs in terms of its effect. It could be argued that the power of the proletariat as a spectre is positive, while that of untouchable's is negative. But power of both these spectres differs inasmuch as the proletariat has much more power to create a systemic crisis for capitalism, whereas an untouchable as a spectre creates crisis for the touchable individual. An untouchable's power to pollute the touchable can force the latter to remain within his boundaries. Second, the spectre of proletariat can haunt the capitalist and can overthrow a capitalist system of exploitation. A spectre in the Marxist sense, therefore, has positive power. Hence, the Brahman wants to be safe from the untouchable. In the Indian context, an untouchable can acquire the force of spectre on account of his/her possessing the power to ritually pollute a pure being such as a Brahmin. It is in this sense, an untouchable can be a poison weapon. The spectre of the untouchable as a poison weapon can be seen controlling the Brahmin as a pure being in U. R. Anantmurthy's highly acclaimed novel, *Sanskara* (1981). Alienation

and spectre are arguably two concepts that bring forth the philosophical difference between Marxism and Ambedkar's Buddhism.

Alienation occurring from untouchability is the result of the feeling of repulsion that is unilaterally expressed by an upper-caste person converting a living labourer into an object of dirt. In such a symmetrical social relationship, labour is denied its universal recognition. While in case of labour that is also physical, this results from the loss of control over the product. The opposite is true in regard to a form of labour considered polluting and defiling. It is the loss of universal recognition. Labour can acquire a universal character in terms of its use value for the accumulation of profit. Capitalists across time and space use this labour without distinction. The slogan, "Workers of the World" given by Marx makes sense only in this regard. Work that is considered to be defiling cannot acquire such a universal character. Thus, the slogan, "Untouchables of the World, Unite" does not become a possibility—should it be produced at all. Similarly, an untouchable worker cannot enjoy recognition of his/her labour even if they are paid high wages, which is not the case at all. It cannot be bought by paying more labour charges. The untouchable and the worker (proletariat) are two different entities facing two different kinds of alienation. For example, in Pune, untouchables were not allowed to walk the streets in the morning and the afternoon. This was not because Brahmins tended to be outdoors at this time; rather orthodox Brahmins considered the shadow of an untouchable the source of ritual pollution, and since a shadow casts longer in the morning and afternoon, Dalits were barred from entering the streets of Pune during these times.

The act of disentangling the proletariat from the untouchable is rendered difficult not due to an acute sense of competition, but more due to the need to monopolise scarce resources to one's own caste. Hence, we had the formation of caste include modern textile industries (Guru, 1987). Untouchable workers, for example, were not allowed to work in the bobbin sections of the textile mills in Mumbai (Ibid). It is in this sense untouchability resulted in denying untouchables the power of becoming a spectre. They always remained with the tag of an untouchable worker. On another level, it could be argued that the untouchability practiced by touchable workers in the textile mills tended to produce a different kind of alienation, not from the estranged self but from the social attitudes held by other workers. The process of becoming a spectre depends on two processes: moral hegemony and working-class solidarity. Workers need to acknowledge that untouchables are superior to the former in terms of skill and efficiency. This did not happen, particularly in the case of the textile mill workers in Mumbai. Caste and untouchability did not allow untouchables to be fully formed into a proletariat.[15] This is because the workers from other caste groups were not fully formed into a proletariat as they largely remained entangled within their own caste consciousness.

This, however, was not a natural disposition so much as it was the result of tendencies to monopolise higher-paid sections like weaving in textile mills. However, during the feudal period where there was no competition, the sense of superiority and patriarchy sustained this consciousness. One could then conclude that there is an acute sense of the impossibility of becoming and individual workers sought to intensify the feeling of alienation among Dalits, while among the upper castes alienation was subsidised by the relative sense of social superiority over the untouchable. In fact, at the specific level, workers enjoyed the power to regulate the industrial relationship. Hence, the sense of alienation was diluted—thanks to the caste consciousness that intersected their class consciousness. Thus, caste denies the formation of pure alienation and hence raises a serious problem for the unitary theory of alienation. In feudal times, there was an absence of a sense of self-worth, which arguably was the result of the lack of social interaction between two persons isolated by caste and untouchability. But in modern times, the sense of self-worth that results from the efforts to attach value to oneself is defined by the type of work one is doing. The work in modern times carried a utilitarian value with it. For example, work that is competitive and much sought after is quite valuable. Thus, clean, skilled work is looked at with respect. Put differently, scavenging is considered defiling and dirty. The untouchable does not attach any value to it, neither do those who create conditions for the dirt. Dirty work, which came to be physically associated with untouchable, continued to stay with them in reflective form. For example, the shadow of the untouchable also carried the negative power of polluting the touchable who then performed elaborate rituals to make themselves pure. The untouchable faces a double challenge of separating himself or herself from the dirty labour as well as his or her associative shadow. The question was: Did becoming part of the proletariat offer the untouchable a space to seek this alienation? We do need a Marxist theory of labour that has some bearing on dirt. At the moment, we do not have one.

The untouchable's struggle is fundamentally associated with how to rid oneself of the shadow that is also defiling. This shadow is not empty. It is embedded with negative meaning. In Marathi, there is a popular saying, "*Sawalilahi Ubha Rahat Nahi*" or "one keeps away from the shadow of a morally menacing person."[16] One of the mediums that Ambedkar suggested for this was the urban conditions of industrialisation, urbanisation and education. For him modernisation did offer a bright chance to destroy this double alienation. Urbanization and clean work in the textile mills were considered enabling force, within which an untouchable could become anonymous and would not be haunted by his own shadow. On the other hand, material conditions made it difficult for the touchable worker to separate himself from caste associations. He remained caste conscious vis à vis the presence of untouchables in the textile mills of Mumbai, Ahmadabad,

Chennai, Calcutta and Kanpur. The "pure" form of alienation resulting from the loss of control over their own labour and the fruits of labour never occurred to him. This was because he remained happy with the sense of superiority that he got by treating the untouchable as defiling and dirty, even in the modern industries of textile mills. Alienation based on the ritual notion of pollution and the forcible association with dirty work has been a reality in India, Nepal and Japan (in earlier days) but not in Europe. This is simply because in the European context, there was no caste division in factories. A worker's alienation, therefore, is derivative of material conditions. It was the alienation associated with it.

Conclusion

Under the influence of traditional Buddhism, Ambedkar's conception of Buddhism is rendered as spiritual and psychological at the hands of some post-Ambedkar Buddhist scholars. Hence, the anti-caste radical character of Ambedkarite Buddhism is diluted. It neglects Ambedkar's attempt to make his Buddhism have a dialogue with Marx. On the other hand, there are Ambedkarite scholars influenced by Marx who reduce Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism to Marxism. Both these approaches, reductionist and exclusivist, fail to capture Ambedkar's true intentions as reflected in his writing on the Buddha and Marx. In order to understand and combat the problem of caste, the insights of Marx and Marxists can play an important role. But one has also to understand and transcend the limits of Marxism. Indian Marxist scholars have done a lot of work in theorising caste. But the Indian Left in practice (barring some exceptions) does not carry the ontological burden of caste. It has considered the caste issue not a national one, but an individual or local one.

Marx would regard class as belonging to the base and caste as belonging to the superstructure. Ambedkar, instead of applying the base–superstructure model, considers the caste system a four-storeyed building with Brahmins forming the top storey and Shudras the ground floor, but with every floor also carrying an element of Brahmanism nonetheless. According to him, the building should be demolished from the top. According to Marx, the destruction of the class structure will automatically lead to the annihilation of caste. For Ambedkar, the annihilation of caste is a pre-condition of the destruction of class.

Marx focuses on the alienation of the proletariat, whereas Ambedkar on that of the untouchables. The latter, which involves the categories of purity and pollution determined by birth, is of a very different nature than the former. It is not voluntary nor does it permit mobility. Moreover, the human being undergoes a stigmatized life of humiliation, which is not quite the same as impoverishment. Hence the problem of alienation in Indian society becomes complex. Ambedkar, through his formation of Buddhism, attacks

both capitalism and Brahmanism. He, therefore, questions inequality at the levels of both class and caste. He demonstrates the economic, social, cultural and personal implications of caste as entangled. Hence, his radical interpretation of Buddhism can provide tools for combating the complex problem of alienation.

Notes

1 For a detailed discussion see Guru, 1991.
2 Chattopadhya (1976) is a case in point—he builds on affinities between Buddhism and Marxism exclusively by privileging their practical turn.
3 Any Dalit talking about the possibility of overlap between the two philosophies has become an object of hate.
4 Editors of BAWS, Vol. 3 in their introduction to the Part IV entitled "Buddha or Marx" say, "The Committee found three different typed copies of an essay on Buddha and Karl Marx in loose sheets two of which have corrections in the author's own handwriting" (p. 439). This implies that the original title of the essay must have been "Buddha and Karl Marx"or "An Essay on Buddha and Karl Marx."
5 Of course, in Marathi there are some leading scholars with leftist orientations, such as Prabhakar Sanzgiri and Prabhakar Vaidhya, who wrote about Ambedkar.
6 Ambedkar does find some mention in *Social Scientist* but this occurs in the journal only on the event of his birth anniversary in 1991.
7 The *Social Scientist* journal brought out a special number on Gandhi in 2018 (Vol. 46, numbers 11–12, November to December 2018).
8 The writings of Prabhat Patnaik (2018) and Akeel Bilgrami (2018) for example.
9 Patil founded a Marathi Journal *Satyshodhak Marxwadi* (translated as "Truth-Seeking Marxist").
10 These include Vivekananda Jha, R. S. Sharma, Irfan Habib and Romila Thapar.
11 For instance, Sudam Kaka Deshmukh form Amravati.
12 "Caste and Class," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1979.
13 Kaviraj Sudipta, Indo-centric theories,: the Marxist Framework, in ed. RS Khare, OUP, 2006, p. 154.
14 Dumont terms this "continuous hierarchy" (1999).
15 This is ignored by Marxists such as Habib (2007), who attempt to proletarianize caste.
16 This references the 19th century Peshwai rule.

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7

AMBEDKAR'S CRITIQUE OF PATRIARCHY

Interrogating at intersection of caste and gender

Pratima Pardeshi[1]

An analysis of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts must be located within the diverse positions on the "woman's question" that were articulated during his period in Maharashtra. While some posed the question within a Brahmanical frame, others placed it within the confines of Hinduism. Yet others sought to link this question with the non-Brahminical thought of the period. The Marxist frame of class gave voice to women of the working classes. Non-Brahmanical revolutionary streams of thought launched an attack on the three institutionalized hierarchies of caste, class and patriarchy. It is this stream that is reflected in the works of Ambedkar, who drew out the links between the subordination of women and the caste system.

Women as the gateways to the caste system

Ambedkar refers to castes as being enclosed classes and traces them to the origins of untouchability in meat eating. He concludes that the absence of intermarriage or endogamy is the one characteristic that can be called the essence of castes (Ambedkar 2019, 318–74). In his detailed analysis of the caste system, he underlines the intrinsic relation between the caste system and the subordination of women. According to Ambedkar, endogamy is the primary characteristic of the caste system, rather than merely the idea of pollution or untouchability (2014 a, b; 2019, 303; 1987). We can discover the origins of caste by looking at how endogamy comes to be maintained and perpetuated in society.

Ambedkar then raises questions about how the practice of endogamy could have been maintained in society through boundaries that could not ordinarily be transgressed by people. This is so that marriages within the caste may be ensured, however normally the sex ratio in any given group is likely to be balanced (2014a). That is to say, men and women tend to be present in equal numbers and a severe imbalance in this ratio is likely to

create problems as "surplus men" or "surplus women." That is to say, if a wife dies before her husband, the man is rendered a surplus man; if the husband dies before the wife, she is rendered a surplus woman. The group then faces problems: how is this surplus woman to de disposed? According to Ambedkar, in order to maintain the sex ratio, perpetuate endogamy and thereby the caste system, four different practices are deployed. These include *sati*, enforced widowhood, enforced celibacy and the marriage of child brides with older men or widowers.[2]

1. The Practice of *Sati*: After the death of her husband, the woman is rendered surplus, affecting the balance in the group. In order to avoid this, the woman is burnt on the pyre of her deceased husband. Such a practice was adopted because if the widow lives then there are several dangers: one, she is likely to marry another man from her caste group and thereby encroach upon the reserved right of young brides from the same group. Two, if she marries a man outside her caste, the boundaries of endogamy will be broken down. Therefore, burning her live on the pyre of her deceased husband was seen as essential by the group. However, it was not always possible to keep the caste group intact by practicing *sati* and therefore other practices also came to be deployed.

2. Enforced Widowhood: Ambedkar argues that the practice of enforcing widowhood on women was a relatively milder one than *sati*. Any possibility of "immoral" behaviour from the widow was regulated through practices such as tonsure, which were considered making her undesirable. Further several restrictions came to be placed on her mobility and dietary habits, etc., so as to ensure that she did not pose a "temptation" to the males of the group.

3. Enforced Celibacy: A balanced sex ratio is a crucial issue for groups who seek to become castes. Since the balance is crucial for the possibility and perpetuation of endogamous marriages, Ambedkar argues that if the needs of the people cannot be satisfied within the caste group then they are likely to look outside the group. Further, he argues that a surplus man is not burnt in society by the sole virtue of his being a man—if the surplus man is thought to be a danger to the maintenance of the caste group, he is not burnt as the woman is. Instead, celibacy comes to be enforced upon him. Some widowers themselves chose to practice *brahmacharya* or *sanyaas*. However, these practices go against natural urges in human beings. If the surplus man continues to function within the group, he can pose a danger to the moral standards set by the caste group.

4. Marriage of Child Brides to Older Men: A man who is celibate or who renounces the world is, in a sense, useless or as good as dead for the propagation of the caste group. Every caste has to increase its numbers in the race for survival, and hence enforcing celibacy on the surplus man is an impractical practice. It would serve the interests of the caste groups better if the surplus man could remain in *grihasthashram,* that is, if a bride can be

found for him within the caste group. If the surplus man is to be kept tied to the caste group, then finding a bride from the yet-to-be-marriageable age becomes the only way out. This keeps intact the rules both of endogamy and caste-based morality.

Thus, to make the emergence of caste groups possible, an imbalance in the sex ratio occurs through the practices of *sati*, enforced widowhood, enforced celibacy and age-mismatched marriages. These practices are exploitative of women and thus Ambedkar underlines the fact that castes are maintained through the sexual exploitation of women. It is only through the regulation and control of women's sexuality that the closed character of the castes can be maintained; in this sense, he argues that women are the gateways to the caste system.

Ambedkar strengthens his argument regarding the philosophy of Hinduism by quoting from *Manusmriti*. He argues that Manu had a clear design as to who could marry whom. The twice-born in his first marriage had compulsorily to marry a woman from his own caste; in his subsequent marriages he had to marry women from the lower varnas. However the shudra woman could marry only a shudra man (Ambedkar 1987a, 1987b). Thus, Manu's opposition to mixed marriage is apparent, as is the fact that in the law of Manu it became regulatory to marry a woman from one's own varna. Ambedkar once again picks up the theme of mixed marriages in his analysis of religion. To the question of defining religion, Ambedkar answers saying that it is constituted by justice and fraternity, which in turn require freedom and equality (Ambedkar 1987a; 1987c; 2014b, 57–58). He then goes on to discuss how Hinduism does not then qualify by this definition of religion and underlines the utter absence of justice in *Naradsmriti* and *Manusmriti*. For instance, in both the Shruti and Smriti, the punishments prescribed vary with the varna. While for the same crime the Brahman paid in *panas*, the prostitute had to pay more *panas*, and the shudra was publicly caned. He, thus, argues that there is no equality and justice within Hinduism and that there is no scope for social mobility, and that is precisely why mixed marriages came to be severely forbidden.

However, despite severe regulations, if mixed marriages do take place, then the law that regulates them is patriarchal (Ambedkar 1987a; 2014b). There are two kinds of mixed marriages: *pratiloma* (hypogamy) and *anuloma* (hypergamy). The latter refers to the marriage between a woman of a lower caste and a man of a higher caste, while the former refers to the marriage between a woman of a higher caste and a man of a lower caste. The *pratiloma* form of marriage is not approved because the woman has transgressed the boundaries of caste. Such transgressions on the part of women could lead to a breakdown of the caste system, and hence this form of marriage comes to be severely punished with excommunication. A religious justification came to be put forth as an ideological ground for the banning of this kind of marriage. For instance, Omvedt (2014) gives the instance of

the marriage between the intelligent man of the *malla* caste and a Brahmin woman. The man in pursuit of knowledge goes to a Brahmin household and obviously fakes his caste for the same. Impressed with the brilliance of the *malla* man, the daughter of the Brahmin marries him. But on realizing that her husband is an untouchable, she commits suicide, for her marriage, being a hypogamous one, would be ostracized by society. This incident also reveals the near complete internalization of caste and of the racial and patriarchal domination by women themselves. Omvedt (2014) also brings out a very significant connection between the illegitimacy of *pratiloma* and the legitimacy of the *devdasi*[3] tradition. She argues that *muralis* and *matangis* were different from the temple dancers and did enjoy some amount of autonomy in the village. But during the feudal period, matriarchal and matrilineal remnants of the custom were used to institutionalize the sexual accessibility of Dalit women for high-caste men. This easy access to Dalit women by high castes, when juxtaposed with the proscription of the relation between women of the higher castes and men of the lower castes, reveals a significant sexual dialectic (Ambedkar 2003b). The latter informs caste interactions and behaviour in the villages of India even today.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the caste system emerged through the imposition of several religious and customary restrictions on women. It is this that leads Ambedkar to conclude that women are the gateways to the caste system. This theme appears not only in his writings on the origins of the caste system, but also in his speech at the Mahad Satyagraha Parishad (Ambedkar 1928; 2014c). Thus, his views on the liberation of women in India may be summarized as:

a   Caste system exploits women
b   Patriarchy exploits women

The caste system is hierarchically organized and the relation between the different strata are organized on the principle of inequality and difference. Thus, the exploitation of all women is not uniform and differs by caste. This exploitation is intensified as one moves down the caste hierarchy; the exploitation of Dalit women is of a different nature than that of high-caste women. Thus, from within a Phule-Ambedkarite position, any claims to all women being Dalit is only rhetoric. To speak on behalf of all women is to deny the very core of Phule-Ambedkarism.

The caste system and the subordination of women

The speech made by Ambedkar at the Mahad Satyagraha is important as it would not be an overstatement to say that it provides a statement of what could be called the Dalit perspective on women's liberation. In an analysis of the ways in which the caste system is responsible for the subordination

of women, he argues that the subordination of women in India is intensified through the subordination of class, caste and patriarchal systems (1928, 2014a). Caste-based division of labour, caste *panchayat*, caste-based personal laws all go towards subordination of women. In matters of marriage, divorce, remarriage, inheritance, etc., caste-based laws and regulations seek to make women dependent on men and dispossessed. Within this frame of caste, the exploitation of Dalit and Adivasi women is more intense; a majority of them are landless agricultural labourers. More of these women become victims of rape and sexual assault; the number of mass rapes of Dalit women in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are cases in point. Moreover, the state takes no notice of such sexual crimes, as it is assumed that men from privileged castes are entitled to sexually exploit women from underprivileged castes. That the women of the Atishudra castes have no honour and that they are but commodities for the pleasure of men of the higher varnas is an old injunction of the Dharmashastras. Therefore, the atrocities against Dalit and Adivasi women are to be traced to the caste system and not to the class system (Patil 1983). This analysis by Patil assumes significance in this context.

Thus, Ambedkar underlines the fact that the caste system exploits women; further, in such a hierarchical system, the lower the position of the woman in the hierarchy, the more intense her exploitation. He made Dalit women at the gathering conscious of their exploitation as women born in the lowest strata of the hierarchy. By asking them to ponder why their status is so different from that of the Brahmin women, he underlined to them the fact that the annihilation of untouchability is their cause. In this context, he called upon them to join the struggle for the annihilation of the caste system. Through his analysis Ambedkar establishes the fact that there is an intrinsic relationship between the caste system and the subordination of women.

Brahmanical culture: responsible for the subordination of women

Ambedkar, one of the key thinkers in the non-Brahman tradition, himself categorizes all Indian history, tradition, religions and culture into the Brahmanical and the non-Brahmanical. He also argues that perspectives on women's liberation can also be broadly divided into the same two categories. Brahmanical culture, which Ambedkar opposed, justifies and supports the subordination of women. In his work *The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women*, he undertakes a detailed analysis of Brahmanical culture, texts and religious injunctions which push women into the dark valleys of enslavement (2014d).

Ambedkar argues that since ancient times, the birth of a daughter has always been a matter of sorrow in Hindu families. The Buddhist tradition

stood in opposition to this Brahmanical tradition. The Buddha did not think that the birth of a daughter was a sorrowful event. To substantiate his argument, Ambedkar quotes from Buddhist literature the dialogue between King Prasenajit and the Buddha. The King, disappointed on the birth of a daughter, was asked the reason for his sorrow by the Buddha. On being told the reason, the Buddha gave Prasenajit a discourse on the same. The Buddha tells the king that there is no need to grieve the birth of a daughter as she can prove to be a more effective progeny than a son. "Your daughter," he continues, "will become wise and virtuous" (Ambedkar 2014d, 117–8). Through this dialogue, Ambedkar seeks to underline the fact that the Buddha did not subscribe to gender discrimination and thought that girls too could be capable and virtuous.

Brahmanical culture denies women the right to knowledge

Ambedkar highlights the fact that the Buddha allowed the entry of women in the Sangha (2014d). Hindu religion on the other hand denied women all access to knowledge and the right of renunciation was denied to Shudras and women. The reasons for this are traced to Manu's dictum that women did not have a right to learn the Vedas and therefore even the performance of the Samskaras for them should be done without chanting the Vedic mantras. According to the Vedic religion, the chanting of the Vedic mantras absolves sin, but since women were not allowed to study these Vedic texts, Brahmanical culture deemed them to be in a perpetual state of untruth and sinfulness. Ambedkar was not in agreement with this and he argued that this dictum of Manu was in keeping with the tradition of the Brahmanical texts that came before him. This Brahmanical dictum regarding women, he argued, led to the downfall of women in India; for partaking in the process of knowledge-making is the natural right of all humans and has been withdrawn from women by the Brahmins without any logical reason. Thus, women had to forego the right to spiritual growth and knowledge. Brahmanical culture believes that a man who has no spiritual knowledge is closer to God than all others by the virtue of being a man. Why is this so? Why is this not true for women? Ambedkar posed these questions to those who championed Brahmanical thought.

According to Ambedkar, the Brahmanical ideology dominant in the sphere of knowledge caused two grave injustices to women, which were abolished by the Buddha. The Buddha allowed women the access to "Parivraja" and thus at once brought an end to two kinds of injustices:

1   Women could partake in the processes of knowledge, as could men
2   Women could experience spiritual enlightenment

Thus, Ambedkar concludes that the Buddha emancipated Indian women from their enslavement and brought about revolutionary changes in their lives. Brahmanical culture denied women the right to freedom, the Buddha, however, granted freedom to women. "All women, no matter whether they belonged to the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishyas, and all Shudras, … were prohibited from acquiring knowledge. The Buddha raised a revolt against this atrocious doctrine of the Brahmins" (1992, 287). Thus, Ambedkar argues that the Buddha, by allowing the women to enter the Sangha, propagated the cause of women's freedom (2014d). By breaking the shackles of gender discrimination, not only did the Buddha throw open the path of excellence to women but he also paved the way for granting women a status equal to that of men.

Ambedkar further argues that in ancient India, women enjoyed a high social status (2014e). Women were in the forefront of the political process and also the social and intellectual spheres. They had the right to initiation or *upanayana* and could chant Vedic mantras. Quoting from Panini, he gives instances of women who excelled in the Vedas and who could debate with men on issues of religion, philosophy, the origins of the universe and the development of knowledge. The debates of Jahaksulabha, Yajnavalkya and Gargi-Maitreyi and Shankaracharya and Maitreyi are well known (2014e). Thus, women have not always been exploited, as there were times during which it was possible for them to reach the peaks of success. Ambedkar underlines the fact that India was probably the only society in which women enjoyed such a high status.

In the first volume of *Dasa-Shudra Slavery*, Sharad Patil (1983) also notes that in ancient societies women were at the forefront of matters of political governance. He argues that simple tribal societies in ancient India were matriarchal. Patil refutes the feminist assumption that women have always and already been subordinated. To say that societies were matriarchal is not to accept the Marxist notion of primitive communism. Matriarchal societies were gendered and differentiated. Women in these societies had rights in the distribution of communal lands, in governance and priesthood. This is probably because it was women who discovered hoe agriculture. Thus, in these societies the reins of governance were in the hands of women, yet this did not mean that these societies were egalitarian. They were both gendered and politically differentiated. Patil's thesis is in keeping with Ambedkar's views on the status of women in ancient India, where he underlines the fact that this status for women was limited to the pre-Manu era.

According to Ambedkar, Manu is responsible for the downfall in the status of women. He puts forth evidence for the same in his different writings by quoting from *Manusmriti*.[4] For instance, by the rule 2–213 in *Manusmriti*, "It is the nature of women to seduce men in this (world)." The rule 2–214 says, "For women are able to lead astray in (this) world not only a

fool, but even a learned man, and (to make) him a slave of desire and anger." Rule 2–215 claims, "One should not sit in a lonely place with one's mother, sister, or daughter; for the senses are powerful, and master even a learned man." Rule 9–14 claims, "Women do not care for beauty, nor is their attention fixed on age; (thinking), '(It is enough that) he is a man,' they give themselves to the handsome and to the ugly." Thus through these rules Ambedkar seeks to underline the lowly status that Manu pronounced upon women. Manu also stands in opposition to freedom for women. Rule 9.2 claims, "Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males of their families." While rule 9.3 underlines that "a woman is never fit for independence." Rule 9.6 claims, "Considering that the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives."

Manu further stands in opposition to granting women the right to property and divorce. He, thus, justifies atrocities on women. He codifies the law that denies women the right to separate from their husbands. Thus, he binds the woman to her husband while granting the man the freedom that he desires. Men had the right to divorce their wives under the slightest of pretexts. Similarly, he equates a woman's status to that of a slave in matters of the right to immovable property and does not recognize the widow's right to property.

Ambedkar condemns this and argues that these laws of Manu, which denied women the right to property and gave them a lowly status, was in keeping with the Brahmanical religion. According to him, by the law of Manu social practices assumed the form of religious injunction and came to be enforced by the king. Women and the Shudras were the base of the Aryan (Brahmanical) religion and therefore all kinds of laws came to be enforced upon them. The strict forbiddance of mixed marriages that Ambedkar explicates is a major case in point.

Thus, Ambedkar explains how Manu came to cause the downfall of womenkind. He underlines the misogynistic nature of Brahmanical culture and religion. On the other hand, he sees Buddhism as a champion of women's freedom, as denying gender discrimination and granting women access to knowledge and liberation. It is important to note the fact that while adopting Buddhism, its tenets that were emancipatory towards women played a significant role.

The Hindu Code Bill for the liberation of women

Ambedkar sought to change the laws of Manu that were misogynistic and reduced a woman to a commodity. Thus, in the post-independence period, as the architect of the Indian constitution he granted women the basic rights to justice, equality and security; however, it may be underlined here that he did not see this as an end in itself.

It was mainly to challenge and change the law of Manu and to grant women the basic right to property that Ambedkar drafted the Hindu Code Bill (2003a). The Hindu Code Bill in a sense marks the end of the law of Manu and brings forth a text that makes possible the liberation of women. Ambedkar in a powerful symbolic gesture publicly burnt *Manusmriti*; for within this text was the justification for the enslavement of Shudras and women. Some activists in the women's movement do not grant him this and argue that he burnt *Manusmriti* not in support of women's liberation, but rather in the context of caste. Such an unfounded statement is unjust to Ambedkar's complex thinking on the intersectionality of caste and gender; it also underlines failure of many to understand that. For him, the issue of caste and that of the subordination of women are inseparable and do not present a dichotomy. It must be underlined that he had appealed to women to join the struggle for the annihilation of caste because he saw the caste system as being exploitative of women.

Women are the central core of the Hindu Code Bill and through the laws on property, marriage and divorce; he sought to enhance their cause. For instance, he argues that under prevailing Hindu Law, men could marry as many times and that this was unjust and had to be changed to a uniform principle of monogamy for both men and women. Since according to this Hindu Law, marriage was a sacrament, a break in this or divorce was not possible. Ambedkar saw this as unjust and sought to amend it. Through the 1937 Act of Inheritance, women did not have an equal share in property. He sought to amend this and to grant daughters a share equal to that of sons. He asked the question, "What does this Bill seek to do?", which he answered saying that this bill keeps old things in their place to seek primacy for the new. It granted to every Hindu man the right to make a will of his property and therefore if the daughter gets a share of the property, conservatives could do very little against it, for if they attempted to derecognize the girl child from sharing in property, they would have to do so by making a will (Ambedkar 1983).[5]

Hence, it is apparent that Ambedkar was in opposition to the prevailing Hindu Law because it denied women the rights to property and divorce, while granting them to men as well as the right to several marriages. He condemned these laws as patriarchal and sought to amend them through the Hindu Code Bill (2003a). He stressed that in the interests of Indian women, it was important that the Bill be passed. He wrote to Nehru that the Bill had for him an extraordinary importance and appealed to him to leave no stone unturned in convincing opponents and passing the Bill. That the core of this Hindu Code Bill was the liberation of women and that the efforts of Ambedkar were to this end is apparent.

Any caste *panchayat* is a product of the caste system, an institution that regulates and exploits women. The law of the *panchayat* is an oral law; the

"panch," the administrators of justice, are invariably men and justice can easily be bought and sold herein. Yet several feminist activists and scholars have supported the institution of the caste *panchayat* in the context of implementing the Hindu Code Bill for Adivasi women. They see the legal process as drain on time and money and therefore not easily accessible to women, mainly those from the Adivasi community. They argue that the bureaucracy is inhuman and corrupt and often at the end of the long wait justice may not be delivered at all. On the other hand, they see the caste *panchayat* as being less time consuming, easily accessible and as delivering "justice" in a quicker time framework. For example, Rekha Thakur, activist and researcher of the Bahujan Mahila Aaghadi, argues:

> [T]he Bahujan woman is exploited more outside the home than inside it. The mechanisms which regulate her lie outside the family. Within the family, she is relatively more free than the upper caste women. Since the burden of purity of lineage was not on her shoulders she had access to separation from the husband and to remarriage. The discord within the family could be referred by her outside the four walls of the home. The caste panchayat became the mediating institution and would administer justice. Hence the legal right to divorce has not given much; customarily this right as such had been available to her.[6]

Ambedkar's prime reason for becoming a part of the ministry was to get the Hindu Code Bill passed. On realizing that the government was postponing the issue, he resigned from the ministry. In a clarification about his resignation, he said that he joined the ministry only for the Hindu Code Bill, but that he had been harassed in this context. He firmly believed that women had to be liberated from the prevailing patriarchal Brahmanical law and the oral law of the caste *panchayat*. He saw this Bill as an important event in the life of the new nation and yet it had not been taken up in any significant conference. Probably, the Hindu Code Bill would remain the single most important law to come before parliament. He concluded that any law that does not address the hierarchy and gender discrimination prevalent in Indian society and only seeks to ameliorate economic conditions is akin to building castles in the air. In a patriarchal feudal society, women were subjugated through caste-based laws of marriage, divorce and inheritance. The colonial rule led to the emergence of new classes. Women's education, their participation in social production and their overall better status came as demands from this new society. Hence Ambedkar's historic contribution lies in his sustained efforts towards getting the Hindu Code Bill passed, as a basic requirement towards the fulfilment of these new demands. In a sense, this marked the journey of the law from a caste-based patriarchal one to an individualistic and class-based societal law (Phadke 1985).

In these writings of Ambedkar, one can trace the theme of what he conceptualized as a non-Brahmanical perspective on women's liberation. Such a perspective aims not at mere improvements in the economic status but gives primacy to a revolutionary agenda of the annihilation of caste and the subordination of women. Often Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill (2003a) is misconceived as his manifesto on women's liberation. Though, he referred to the Bill as incomparable in its importance to any other, it was not conceived by him as an end, only a beginning. He compromised and joined the ministry because he saw the granting of freedom of property, however limited, as a beginning of women's liberation. But this does not mean that his views on this topic were limited to the issues of economic freedom only. One only has to recall here his insights into the relationship between the caste system and the subordination of women, and his sustained attacks on the patriarchy. Through Ambedkar's writings and speeches it becomes apparent that the Bill represented to him a counter-revolutionary position to the prevalent law of Manu. That he dared to resign on the question of women is an unparalleled act, even among leaders of the women's movement in India. Thus, the Hindu Code Bill was conceived by Ambedkar as a way out of the impasse that the woman question was in and he never meant it as a manifesto for the liberation of women in India. That is why even in his letter of resignation from his post of Law Minister, he underlined the fact that the Bill was significant only because it proposed a law more progressive than the two other prevalent laws.

Several positions are being put forth on the issue of the Hindu Code Bill. While some believe that through it, the manifesto of women's liberation was been put forth, others argue that it was not really drafted by Ambedkar and that it marks the codification of the colonial process of making laws based on religious texts and in consultation with the Sanskrit pundits. Madhu Kishwar's (1994) and Rekha Thakur's (1999) views would subscribe to this latter position. Omvedt (2014) argues that in noting that the Hindu Code Bill was heralded by Ambedkar, we overlook the fact that the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) had lobbied for this demand since 1925. Such a comment arises from an ill-founded comparison between the creation of the Bill and those who suggested changes therein. Moreover, there is a fundamental difference in the positions of Ambedkar and the AIWC. For Ambedkar, the Bill marked a progressive step in the larger programme of women's liberation, while for the AIWC it was a political manoeuvre. This is apparent from the fact that neither did they come out in support of the Bill when Ambedkar presented it to parliament nor did they condemn the march organized by the women of the Jan Sangha in opposition to the Bill. For what reason then should we glorify the fact that the demand had been taken up by the AIWC? It is surprising that the two issues—the contribution of Ambedkar to the Bill and that of the AIWC—should be mixed up at all! His analysis of subordination of women and the

agenda charted out for liberation of women highlighted his linkage of caste and gender hierarchy. We shall explore in the next section their inevitable links, as well as their interdependence.

The perspective on and agenda for the struggle for the liberation of women

In refuting the biological explanation of caste, Ambedkar underlined the linkages between the caste system and the subordination of women. In arguing that castes were created to perpetuate inequalities, he further argued that within the hierarchy every caste expresses pride in its own identity. Every caste is therefore active in keeping its difference and maintaining its own identity. It is not only that they restrict dining and marriage to the caste circle, but even food habits, rituals of marriage and clothing have been regulated by the caste system. This readily marks the untouchable from the *savarna*. While issues of food and marriage rituals are of an intra-caste nature, the issue of clothing is treated in more detail by Ambedkar. Clothing marked untouchability and hence he appealed to the people to denounce the clothing marked for them by the caste system in order to lead a life of self-respect.

Untouchable women are marked as lowly through their dress. Brahmanical tradition has thrust upon them a costume of half (above the knees) sarees and heavy and cheap jewellery, which marks them as untouchable. These traditions were designed to keep these women enslaved. He thus appealed to women to deny these symbols of enslavement. In a speech at the Mahad Satyagraha Parishad, he said,

> You all must vow to leave behind the old and dirty customs. To state the truth there is no branding on the forehead of the untouchable which would mark him so. But it is through the customs that people are able to mark the caste of a person. I am of the opinion that these customs have in the earlier times been thrust upon us
> (Ambedkar 1928)

Thus, he underlined the need for the women of the lower castes to keep a neat and clean appearance, so as to wipe away the caste markings that are thrust upon them and is in no way asking them to beautify themselves.

In any political struggle, the issue of identity is significant. Several times, identities come to be used for political purposes. Rather than debating what really constitutes identities, it is important that we study the identities of the different politically progressive trends in contemporary politics. For instance, several movements have emerged in the recent past that put at the central position the OBC, Matang, non-Buddhist Dalit, women or Dalit

identities. Identities are not created overnight nor can they be thrust upon others. The crux of identity politics must be progressive. Identities are real only if they are rooted in struggles to end vested political, social and cultural interests.

Another important issue in the context of identities is the need to ask the question: which identity is being forged? Is it Brahmanical, patriarchal, inegalitarian? If it is so or if it is only an identity of political opportunism, we have to condemn it. The Dalit identity, even in the pre-Ambedkar era, has always drawn from the non-Brahmanical tradition. From Shivram Janoba Kamble, Narayan Meghaji Lokhande and Mahatma Phule to Ambedkar, we see continuity in the non-Brahmanical roots of Dalit identity. The contemporary Dalit movement also draws upon Phule-Ambedkarism and such a Dalit identity, which has emerged from the history of a long struggle, is a revolutionary identity. This identity did not emerge overnight and the Dalit community will not be willing to easily give up this identity, for it is based on a history of mass struggles. That women were also a part of this history is apparent from the fact that due to the efforts of social reformers such as Phule, Gopalbaba Valangekar, V. R. Shinde, Kamble, Shahu Maharaj, Munpande Kalicharan, Nanda Gavali; women were always present in large numbers at the public meetings.[7]

In countering different caste-based atrocities the Dalit movement took up several struggles of identity. Ambedkar himself led the Chavdaar Lake Satyagraha and the entry into the Kalaram temple. In the Dalit Mahila Parishads, several resolutions were passed in which he called upon Dalit women to stay away from *tamashas* and to refuse to carry gas lamps on their heads, as these practices marked them as lowly and contemptuous. That is to say, Ambedkar saw the question of the Dalit women's identity of self-respect as crucial to social reform and to the revolutionary struggle. Thus, his conception of identity was broad-based and therefore Dalit women constituted an intrinsic part of his thoughts and struggles.

In any social movement, there is always a long-term programme and a short-term agenda. In the early phases of the movement, it is likely that the short-term agenda is taken up. In case of Ambedkar's revolutionary programme too, struggles such as those of the temple entry were taken up by him to enhance in the minds of Dalits the anger against the injustice done to them. It is important to note here that temple entry was for him a short-term programme and the annihilation of caste and the liberation of women were the long-term ones.

Ambedkar's programme, which appealed to Dalit women to give up their caste-based costumes, with a view towards wiping away the markers of untouchability, was no doubt a short term goal in his agenda for women's liberation. That the denial of these caste-based costumes and customs will not lead to the annihilation of caste must have been obvious to a thinker

and leader of his calibre. His position should not be misconstrued as the "Brahmanisation" of Dalit women. We only need to recall that if the Brahmanisation of women had been his position, he would not have underlined the question of Dalit women as a political question. Moreover, he saw abolition of caste as primarily a women's struggle and organised conferences towards that.

Consciousness rising among untouchable women

Ambedkar time and time again underlined that the abolition of untouchability was the responsibility of women. He argued that men would take a longer time to achieve this end. To this purpose, he always organized separate political meetings of women and it is this precedent that lead to the formation of the Dalit Mahila Federation.

In Ambedkar's very important speech to the Dalit Mahila Federation in 1942 he envisioned the participation of women in a movement as a measure of its relative success or failure. In the same speech, he narrated,

> Ever since I began to work among the Depressed Classes, I made it a point to carry women along with men. That is why you will see that our Conferences are always mixed Conferences. I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved, and when I see this assembly, I feel both convinced and happy that we have progressed
>
> (Ambedkar 2003a, 282)

In these speeches, the faith that Ambedkar had in the capability of exploited women is apparent. It is through the propagation of his ideas and his work that Dalit women began to awaken, organise and revolt. Women participated in large numbers in the Mahad Satyagraha in 1927. This is the first time in history that Dalit women came out in public to support their social and cultural demands. Prior to this, women had come out in public for the struggles led by Gandhi; but in what could be called "transformative" or "revolutionary" struggles, it is in the Ambedkarite movement that women first took to the streets. The credit for promoting this organization among Dalit women goes to Ambedkar.

This political conscientization that Ambedkar brought about is reflected in the programmes and the leadership of the Dalit Mahila Federation. The General Secretary of the Dalit Mahila Federation, Ayu. Indirabai Patil, noted how Dalit women should break away from Brahminical Hindu religion and its conception of feminine domesticity, since these enslave women (Ambedkar 2003c; Pawar and Moon 1989, 254–5). Similarly, under the chairpersonship of Sulochanabai Dongre, there was a demand for

representation of Dalit women in all institutions, starting from the local. To quote,

> …like female representatives taken in the Central and Provincial Legislatures from female constituencies, this Conference feels that for the general progress and advancement of the women of the Depressed Classes seats be reserved for them on all legislative and other representative bodies
>
> (Ambedkar 2003c; Pawar and Moon, 213–5)

Thus, began the journey of organizing Dalit women for their identity, existence and a humane society. Society began to recognize that in the political sphere too women could operate with courage, daring and efficiency. These women realized that their struggle was for their identity and they began to publicly react to any insulting and derogatory behaviour from *savarna* (upper caste/varna) men and women. This was a direct result of their participation in new knowledges and their political conscientisation. At the proceedings of one of the Akhil Bhartiya Mahila Parishads, *savarna* women discriminated against the two Dalit women delegates by setting plates separately for them. At this January 1938 Conference, these two Dalit women publicly condemned this act, which was called "lowly" and "mean," and Dalit women were asked to keep their self-pride and identity.

This torch of struggle was lit by Ambedkar, for he believed in the strength that lay dormant in women. The incident of April 7, 1930 at the Temple Entry is a case in point. At the time of temple entry when one of the priests pushed a young Dalit girl, she slapped him (Phadke 1987). Such incidents kindled the fire of self-respect. At the political Parishads organized by Ambedkar, not only were separate Mahila Parishads organized but also the Parishad passed several resolutions condemning atrocities against Dalit women. These were mainly resolutions against those practices that enslaved women. The Parishad, in an important resolution, condemned the practice of child marriage and discussed its biological and psychological ill effects. It was proposed that the marriageable age be fixed at a minimum of 22 for boys and 16 for girls. Considering the fact that the dowry question could be lethal for women, the Mahar Panch Committee resolved that wedding expenses should not exceed a maximum of sixteen rupees and the details of how this money should be distributed were also given. For example, five rupees were assigned for the ritual of *Sakashgandha*, nine rupees for the engagement, two rupees for the wedding and it was enjoined that parents should not give any ornaments to their daughters. This resolution is extremely significant.

All this went towards kindling tremendous self-confidence in Dalit women. They refused to compromise at all when it came to their political

work. They time and again proved to the community the importance of their liberation. In Nagpur, Jaibai Chaudhari qualified as a teacher and took up a job in a school. But *savarna* and Christian students refused to be taught by a Dalit teacher. She was advised to convert to Christianity, which she courageously refused. She resigned her post, realizing that the issue at stake was not so simple that it would be resolved by her conversion. This strength came from the collective struggles of Dalit women. Probably realizing that the question was of the real struggle—the annihilation of caste—she started the Chokhamela Girls' School. She remained active in the struggles of Dalit women until the end of her life. In 1920, the Bahish-krut Samaj Parishad passed a resolution that girls be given free and compulsory primary education, and on that occasion Tulsabai Bansode and the young Rukmini Kotangale delivered effective speeches in support. Thus, it is apparent that though the programmes taken up by the Dalit women's movement were short term, their ideological position was committed to the annihilation of the caste system.

Ambedkar's opposition to atrocities against women

Ambedkar, having had a deep faith in the capabilities of women, always stood in opposition to atrocities against them. The first phase of the Ambedkarite struggle was dedicated to enkindling self-respect in the minds of Dalit men and women and ensuring for them a humanitarian treatment from society. He stood against the domination and exploitation of any one varna by the other.

In 1956, amidst a gathering of lakhs of people, he embraced Buddhism and gave to the Neo-Buddhists the gift of the 22 Vows (Ambedkar 1956). These vows deny all inegalitarian practices, customs and forms of worship. One of the vows, "I shall not take intoxicants like liquor, drugs, etc." (Vow 17) was in part to protect the women at the receiving end of the ill effects of intoxicants. In his conceptualization of "Dhamma" there is an insistence on ethics. A religion such as this, Ambedkar opined, would render more justice to women. The freedom and access to knowledge for women encoded in Buddhism played a significant role in his thoughts on Dhamma.

His opposition to the atrocities against women was also apparent in the speech he delivered to a gathering of prostitutes. At this gathering of Devadasi, Potraje, Bhute, Aradhi and Jogtini sects in 1936,[8] he said,

> I insist that if you want to be with the rest of us you must give up your disgraceful life…There are only two ways open to you: either you remain where you are and continue to be despised and shunned, or you give up your disgraceful profession and come with us
>
> (Ambedkar 2003c)

That poverty should drive women to sell their bodies is perceived by him as an atrocity against women. It is in keeping with these principles that he refused to accept the money donated by Patthe Bapurao, a Brahmin *tamasha* artist, arguing that the money was earned from making Pavalabai, a Dalit woman, dance on the *tamasha* floor. It is Dalit women who are the most exploited by caste-based prostitution, such as practice of *devadasi*, and this was strongly condemned by Ambedkar.

The preface to Ambedkar's *The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women* gives us clues about his opposition to the atrocities against women (2014d). Ambedkar narrates the story of a particular village that was notified to completely excommunicate a Buddhist monk (1992, 495–496). A Brahmin woman breaks this injunction and gives water to the thirsty monk. The men of the village beat her up to teach her a lesson. In citing this story, Ambedkar reflects his opposition to violence against women.

Ambedkar: the true heir to the legacy of Mahatma Phule

Ambedkar carried forth the legacy of the non-Brahmanical thoughts of Mahatma Phule. This is also true in the context of the liberation of women. The importance of education for girls, the prevention of infanticide, the traumas of a deserted woman were all issues that informed the work of Babasaheb Ambedkar as they did for Mahatma Phule.

Ambedkar felt deeply on the issue of orphaned children and unwed mothers and he had also proposed starting a home for them at Aurangabad. He used to say, "Bring the small children here to this home, all of them poor and the orphaned, those deserted by the destitute and unwed mothers. I will personally take care of them" (Pawar and Moon 1989). This goes to show that he did not take the traditional view on the issue of unwed mothers. He opined that deserted women are left all alone to fend for themselves in a society that stigmatizes them and that he could do his bit by taking care of the children of such mothers. It needs to be noted that he placed no stigma on unwed motherhood.

Savitribai and Jotiba Phule could not beget any progeny of their own. In those times there must have been pressures on Jotiba to remarry and beget children. Yet they resisted these pressures to adopt the child of an abused widow. In the context of Hinduism, the presence of a son as the torchbearer of the lineage is extraordinary and any woman who cannot bear a son comes to be thus humiliated. Yet Phule did not remarry. As Omvedt points out, "Instead of insisting on a heir of their own blood and lineage they adopt the child of a widow (naturally an 'illegitimate' child). Neither do they adopt the child of a close relative as was the prevalent practice" (Omvedt 2001, 15). The issue being highlighted is that they did not see the begetting of progeny as the ultimate aim of conjugal life. Ambedkar also had a similar position on the issue. In dialogue with one activist, he asked

him how he would feel if his wife were to desert him on the issue of failure to produce progeny and explained to him that the child is as much the wife's need as his (Pawar and Moon 1989).

In the same vein, Ambedkar also seems to carry forward the legacy of Mahatma Phule on the issue of education for girls. Ever after returning to India he strove to throw open the doors of education for Shudras and women. Even when accepting Buddhism he emphasized that the position it accorded to women's access to knowledge played a decisive role. In his speeches, he repeatedly underlined the importance of educating women. At the Mahad Satyagraha Parishad, in a speech to the gathering of women, he advocated the importance of educating women so that the community could progress.[9] If a woman is educated, it is as if the whole family is put in touch with knowledge and education and reforming ideas and ideologies becomes possible. It is with this faith that Ambedkar called upon the women to take on the responsibility of spreading knowledge and education in society. In this way, he emerged as the true and most deserving heir to the legacy of Mahatma Phule.

The non-Brahmanical path of women's liberation

To conclude, some of the key principles of Ambedkar's non-Brahmanical conception of women's liberation were as follows:

1   Ambedkar saw the caste system and the class system as the two major enemies. He saw both as being responsible for the subordination of women. He traced linkages between caste-based exploitation and the subordination of women by pointing out how castes emerged through the regulation of women. To put it briefly, he argued that women are the gateways to the caste system.
2   The subordination of women will not automatically end with the end of capitalism. Ambedkar argues that to achieve this purpose the caste system and patriarchy will have to be attacked. The subordination of women cannot come to an end in a caste-based society and it is therefore women who must lead the struggle for the annihilation of caste. He sees organic links between the struggle against the caste system and the struggle for the liberation of women. Thus, the idea of women's liberation is intrinsic to his ideology and not a token add-on.
3   His position seems to take the same stance as the feminist commitment that "the personal is the political." He sought to bring into the public sphere, within the auspices of the legal system, the atrocities that women suffered as private within the confines of the home. Issues of bigamy, maintenance, etc., were all brought into the public debate. He wished to transform these matters of the private into political

issues and to this end drafted the Hindu Code Bill (2003a). His journey of codifying the Law is one that sought to delimit the private sphere and make more encompassing the public sphere. Share in property for women, and the rights to seek divorce and marry according to one's will were all issues that come up in the Bill. These stood in opposition to the prevalent familial abuse of women. Even within the political sphere, he was opposed to private ownership of land and stood for its socialization. Thus, his views on the public/private and on political issues kept with those on the woman question.

4 Ambedkar took an anti-patriarchal position in the creation of the Hindu Code Bill. He opposed the law of Manu because it subordinates and enslaves women. He preferred the Buddhist non-Brahmanical tradition because it grants freedom to women and gives them access to knowledge. He, thus, believed that any social transformation is incomplete until gender discrimination in that society comes to an end.

Like Phule, Ambedkar analysed the caste system as the major cause of the subordination of women and called upon people to revolt against it. To develop the non-Brahmanical principles of women's liberation that are embodied in the lives and works of Mahatma Phule and Ambedkar, we need to take up the following issues:

- Ambedkar saw Hinduism as the emerging ground of the caste system and hence argued for a countering of the philosophy and the rites and rituals of this religion. To take it a step further, we need to highlight that caste-based exploitation has a material base. Hence, resisting it assumes primacy on the agenda.
- The origins of the subordination of women has been articulated in the works of Ambedkar. The issue therein needs to be put forth as a theory. That patriarchal exploitation also has a material base needs to be underlined and this must inform any agenda and revolutionary programme.
- The programme for the liberation of women needs to be seen as an intrinsic part of the struggles against the social, religious, cultural and political exploitation of the caste system. Such a trend has failed to emerge from within the contemporary Dalit movement. Even within the Republican Party of India and the Dalit Panthers, a perspective on women's liberation has not emerged, both in theory and in their practices. Efforts to develop such perspectives will have to be undertaken.
- An Ambedkarite perspective is important to the theory of the emergence and the end of the subordination of women in India because this perspective, by conceiving women as the gateways of the caste system, draws focus to the caste-based nature of this exploitation.

This theory needs to be developed further by linking it to historical materialist analyses and to the political economy of the sexual division of labour. Developing a non-Brahmanical perspective of the liberation of women in India would entail such a task.

Notes

1 This chapter is an abridged version of the book by Pratima Pardeshi, *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Question of Women's Liberation in India*, trans. Sharmila Rege (Pune: Krantjyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Study Centre, Savitribai Phule Pune University, 1998). The original Marathi edition was published as Pratima Pardeshi, *Dr. Ambedkar aani Streemukti* (Pune: Krantisimha Nana Patil Academy, 1996). Swati Dehadrai, Assistant Professor, Krantjyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Study Centre, has edited the English edition of the book for this volume. Used with permission.
2 This is derived from (Ambedkar 2014a, b).
3 A devdasi was a woman dedicated to worshipping god and serving a deity or a temple. The system exploited these women sexually so it was outlawed in India.
4 See (Bühler 1886).
5 Extracted from (Thakur 1999).
6 This is a citation from an unpublished text.
7 The oral narratives of women in the Ambedkarite movement have been documented in (Pawar and Moon 1989).
8 In Maharashtra there is a practice in some families, mainly amongst lower castes whose family god is Khnadoba, of offering one child to him. Traditionally the boy is called "Waghya" and girl "Murali."
9 Translated from Marathi (Ambedkar 1928).

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——— 2003c "Progress of the Community is Measured by the Progress of Women" in *Dr. Bahasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches* vol. 17 (part 3), 277–83 New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Government of India.

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Part III

HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM
Interaction, conflict and beyond

8

BUDDHISM AND HINDU SOCIETY

Some observations from medieval Marathi literature

Shrikant Bahulkar

It is widely known that Buddhism began to decline from mainland India around the 12th century CE and finally disappeared during the centuries that followed. The Hindu tradition, particularly, the Vaiṣṇava sect, considered the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu and in a way attempted to show that Buddhism was a part of Vaiṣṇavism. It is however noticed that the notion of the Buddha as the incarnation of Viṣṇu did not get much popularity all over India. Unlike Rāmajanma or Kṛṣṇajanma, we do not find explicit references to Buddhajanma celebrations on a mass scale in India until the second half of the 20th century, when in 1956, the 2,500th anniversary of the Mahāparinirvāṇa of the Buddha was celebrated all over India, at the insistence of the Government of India.

Archaeology and literature provide evidence of Buddhism's widespread influence in India. However, it is difficult to find how many Indians at any time actually considered themselves Buddhists. While we know from Buddhist sources of the legends of upper-class Hindus who embraced Buddhism, the percentage of such people must be very less. Also, it might not be a formal conversion into becoming a Buddhist. The late Upaniṣads, composed after the Buddha, the epics, and the classical Sanskrit and Prakrit literature do not mention the Buddha and his teaching frequently and explicitly. The two Mahākāvyas by Aśvaghoṣa, namely, the Buddhacarita and the Saundarananda are not mentioned by the later poets or the authors of the works on poetics; nor do we find verses quoted from those poems as examples of the figures of speech. Many works by Buddhist pundits were ignored and consequently were lost in their Sanskrit originals. No manuscripts of Buddhist works were preserved in India, with the exception of a few. By the 12th century, the life of the Buddhist monks, the Saṅgha, Buddhist art, the interpretation of Buddhist thought, and even the knowledge of the Buddhist period, became lost to sight.

At the beginning of the 19th century, European scholars began to study Indian Buddhism and translate from Pali, Sanskrit, and Tibetan scriptures. In 1837, James Prinsep, a British government official deciphered the Brāhmī script of the Ashokan rock and pillar edicts. Alexander Cunningham, another government official identified various Buddhist holy places, using the 7th-century Chinese pilgrim, Huen-Tsang's travel book as a guide. Many Western scholars studied Buddhism in earnest and contributed to the advancement of Buddhist studies. Henry Olcott, an American Civil War Colonel and one of the founders of the Theosophical Society, went to Ceylon in 1880 to study Buddhism. David Hewavitame, a young Sinhalese, joined the Theosophical Society there and established contacts through the Society with Western Buddhist studies and Japanese Buddhism. He became a monk and came to be known as Anāgārika Dharmapāla. He founded the Maha Bodhi Society of Calcutta. Among the scholars in the West was T. W. Rhys David who founded the Pali Text Society in 1881 in London. In India scholars showed a keen interest in Buddhism and began to write books and essays and translate Buddhist scriptures into English and some vernacular languages. The Buddhist Text Society was founded in 1892 in Calcutta, and Sarat Chandra Das, a renowned Tibetologist, and Satish Chandra Vudyabhushan, the first person to obtain an MA degree in Pali in 1901, worked through that Society. Other scholars in this early period of Buddhist studies in India were Rajendralal Mitra and Hara Prasad Sastri who published many Buddhist texts. In Maharashtra, R. G. Bhandarkar included Buddhism in his Indological research. Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar wrote a popular book on the life of the Buddha in 1898. A copy of this book was later presented to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar when he passed the matriculation examination in 1908. Through this book he was first introduced to Buddhism. Dharmanand Kosambi made a pioneering study of Buddhism. He lived for some time both in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. P. Lakshmi Narasu, professor of physics and chemistry at Madras Christian College wrote *The Essence of Buddhism* in 1907. A number of reformers considered themselves Buddhists, although they did not reject Hinduism (Zelliot 1979: 389–99; Sadangi 2008: 321–3; Omvedt 2010: 233–6). Thus, the Indian public was informed more about the Buddha and his teachings; however, it is not clearly known to what extent they knew of Buddhism before they rediscovered it during the colonial period.

The medieval religious cults, including the Bhakti movement emerged just during the decline of Buddhism. In the case of Maharashtra, the Bhāgavata cult began to take shape during the 12th century CE. The Mahānubhāva cult too emerged around the same period. It is interesting to see what the followers of those various religious cults knew of the Buddha and his teachings; to see if Buddhism influenced the teachings of the medieval Maharashtrian saints, and if so, to what extent. Hindu society considered the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu. It is also interesting to find how

this notion was understood in various religious traditions in medieval India in general and in Maharashtra in particular.

In the medieval literature of Maharashtra, this notion is reflected in two ways: First, the saint poets considered their god, Viṭṭhal or Viṭhobā as the Bauddha, the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu; and second, their teachings bear close similarity to the teachings of the Buddha and are said to have been influenced by Buddhist philosophy. It is not certain however that they had a direct knowledge of the Buddha and his teachings. In the present paper, these notions will be studied.

By the end of the Gupta period (4th–6th century CE), the Buddha came to be included among the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, as the ninth incarnation. The accounts of the Purāṇas describing him in that form have some variations.[1] The Viṣṇu Purāṇa says that in this incarnation, he converts the demons to having heterodox views to deceive them, while the Bhāgavata Purāṇa states that Viṣṇu took this incarnation in the land of the Kīkaṭas to delude people considered inferior who perform sacrifices using Vedic mantras.[2] The land of the Kīkaṭas is identified as Bihar. The Purāṇas while describing the ninth incarnation use the term *sugata-*, and mention Sarnath and Mṛgadāva. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa states that he has a shaven head and is naked. It is also mentioned that he, becoming the sky-clad (*digambara*) taught the Jaina doctrine and wearing a red robe, taught the Buddhist doctrine (Dhere and Feldhaus 2011: 185). Jayadeva, in the Aṣṭapadī of his Gītagovinda describes the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, where he describes the Buddha, the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu, in the following words:

> nindasi yajñavidher ahaha śrutijātaṃ,
>   sadayahṛdaya darśitapaśughātam |
> keśava dhṛtabuddhaśarīra,
>   jaya jagadīśa hare||
>   Oh! You of merciful heart, you blame the Vedic scripture related to the performance of sacrifices that has shown (i.e. prescribed) the killing of animals (in the sacrifices). Victory to you, O Hari, O lord of the world, O Keśava, in the form of the Buddha.

In Hindu rituals, there is a resolve (*saṅkalpa*) for the performance to be undertaken by the sacrificer or the worshipper (*yajamāna*), in which the region and the date of the performance are to be mentioned. In Maharashtra, the "resolve" includes, sometimes, a mention of the current period as "during (the period) of the incarnation of the Buddha" (*bauddhāvatāre*), thereby keeping the memory of the Buddha.

The oldest available Marathi poem, mixed with Kannada, is found in a 12th-century Sanskrit work, the *Mānasollāsa* of Someśvara Cālukya. This poem mentions the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu, who, assuming the form of the Buddha, "deceives" the demons and gods: the verse begins with the

words: "The one who brought the Vedas from the underworld in the form of a fish…" and continues as under:

"The one who, in the form of the Buddha, deceived the demons and gods, who found fault with the Vedas: may that God of illusion and deception bless me" (Dhere and Feldhaus 2011: 185).[3]

In this connection, Dhere states:

> The Purāṇas' description of the Buddha incarnation is depressing. It is unfair to his great teaching to call the Buddha "illusory and deceptive" and to say that his philosophy was a heterodox view that he intentionally taught in order to deflect demons from the true path. In calling the Buddha an incarnation of Viṣṇu, the Purāṇas annihilated Buddhist thought. The Purāṇas accepted the Buddha, but they completely rejected Buddhist ideas.
>
> (Dhere and Feldhaus 2011: 186)

In this connection, Dhere quotes a verse from the *Merutantra*, an English translation of which is as below:

> Brāhmaṇas enamored of the left-handed path, Kuṇḍakas, people who have fallen from caste,
>   those bereft of Vedic rituals, people who have become Mlecchas through a mistake they made,
>   Goḷakas, and also members of the Kāyastha and other castes
>   Take refuge in the Buddha Viṣṇu and reach devotion and liberation.
>
> (Dhere and Feldhaus 2011: 186)

Although we find some references in medieval Marathi literature to the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu, in contrast to Vedic sacrificial religion, there are more frequent statements addressing Viṭṭhal or Viṭhobā, the most revered deity of Maharashtra, as the Buddha, Bauddha or Bauddhāvatāra, the later form of the Kṛṣṇa Avatār. Marāṭhī saints frequently call Viṭṭhal by these various names. Janābāi, Nāmdev's disciple, refers to Viṭṭhal as the Buddha after Kṛṣṇa, in the description of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu: "Becoming Kṛṣṇa, he killed Kaṃsa; now my friend became the Buddha" (Gāthā 344). The saints considered the Buddha to be Viṣṇu's ninth incarnation and attributed the adjectives "silent" and "naked" as they did in the case of Viṭṭhal. Dhere quotes a number of references from the works of Nāmdev, Tukārām, Ekanāth and the *Puṇḍalīka Caritra* of the *Pāṇḍuranga Māhātmya*, a section of the work called "Svānubhāva Dinakara" of Dinakara Svāmī Tisgāvkar (1628–87), a disciple of Rāmdās (Dhere and Feldhaus 2011: 173–88). The saints frequently called Viṭṭhal as "silent" (*maunastha*)

and "enlightened" (*bauddha*) (Dhere and Feldhaus 2011: 174). Tukārām says: "My Buddha incarnation silently fixed his attention on the invisible" (Gāthā 4083). Eknāth too spoke again and again about Viṭṭhal's silence:

> "Taking the garb of silence
>   he stands on a brick" (Gāthā 585).
>   "He has stood on a brick for 28 yugas.
>   He does not speak, he does not sit, he does not cross the limits"
> (Gāthā 605).
>   "Driven mad, driven mad, he stood there in silence" (Gāthā 624).

Besides Marathi saint literature, we can find corroborative evidence in paintings and sculptures in Maharashtra. The old almanacs (*pañcāṅga*), printed by the litho-press have pictures of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu where they depict Viṭṭhal as the "Buddha or Bauddha," the ninth incarnation. A book of hymns called *Śrīrāmasahasranāma* has a picture of Viṭṭhal and Rukmiṇī, his wife, along with Garuḍa and Hanumān with Viṭṭhal's name as the "Bauddha." There are at least two sculptures in Maharashtra, where Viṭṭhal is depicted in the place of the Buddha (Dhere and Feldhaus 2011: 182).

The notion of Viṭṭhal being the Bauddha's incarnation has been prevalent in the oral as well as literary traditions of Maharashtra and was recorded by modern scholars in the first half of the 19th century, when the Western scholars began to study India as a part of Oriental studies. This particular notion appears to have led Rev. J. Stevenson, a Scottish missionary, to write an essay on this religious sect. In the essay titled "An Account of the Bauddho-Vaishnavas, or Vitthal-Bhaktas of the Dakhan" (Stevenson 1843: 64–73), Stevenson bases his arguments on the literature of the followers of the sect whom he calls "Bauddho-Vaishnavas", "a convenient descriptive name" (Stevenson 1843: 64). He summarizes the account of two sources. The first is the *Pāṇḍuraṅga Māhātmya*, where the story of Puṇḍalīk or Puṇḍarīk is narrated. Kṛṣṇa, in search of his wife, Rukmiṇī, came to Pandharpur where Puṇḍalīk was living. Puṇḍalīk, being a dutiful son, was engaged with serving his parents, holding his father's feet in his right hand and scrubbing it using a brick. Kṛṣṇa appeared before him in a luminous form (*pāṇḍuraṅga*). Recognizing the god, he bowed to him, and cast the brick to sit on it. Pleased with Puṇḍalīk's devotion to his parents, Kṛṣṇa, stationed on that brick and therefore came to be called Viṭṭhal "one standing on a brick." The god asked Puṇḍalīk to request a boon, the latter requested him to stay there permanently. On the basis of another work, Mahipati's Bhakt Vijay "The Victory of the Devotees," Stevenson points out that Viṭṭhal or Pāṇḍuraṅg is a distinct incarnation of Viṣṇu (Stevenson 1843: 66). According to Stevenson,

Viṣṇu appeared to Puṇḍalīk as a sky-clad (*digambara*), with his hands resting on his loins, according to the idea of a perfect sage among the Jains and Esoteric Buddhists, rendering it necessary for the Hindus to furnish him with clothing. He is dressed in yellow garments and hence called Pītāmbara and in the fifth chapter of the *Mahāvaṃso*, this is pronounced to be the dress peculiar to the Buddhist priesthood.

By providing some more evidence, Stevenson tries to establish a connection between this sect and the genuine Buddhists. On narrating the story from the Bhakt Vijay, Stevenson points out some more striking similarities between this sect and the Buddhist. In that story, it is said that Viṣṇu assumes the Bauddha avatār, and his devotees, namely, Uddhava, Akrūra, Vyāsa, Vālmīki and Śuka are born as Nāmā (i.e. Nāmadeva), Rāmadās, Jayadev, Tulsidās and Kabīr respectively. Viṣṇu, in the form of the Bauddha avatār, sits still and silent and sends those followers abroad to propagate the principle of piety and morality. Stevenson thinks that this story is an exact counterpart of the account found in the first chapter of the *Mahāvaṃso* and that, "though Pāṇḍuraṅg be quite a different personage from the historical Buddha, the idea of his character has been mainly borrowed from the Buddhists." The third peculiarity Stevenson points out is that the "Bauddho-Vaishnavas," unlike the followers of the Brahmanical tradition, theoretically admit no distinction of caste among true worshippers and declare that at religious solemnities, people of all castes should eat together (Stevenson 1843: 68).

In this regard, Alexander Grant, in his essay, "Tukaram: A Study of Hinduism," (1868: 14–18), makes the following observations:

> Vithoba is said to be an incarnation of Krishna, who was an incarnation of Vishnu. But some say that Vithoba was a Buddhist saint, deified by local reverence. And Dr. Stevenson describes the worshippers of Vithoba, or Vitthal, as Baudho-Vaishnavas, that is, as mixing up Buddhism with the worship of Vishnu.
>
> Tukaram represents an eclectic form of Hinduism, into which a larger leaven of Buddhism has found its way
>
> (Grant 1868: 15; Also, Halocombe 1868: 137)

Nīlakaṇṭha or Nehemia Goreh, a Brahmin from Benares who was converted to Christianity, writes a letter to the Brahmos, where he refers to Stevenson's essay and criticizes him as under:

> It is said that Dr. Stevenson describes the worshippers of Vithoba as BauddhoVaishnawas. But this I fear is one of those bold speculations which the European learned men are ever fond of

hazarding with respect to facts of other countries and ages. The writer of the article himself says that Tukaram represents "an eclectic form of Hinduism, into which a larger leaven of Buddhism has found its way.

"I should like to know what are those things which he found in Tukaram which he could not trace to the teaching of Hindooism. It is said by some that Vithoba was a Buddhist saint. Of course, I cannot vouch for the correctness of the opinions of my countrymen. They are proverbially like sheep which, if one goes astray, all follow, without examining each for itself whither it is going. They themselves have warned us in this matter by another proverb–"The course of a river and the race of gods one ought not to endeavour to trace." Vithoba may have been originally a Buddhist or a Mahommeden, for ought any one knows; but this is certain, that those who worship him think, by whatever mistake they may have begun to think so, that he is the genuine God of the Hindoos, even Krishna, the husband of Rukmini, who has been worshipped in India for ages among the Hindoos."

(Goreh 1868: 25–26; also, Halcombe 1868: 145)

Not many scholars are aware of Stevenson's essay on the Bauddho Vaishnawas and his hypothesis on that behalf. Recently, however, John Milton Keune, in his dissertation on "Eknāth" refers to Stevenson's essay and considers Stevenson's observations as "rather idiosyncratic, particularly as he sought to situate Viṭṭhal of Pandharpur within a hypothetical, supposedly forgotten Buddhist background" (Keune 2011: 40).

Although the inferences put forth by these scholars are difficult to accept in their entirety, it may be said that their observations reflect the notions prevalent in the local traditions. The foregoing discussion can be summarized in the following manner:

In the medieval period, the Bhāgavata or Vārakarī Sampradāya became prominent and came to be known as a unique feature of the Bhakti cult of Maharashtra devoted to the deity Viṭṭhal or Viṭhoba, having his main temple at Pandharpur. This Bhakti tradition of Maharashtra considers Viṭṭhal as the Bauddhāvatara, as the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu. Maharashtrian saints addressed Viṭṭhal with epithets such as *maunastha* "standing in silence" and "Bauddha." For them Viṭṭhal is the later manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. There are some sculptures and paintings in Maharashtra, depicting the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, where Viṭṭhal has been shown as the ninth incarnation.

Now let us see how the philosophy of the medieval saints has been influenced by the Buddhist philosophical concepts. In her book, *Buddhism in India*, Gail Omvedt has devoted a chapter to the discussion on the Bhakti movements that spread during the period after the decline of Buddhism

in various parts of India (Omvedt 2010). Maharashtrian saints addressed Viṭṭhal as "Buddha" or "Bauddha" by which they pointed to the aspect of wisdom (*prajñā*). They also called him "mother" (*māulī*), thus pointing to the aspect of compassion (*karuṇā*). Their philosophy appears to have been greatly influenced by Buddhism. We thus find that Buddhism did not vanish completely; but was absorbed in the fold of the Vaiṣṇava tradition of Maharashtra.

It is sometimes believed that one of the reasons of the decline of Buddhism in India was the spread of the Vedānta philosophy elaborated by the Śaṅkarācārya who is said to have defeated in the debate the Buddhist thinkers of his period. This popular notion has taken roots in the popular belief of Hindus probably because of the legendary biographies such as the *Śāṅkaradigvijaya* of Mādhava Vidyāraṇya (14th century CE). However, that belief can hardly be entertained for want of historical evidence. Buddhism continued to flourish after the Śaṅkarācārya and was encouraged by some kings, such as the Pāla king of Bengal. After the destruction of the Buddhist monastic universities such as Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, Odanatapuri, Jagaddala and so on in the eastern part of India, Buddhism began to disappear from India. The saints emphasized certain noble thoughts, particularly, compassion toward all sentient beings, non-violence, rejection of the Vedas as an authority, and criticized the hierarchy of castes based on the discrimination of people on the basis of birth.

Most of the saints belong to lower classes and castes of Hindu society. Both men and women have contributed to the development of the Bhakti movement in India, and particularly in Maharashtra. This movement began with Jñāneśvar in the 13th century and continued in the subsequent centuries by many saints, such as Nāmadev, Bahiṇābāi, Cokhāmeḷā, Eknāth, Tukārām and so on, most of which belonged to non-Brahmin castes, some of them to lower castes. Like the Bhakti movement in other parts of India, the Bhakti movement of Maharashtra also was anti-caste and anti-orthodox and opposed the authority of the Vedas, the sacrificial religion advocated by the Vedas and the ancient system of the *Varṇāśramadharma*.

> Many believe that there was a connection between Buddhism in Maharashtra and the Bhakti movement, but the general stance of the Dalit writers, however, is to mourn that even the compassionate saint-poets upheld social distinctions, and that their compassion had little effect.
>
> Zelliot (1978: 79–80)

There is no clear evidence to believe that the saints had a direct knowledge of the Buddha and his teaching. As we have seen, the saints regarded Viṭṭhal as the ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu and thereby, they replaced the Buddha with Viṭṭhal. Thus, there is no direct reference to the Buddha in

the literature of the saints. Buddhism appears to have great impact on the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra, indirectly if not directly, and the Bhakti movement in turn has been instrumental in shaping the ways of thinking and the life of the people in Maharashtra, particularly, the people belonging to Hindu society. It is however hard to say that Hindu society in Maharashtra was familiar with the Buddha, his life and his teaching. It is possible that Hindus had some knowledge of Buddhism that had come down to them traditionally; but their knowledge was enriched in the colonial period when the books on Buddhism, written in vernacular languages and in English, became available to them. As noted by some scholars, the authors of the pioneering works written in the colonial period were Hindus who considered Buddhism as a refined and pragmatic form of Hinduism. They wanted to educate their brethren about Buddhism and were sincere in their undertaking. However, the limited impact of their works on Hindu society at large is seen. While Hindu society has become much more familiar with the words of the Buddha, it will still take a long time for that society to inculcate the spirit behind the letters.

Notes

1 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3.18); *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1.3.24; 2.7.37; 11.4.22); *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (1.1.32); *Agni Purāṇa* (Chapter 16).
2 "*tataḥ kalau sampravṛtte sammohāya suradviṣām|*
    buddho nāmnā jinasutaḥ kīkaṭeṣu bhaviṣyati ||" *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1.3.24.
3 "*Jeṇe rasātalauṇu matsyarūpeṃ veda āṇiyale manuśivaka vāṇiyale…*
    buddharūpeṃ jo dāṇavasurāvañcaṇi vedadūṣaṇavollauṇi
    māyā mohiyā to deū mājhi pāsāu karū||" *Mānasollāsa*, Adhyāya 16, Viṃśati 4.
    Apparently, the word *vedadūṣaṇavollauṇi* has a variant [0]volladaṇi (Deshpande 1959: 1). It might be a wrong reading or a typographical error.

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9

THE BUDDHIST PAST AS A CULTURAL CONFLICT

Ambedkar's exhumation of Indian history

Umesh Bagade

Although colonial and nationalist schools of historiography offer two divergent versions of Indian history, both have demonstrated a common tendency to portray a monolithic and homogeneous history of ancient India. Through the oriental trope, Buddhism is represented as a cohesive and harmonious tradition of Indian culture. In representing Buddhism, colonial historiography charts two disputing tendencies. One of these was posited by Rhys Davids, while the other by Oldenburg. Rhys Davids puts forth Buddhism as a reformist movement that aimed to abolish the caste system by overthrowing the hegemonical classes of the elite and the powerful. On the other hand, the school represented by Oldenburg, portrayed Buddhism as status quoist in nature. Through recruiting the elite within the *sangh,* it neglected the exploited and the oppressed. Consequently, Buddhism as an institution never took on the efforts to minimize the cruelties of the caste system (Patil, 1999: 4–5). However divergent these two schools may appear, both interpret Buddhism masquerading as a cultural rift within Indian history. Moreover, Rhys Davids clarified that the Buddha was not against Brahma and Brahmins. She maintained that 'Buddha never contradicted the Upanishadic doctrine of immanence of Brahma in each individual. What he denied however is the existence of material soul which certain passages of Upanishads seem to suggest' (Bapat, 1997: 297).

The nationalist school, with its passionate defence of a unified homogeneous Hindu past, absolved Buddhism of any cultural antagonism against Brahmanism. Radhakrishnan argued that 'Buddhism did not start as a new and independent religion; it was an offshoot of a more ancient faith of Hindus, as schism or heresy.' According to him, the Buddha utilized the Hindu inheritance to correct some of its expressions. He attempted to enhance the contents of this Hindu inheritance, rather than demolish it altogether. While the teaching of the Buddha assumed distinctive forms in other countries in conjunction with their own traditions, here in the home of the Buddha, it has entered into, and become an integral part of, Indian culture.

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The Brahmins and the Shramanas were treated alike by the Buddha, and the two traditions gradually blended. In a sense, the Buddha is a maker of modern Hinduism (Bapat, 1997: XII).

Some mutually hostile ideologies and interests which came together under the nationalist movement presented different versions of a Buddhist past according to their respective theoretical and socio-cultural positionings. A small number of social reformers invoked Buddhism to validate their ideas; G. G. Agarkar eulogized Buddhism for its agnostic grounding (Ganachari, 2016: 253). However, nationalist reformers have never been at ease with Buddhist ideals. M. G. Ranade castigated Buddhism for breeding a reaction, leading to a downgrading of women's position (Bagade, 2006: 277–78); he categorically stated that the 'nationalist mind cannot rest on Buddhism' (Ranade, 1992: 69). Hindu nationalists like V. D. Savarkar depicted the Buddhist past as a "decay" which according to him weakened the national spirit and stripped manhood from the nation through the insistence on non-violence. He held Buddhism responsible for the historical defeat of the Indian nation (Ingale, 2006: 45–62). Sociologist of the nationalist brand S. V. Ketkar had launched a blasphemous attack on Buddhism wherein he held Buddhism responsible for every social evil that ruined India. Such a vitriolic condemnation of the Buddhist past remained an inexhaustible tendency among Hindu nationalists. Nationalists espousing social reforms like Dharmanand Kosambi passionately defended the Buddhist past from all such castigating attacks (Phadake, 1985: 98).

Amidst this clamour of two contradictory historiographies, Ambedkar inaugurated the search for the Buddhist past. He objected to this tendency of homogenization of Indian history. He categorically stated that there has never been a common Indian culture, that historically there have been three Indias: the Brahmanic India, the Buddhist India and the Hindu India. He claimed that the history of India is the history of the moral conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism. According to him, the dominant lineage of history writing in India not only produced a political and dynastic history, but also neglected its social and spiritual significance (Ambedkar, 1987: 275). Ambedkar's attempt was to restore this social and cultural significance of Indian history.

The cultural and the material

Ambedkar's emphasis on the cultural was based on his understanding of the phenomenon of caste. The cultural and the ideological apparatus of religion remained the grounding force of caste. This privileging of the cultural in Indian history led him to combat the rigid Marxist economism.[1] He stated that unlike the other societies of the world, caste system in India

is a unique phenomenon. Nowhere in the world is the economic activity informed by religion, except in India. He writes,

> The Hindus are the only people in the world whose social order—the relation of man to man is consecrated by religion and made sacred, eternal and inviolate. The Hindus are the only people in the world whose economic order—the relation of workman to workman is consecrated by religion and made sacred, eternal and inviolate.
>
> (Ambedkar, 1989: 190)

Ambedkar identified the key role of religious sanctions in the sustenance of the caste system. He stated that legal and religious sanctions were both equally powerful engines to keep the caste-system thriving. The legal penalty for the breach of caste-rules was twofold. It involved excommunication and a loss of right to inheritance. And the religious sanction is so central that the caste system has been maintained solely by it. He asserted that religious sanction was the highest sanction because the religious was the social, and the religious was sacred. Here Ambedkar quoted Durkheim in his support (Gore, 1993: 264). The Marxists regard religion, ideology and culture as products of an economic reality. Durkheim moved from this position by regarding ideas and beliefs as a derivative of social facts, suggesting that symbolic thought is a condition of a society and that it explains prevalent social structure. His ideas on the sociology of religion are relevant to the analysis of Indian society, since religion is often regarded as the crucial variable that gave a particular direction to it (Thapar, 1993: 34–35). This viewpoint on religion has acknowledged the religious grounding of caste. As a result, Ambedkar draws from Durkheim's ideas on religion like the bipolarity of purity and pollution to define the hierarchy of the caste system.

Ambedkar emphatically criticized the Marxist reading of class. He lambasted the practice of the Indian Marxist to assume that there are only two classes. He further expressed his disagreement with the liberal economist who claimed the economic essence of man. He claimed it to be wrong to hold that economic man (or a rational man or a reasonable man) is a fact (Khairmode, 1998: 92) and focused on cultural constituents of economic class.[2] Ambedkar questioned the assumption of European Marxism that class struggle is the sole determinant of history. He talked about the role of caste in the economic realm and identified the peculiarity of the caste–class mechanism in the Brahmanical and capitalist system of exploitation and domination.

Thus, by identifying the role of caste in the economic sphere, Ambedkar acknowledges non-economic spheres like religion and sociality as the

structures of power. In his renowned speech, 'Annihilation of Caste,' he argued that religion, social status and property are sources of power and authority and hence must be given equal importance. If the source of power and dominion is at any given time or in any given society, social and religious, then social and religious reform must be accepted as the necessary sort of reforms' (Ambedkar, 1979: 44–47).

Ram Bapat cites parallels between Ambedkar's and Ricœur's critique of Marxism regarding economic and non-economic power plots enmeshed to form history. Ricœur writes:

> …the error of Marxism resides not so much in its lack of political horizon as in its reduction of the critique of power to economic transfer of work to capital (that is, the critique of surplus value). Thus Marxist critique tends to ignore that there can be more pernicious form of power than capital—for example, the totalization of all the resources (the resources of work force, of the means of discussion and information, education research, etc.) by the central committee of the party or state…. May be the economic analysis of class struggle is but one of the many plots that makes of the complex history. Hence the hermeneutics of sociality that could unravel the plurality of power plots which enmesh to form our history.
>
> (Kearney, 2004: 34–35)

Amongst several power plots Ambedkar privileged the religious (socio-cultural) power plot of history. Religion has always played a dual role in world history. On one hand, by its ideological and ritualistic apparatus it served the existing system of exploitation and domination. But on the other, counter-cultural religious upsurges had provided an emancipatory space to downtrodden masses. Ambedkar cites Christianity of early era, which according to him provided this emancipatory space to toiling masses. 'The slaves of Rome, crushed under the tyranny of Patricians, roaming on the roads without bread and shelter, embraced Christianity for salvation and freedom' (Ambedkar, 2002: 436). Ambedkar envisaged this religious power plot of Indian history. He argued for the case of the egalitarian and emancipatory nature of Buddhism that represents the revolutionary era of Indian history (Ambedkar, 1987: 65–228).

The Marxist notion of religion 'as an inverted consciousness of alienated labourers' influenced the Marxist historiography of India. Marxist historians, however, condemned the progressive character of Buddhism as false consciousness.[3] In defence of Buddhism, Ambedkar refuted every charge levelled by communists against religion. According to him, the charge that religion made people otherworldly and made people suffer poverty in this world and that religion is the opium of the people are not applicable to Buddhism (Ambedkar, 2007: 21). He reversed the often-used Marxist

architectural analogy of base and superstructure to unravel the necessity of cultural conflict. He emphasized that the mental hold of religious slavery has to be destroyed. He writes:

> But the base is not the building. On the basis of economic relations, a building is erected of religious, social and political institutions. The building has just as much truth (reality) as the base. If we want to change the base, then first the building that has been constructed on it has to be knocked down. In the same way, if we want to change economic relations of society, then existing social, political and other institutions will have to be destroyed.[4]

Ambedkar observed that political revolutions have always been preceded by social and religious revolutions. He cited several examples of world history and Indian history to support this view. Ambedkar advocated the socio-religious revolution as the prerequisite of socialist revolution (Ambedkar, 1979: 43–44). Moreover, he posed a noteworthy question to communists as to what happens when a revolutionary state ceases to exist. Marxists believed that after a socialist revolution, the state will wither away. He fervently argued that religion will take the place of state when the force of state will be withdrawn (Ambedkar, 2007: 21).

Prioritizing the history of cultural and moral strife

Ambedkar's privileging of cultural is strongly reflected in his unfinished work, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Ancient India*. Through this book, his attempt was to unravel a cultural conflict through the exhumation of the debris of historical evidence. His narrative of social conflict unfolded social and cultural processes involving contradiction, violence and exploitation (Omvedt, 1994: 242). He depicted the conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism as a central antagonism of Indian history which subsumed caste, patriarchal contradictions and shaped the ethos of Brahminic, Buddhist and Hindu periods.

Ambedkar's recovery of a Buddhist past was premised as a contrast to Brahmanism. In his scheme of history, Buddhist revolution was preceded by the Aryan decadence (?) and was followed by a Brahmanical counter-revolution. He depicted the early phase of Brahmanism where Aryan civilization comprised the worst kinds of debauchery: social, religious and spiritual. The degradation was so immense that gambling and drinking became widespread and Brahmins had fallen to the utmost depth of moral degradation (Ambedkar, 1987: 153–64). Against this was the Buddha's teaching, initially a "religious revolution," which became a social and political revolution exemplified by equal opportunity for low-caste individuals and women as well as an equal access to education. The Buddhist

"revolution" was also marked by a challenge to the infallibility of the Vedas and a revision of regnant conceptions of *kamma*. Buddha criticized the notion of an omnipresent god as a creator. Further, he rejected the idea of soul and put forth the doctrine of dependent origination (Ambedkar, 1992). Ambedkar regarded Buddha as the 'first social reformer and the greatest of them all.' Buddha's first contribution was to live a moral life and to teach a new, superior morality to a corrupt society entangled in the practices of ritual and superstition. Buddha campaigned against the Yajnyas and the practice of inequality based on caste (Gore, 1993: 294). Masses suffering under the Aryan decadence flocked to the Buddha for his superior morality and inspiring personality (Ambedkar, 1987: 165–66). By rejecting the mythical account of Buddhism, Ambedkar placed Buddha's renunciation in the material milieu of tribal conflict.

The Brahmanical forces which faded and marginalized under the Buddhist era resurrected during the counter-revolution marked by the social processes turning varna into caste. Under the reign of Pushyamitra Shunga, the state used indiscriminate coercion against Buddhism. Brahminism channelized and organized rituals, beliefs, laws, ideology and culture to eliminate the forces of Buddhism. Under these conditions of counter-revolution, the caste-system came to prominence in India through a process of warfare, subversion and conflict. Ambedkar observed the social and cultural processes facilitating the triumph of Brahmanism. He graphed the structure and processes involved in counter-revolution through a critical examination of Manusmriti. According to him, a counter-revolution established the right of Brahmins to rule and commit regicide. It elevated the status and authority of Brahmins. Manusmriti put poverty and service as the ideal for Brahmins that served as a tool to mislead masses. It also resurrected the image of the Brahmin in the eyes of non-Brahmins through laying down disciplinary prescriptions. Material benefits were ensured to Brahmins through royal patronage and scheme of rituals. Brahmins were awarded several privileges which enhanced their authority. *Varna* was turned into caste by making occupation hereditary and erecting the principle of graded inequality. Brahmanism outlawed intermarriages between different varnas, prohibited inter-dining and exhibited control over women's sexuality. The system of caste initiated an autonomous mechanism of exclusiveness and isolation through the practice of excommunication. Brahmanism as a cultural and ideological apparatus carried out a total subjugation of *shudras* and women. Ambedkar marked that ideological constructs of women's subordination have not enslaved them; rather practice of caste–patriarchy has given rise to ideologies of women's subordination (Ambedkar, 1987: 266–331). As per Ambedkar, gender and kinship came to play a central role in the evolutionary narrative of caste and state formation (Rao, 2009: 152).

Ambedkar examined the role of Brahmanism in shaping and maintaining of caste hierarchy and patriarchy. It was identified as a hegemonic and

coercive apparatus where any attempt of revolution against Brahmanism was met with either coercion or addressed through assimilative mechanisms. His reading of the *Gita* unfolded the complexity of social conflict explicating this assimilative mechanism and its ascendancy under the counter-revolution (Ambedkar, 1987: 332–80).

Ambedkarite historiography theorizes Brahmanism as a complex ideological and cultural system that offered material and cultural unity to a caste society (Ambedkar, 1979: 16). It governed material relations of production and its exchange as well as regulation of social and psychological relations within a caste-based society. Additionally, it played a key role in the surplus appropriation based on graded discrimination and exploitation. As an ideological and cultural apparatus it conformed to caste patriarchy by establishing endogamy as a structural basis to gender relations regulating women's sexuality and exchange within the limits of caste.

Therefore, this historiography sees the emergence of untouchability in the context of the conflict of Buddhism with Brahmanism. Ambedkar states that the broken men were a distinct group of Buddhist tribesmen, wandering defeated in a battle, degraded and homeless. Due to their condition of destitution, they were forced to accept the social servitude of *baluta-jajmani* relationship.[5] Their incessant struggle with Brahmanism resulted in a permanent infliction of impurity on them. Untouchability thus subordinated and stigmatized their labour, enchained them in social slavery, degraded and humiliated their entire existence. By placing genealogy of untouchability in the history of Buddhism–Brahmanism conflict, Ambedkar has assigned an insurgent subject position to Dalits.

For Ambedkar, while Brahmanism represented the coercive and hegemonic forces of varna, caste and gender subordination, Buddhism represented the egalitarian spirit of liberty, equality, and fraternity embodied through anti-caste rebellions. Brahmanism, through its devices like theology, mythology, ritualism, and metaphysics enslaved the minds of caste-subalterns. On the contrary, Buddhism's ideological offshoots provided a counter-cultural terrain to caste subaltern insurgency.

Issues were raised over Ambedkar's preference to the cultural, his emphasis on socio-cultural analysis of Buddhism and particularly his assertion that the conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism is essential to understand the dynamics of Indian history. M. S. Gore questioned the efficacy of a socio-cultural analysis over a materialist concept of history by contrasting Ambedkar's version of Buddhism with that of D. D. Kosambi. He asked,

> Should Buddhism be seen as an effort to oppose the Aryans, a movement against the ritualism and exclusiveness of Brahmins and a movement that tried to stabilize Indian society of that period, by accommodating newer ethnic groups through the enunciation of more universal ethic? Or was it to be seen, as suggested

by Kosambi (1956), as a religion that facilitated the political and social shift from tribal loyalties and tribal organization to a larger form of political organization?

(Gore, 1993: 307)

Sharad Patil also critiqued Ambedkar for his failure in understanding the crux of Buddhist revolution. He argued that the Buddha initiated the revolution by annihilating the varna and tribal slavery in ancient India (Patil, 1993: 226).

Gail Omvedt gives a careful treatment to Ambedkar's formulation of conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism. She comments that as a general principle of a socio-historical analysis of Indian society, it may be said to be necessary but insufficient. She further argues:

> To say that 'Buddhism' and 'Brahmanism' as frame work or ideologies or philosophies were a factor in history, in the sense that they were not simply reflections of socio-economic base but played an autonomous role, is one thing. To say they can serve as sole or major determining explanation is another. In the first sense, Ambedkar's formulations are correct, in the second sense, it is inadequate.
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> (Omvedt, 2003: 279)

Ambedkar did acknowledge the inadequacy in relying solely on cultural analytics by stating that

> purely religious point of view would give only a superficial picture. The questions about the way the masses and classes of India live; the social and economic terms of their associated lives and the influences of the religion constituting their condition of life are very important.
>
> (Ambedkar, 1989: 129)

Since Ambedkar was well aware about the economic basis of socio-religious phenomenon, he unpacks the structure of social dependence within which untouchables as broken men were subjugated to social servitude. Omvedt rightly identified Ambedkar's formulation of the Buddhism–Brahmanism conflict as Weberian in spirit where efforts are made to add cultural–ideological factors to explanation in terms of economic factors (Omvedt, 2003: 280).

Ambedkar has advocated the formulation of the Buddhism–Brahmanism conflict as a corrective stance (Ambedkar, 1987: 275). While reconstructing the social history of India, he had given more emphasis on the moral dimension of Buddhism; his portrayal of Brahmanism is socially complex; however, his depiction of Buddhism is full of moral nuances. Why did

Ambedkar emphasize these moral nuances of Buddhism? He offers several reasons for this preference of universal ethics of Buddhism. The major reason he cites is to demolish the collective morality of caste society. Morality of a caste society is marked by isolation and exclusiveness as it is aimed to protect group interest and thereby becomes anti-social in nature.

Such a morality of collective interests leads to a factional and disorganized society where disharmony prevails. In such a regime of morality, the individual cannot attain a consistency of mind. Such a society that rests upon the supremacy of one group over the other, irrespective of its rational or proportionate claims inevitably leads to conflict. Ambedkar argues that the only way to put a stop to conflict is sacred universal ethics. This position of Ambedkar certainly exhibits the influence of Durkheim. As Durkheim has pointed out the element of 'sacred' in religion and its role in providing a binding force for social relationships, Ambedkar espouses the universal ethics of Buddhism to restructure society on the values of liberty, equality and fraternity (Omvedt, 2003: 260).

Understanding caste as a state of mind (Ambedkar, 1979: 75) moved Ambedkar towards embracing the universal ethics of Buddhism. Psychosocial relationships between castes had been ordered under the structure of graded inequality. Each caste acquired its selfhood within the hierarchy of the ascending scale of hatred and the descending scale of contempt towards 'other' castes. It indeed had created this predicament before any attempt of anti-caste revolution. Not only caste rivalries but even seemingly progressive anti-caste uprisings had flared a psychosis of caste hatred, which ultimately regimented the caste order. This psychosis remained a major hurdle in uniting the caste subaltern against the caste order. Buddhism, which Ambedkar identified as the lineage that fought caste by propounding universal ethics based on non-enmity, is best suited for forging unity and a sense of community amongst fragmented caste subalterns.

Another feature of Ambedkar's preference to moral Buddhism also lies in the continuum of caste struggle. The pattern that runs through the history of caste struggle is ethical and moral contestation. Stigmatized caste subalterns took the recourse to a moral disposition primarily to gain self-respect and negotiate their place in caste hierarchy. Morality remained a prime ground through which stree–shudra–atishudra contested the hegemony of caste order. Prior to Ambedkar, Laxmi Narsu has propagated a moralistic version of Buddhism. Being rooted in the anti-caste tradition of struggle Ambedkar seems convinced about the path's moral strife espousing the universal ethics of Buddhism.

Exhumation of a Buddhist past with the scientific method

Ambedkar rejected the deterministic economic canons of historical materialism. The Marxist emphasis on a material basis of history has acknowledged

that only economic forces shape the course of history, which in turn denied man any role or place in the making of this history. Ambedkar categorically argued that impersonal forces (like economic, geographical etc.) are determining factors of history. However, the effect of these impersonal forces depends on man—his free will and his greatness (Ambedkar, 1989: 212). Ambedkar placed human action as central to historical causality. His commentary on Buddhist causality gives human action a major role, as important as the role of nature, in history:

> The Buddha… maintained that not only every event has a cause but the cause is the result of some human action or natural law. He rejected that man is a puppet in the hands of Time, Nature, Chance, God, Fate, and Necessity. If man is free, then every event must be the result of man's action or an act of nature.
>
> (Ambedkar, 1992: 240)

For Ambedkar, human being existed not only in the physical sense but had a spiritual super-existence through knowledge and love (Gore, 1993: 261). This freedom of reflective reasoning of human beings comprised the motive force of history.

A positivist variety of Marxism enunciates the idea of passivity of the masses before the law of history.[6] Ambedkar was challenging such fatalistic doctrines of economic determinism. He affirmed that ideas generate actions and movements of change and that man is the creator of history. He spoke of the historically determined man, that is, of a man who lives and struggles in concrete historical realities and is confronted with objective societal oppositions.

Ambedkar conceived history from the perspective of the caste subaltern. He criticized the tendency of worshiping the past and insisted that engagement with the past should not belittle the present. In his undelivered speech 'The Annihilation of Caste' he quoted Dewey in support[7] of his argument to reject the burden of history. According to it 'if the present is seen as a 'natural' outcome of the past events, it legitimizes the present, making the present seem inevitable and 'determined.' To see the present as a 'historical given' thus discourages caste subaltern from taking up any task of changing the present. Therefore, Ambedkar admitted that life begins by leaving the past behind. He observed that the revivalist tendencies of glorifying the past enslave the present. According to him, a revivalist approach makes the past a rival of the present and the present becomes more or less a futile imitation of the past. This approach represents the present as empty and the future as remote and therefore inimical to progress. While defining the relations of past and present, he stated that the study of the past becomes significant and relevant only when the past enters into the present (Ambedkar, 1979: 79).

Ambedkar's quoting of Dewey is at times misinterpreted and misused to trivialize his historical writings. Debjani Ganguli misinterprets Ambedkar's act of quoting Dewey as Ambedkar's urge to make history dead.[8] There is a rising tendency of post-modernist scholars to treat Ambedkar's history as a self-styled imaginative account deficient in scientific history. Ganguli interprets Ambedkar's negotiation with a positivist method of history and his attempt to expand the horizon of the scientific method of history to write the history of caste subaltern as tiredness with the historical method. Picking abrupt and oblique references from Ambedkar's speeches, Ganguli termed Ambedkar's history as 'mythographic.' She cites from Ambedkar's speech of conversion at Nagpur. That traced the genealogy of Mahar community to the Naga tribes. He offered an account of the Naga struggle with Aryans and their conversion to Buddhism. He claimed that Nagas were the earliest Buddhists in Indian history. Later in the era of counter-revolution Brahmanism trampled the Naga-Buddhists under the vicious code of untouchability. Ganguli juxtaposes Ambedkar's version of Nagas with Vinaya Pitaka. According to the Vinaya Pitaka tale, Naga (snake) camouflaged his true identity and was granted full ordination in *sangh*. While he was asleep, his deception came to light and the Buddha was informed. After knowing the real nature of Naga, he commanded that 'no animal should be ordained and ordained by mistake should be expelled from the community' (Ganguli, 2005: 150).

Ganguli takes up the disparity of Ambedkar's version with Buddhist literature as an act of haste at arriving at a conclusion with the help of Benedict Anderson's theory about 'amnesias' that invariably accompany all profound changes in human consciousness. Out of such oblivion, he says spring narratives. Identity in other words, is constructed out of and through the remarkable, if paradoxical dynamic of remembering and/or forgetting. According to Ganguli, Ambedkar's invocation of the Naga tale 'is an operation of dynamic forgetting or amnesia in recasting and recreating identity'. Ganguli further connects it to Ashis Nandy's analysis.

> Nandy has also written about the principled forgetfulness in the mythic engagement of oppressed with their past and present. This feature is but flip side of the willful remembering, and together they allow the subaltern to radically define their own past—what Nandy drawing on Jürgen Habermas's phrase 'future oriented memories', calls remembering in an anticipatory fashion.
>
> (Ganguli, 2005: 151)

To treat Ambedkar's historiography as mythographic is utterly erroneous. Ambedkar's exhumation of the debris of historical evidences involved generating historical facts from mythology. Ganguli makes fashionable use of Ambedkar's term exhumation but ignores what he really meant by it.

With the help of the Buddhist canonical literature, Ambedkar categorically makes distinction between womb-born Nagas and egg-born Nagas, thereby making it clear that "the word Naga has two-fold meaning: in its original sense it stood for the name of human community" (Ambedkar, 1987: 152). According to him, Deva, Asura, Yaksha, Gana, Gandharva and Kinnara were members of the human family. Ambedkar, Phule and post-Phule Dalit activists have used myths to write history. When Phule however took myths as history, his attempt was to generate a historical account. The revolutionary moment in the history of Dalit consciousness is the rise of historical consciousness. Although the mythical world has provided space for caste contestation to Dalits, it has also justified and legitimated the given world where caste subaltern was made to accept indelibility of the hierarchical nature of caste. And contrary to it, history adept with a scientific mode of causality assured a possibility of change and thus empowered Dalits to take up the terminal fight against the caste system.

Although Ambedkar was trying to break the cage of the positivist method to write the history of the caste subaltern, he swore complete allegiance to the scientific method. His attempt was to expand the horizon of the historical method and to enlarge the terrain of historical evidences to bridge the gap of history. He did not need to undertake the operation of forgetfulness or amnesia. But he certainly took recourse to reasoned arguments. His history was not an attempt of memorializing the past, evoking either a mythical narrative or self-styled imaginative narrative of the past but a profound reasoned argument of history set in the scientific structure of the historical method.

Ambedkar's historicism[9]

Change or impermanence in history is central to Ambedkar's historical theory. He stated that 'nothing is fixed, nothing eternal, nothing sanatan; that everything changes. Change is the law of life for the individual as well as for society' (Ambedkar, 1979: 79–80). He rejected the colonial theory of stagnation in Indian history and argued vehemently in favour of historical change. Ambedkar believed that the theory of impermanence of the individual and society gives space to progress and evolution in history (Ambedkar, 1992: 241). He accepted social evolution as the governing principle of history.

Although Ambedkar conceived historical progression in evolutionary frame, he rejected the principle of inevitability in the historical progression (Ambedkar, 2007: 6). His historicism[10] is informed by Buddhism. He argued that Buddha's religion is the result of inquiry and investigation into the conditions of human life and understanding of human instincts and dispositions. For Ambedkar, historical perspectives are informed by an anthropocentric vision of reality. He wanted to study social forces of

history and its impact on human instincts and dispositions. Rejecting any deterministic implications of history, he believed that social and individual freedoms are the motor forces of history (Rodrigues, 1998).

Every contemporary reality always contained constituents of historical past in it. Hence historical inquiry becomes essential for any attempt of comprehension of the reality. To understand contemporary social reality instilled by the institutionalization of caste, untouchability, women's servitude and caste-class domination, Ambedkar embarked on the project of historical inquiry. His attempt was to unravel the casual factors in the growth of institution of caste and untouchability; and to identify the patterns in the process of historical change in India. His historical inquiry was passionately engaged in building the theory of revolutionary praxis leading towards caste annihilation.

This historicist enterprise has provided Ambedkar with a theoretical vantage point of a critique of all pertinent ideologies (which relates ideas, beliefs and values) of caste-patriarchy and capitalism. His history offered a shattering critique of Brahmanism which as an ideological and cultural system enslaved the minds of caste–gender subalterns. He explained coercive and exploitative aspects of Brahmanism and condemned them as inhuman and immoral. He emphatically narrated an account of a cultural and moral battle against Brahmanism conceived under an alternative-cultural ideology of Buddhism.

History has been assigned a twofold ideological purpose: one, to conceive legitimacy for changing the present, and two, to maintain it in its existing form indefinably.[11] Ambedkar was well aware about these twofold purposes. He was against every version of a status-quoist history; he fervently rejected colonial and nationalist historiography because of their status-quoist version of the reality built on a coherent interpretation of history conveniently plotted through the continuities of the past. Colonial historians projected the history of India as monolithic 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' pasts. By rejecting monolithic portrayals of ancient Hindu and medieval Muslim pasts, Ambedkar narrated the history of India as the fearsome socio-cultural conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism. He portrayed history not as linear and homogeneous but having ideological-cultural ruptures manifested through three stages of ancient Indian history: Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism. He narrated the history of India as an endless caste struggle ranging from ancient to medieval period and thus defied the classification of the imagined homogeneity of the Muslim period.

By portraying the glorious Hindu past as being interrupted by a corrupt rule of Muslim kings, nationalist historiography placed the Vedic-Brahmanical tradition central to India and thus masked social and cultural contradictions under the picture of unity in diversity of the Indian nation. They depicted Brahmanical culture as the uniting force of the Indian nation. Ambedkar demolished this very version of nationalist historiography

by unleashing a severe onslaught on every argument reflected in contemporary politics based on the dominant nationalist version of history (Gore, 1993). He argued that India has not yet achieved its nationhood; rather it is a nation in the making. Only the anti-caste revolution will bring a nationalist upsurge in India. He built his vision of alternative nationalism based on anti-caste traditions, particularly of Buddhism (Bagade, 1998). Ambedkar's historiography remains contentious. However, he has engaged in multilayered debates with a number of national and colonial nationalist historians.

Ambedkar's critical commitment to the ideologies of liberalism, socialism and Buddhism and his spirited confrontation with colonial and nationalist historiography set up a new kind of historical inquiry. His inquiries into the origin and growth of the institution of caste and untouchability have not only unfolded the structures, processes, historical changes and their continuums in contemporary caste society but has also brought out conflicting social forces that shaped these institutions. His historicist venture offers the most profound critique of caste, patriarchy and untouchability by arguing that caste and untouchability are against reason, humanity and its progress. Thus, his history sets up the revolutionary transformative agenda of caste annihilation which Omvedt has characterized as a democratic revolution.

Ambedkar affirmed that caste was not created by preaching so it cannot be abolished by preaching, his exercise was to prove the falsity of the caste system (Ambedkar, 1979: 78). His project of history writing had a direct bearing on steering the struggle against caste. His quest was to employ history as an ideological tool allowing subaltern castes to actualize new possibilities to fight against caste. A range of material and cultural struggles emerged from the insights drawn from his history pivoting the organization and politicization of the caste-subaltern. His investigations revealed ideological foundations of anti-caste struggles which helped the caste subaltern to acquire their insurgent subject position. His search for new possibilities of social existence which will lead to a reign of freedom away from caste, class exploitation and domination was based on a historical analysis. This indeed convinced him that the eradication of caste required repudiation of Hindu religion and the adoption of an alternative religion of Buddhism.

Ambedkar launched a struggle against caste, class and patriarchy. He wanted an alliance of all subaltern castes and classes. He declared war against Brahmanism and capitalism. Caste exploitation and oppression was giving scope to struggles based on caste identities. Ambedkar was aware of the fact that caste identities are opposed to the lower caste solidarity; he organized anti-caste struggle caste-groups as a unit of organization like Dalits, non-Brahmins etc. He rejected the narrative of caste histories and wrote history as the history of untouchables and shudras. He rejected the racial basis of caste and untouchability and invoked the unity within oppressed castes as economically exploited, socially oppressed and politically

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dominated caste groups who share a common history and culture in fighting a relentless battle against caste. In an anti-caste democratic revolution, he conceived that Dalits will work as a vanguard caste-group and other oppressed shudra and atishudra castes, peasant castes and working class will assist in the revolution. His depiction of Indian history as a history of caste struggle provided the thread of cultural and social unity to all caste-subalterns. His history assigned emancipatory identities invoked from the anti-caste traditions like Buddhism which provided universal ethics of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Notes

1 Marxists first of all made a distinction between the basic economic structure of any society, constituted by the condition of production, taken as a whole and the superstructure of laws, institution, religion and ideas. The primacy to economic structures of (imagined) class relations of production claimed that the motor for the historical progression is provided by the 'class struggle.' The emphasis on economic structure has created a variation of Marxism, which offered a mechanical interpretation of history, conforming economic determinism. Ambedkar stood against this Marxist variety subscribing itself to rigid economism.

2 Ambedkar has brought to notice that cultural boundaries of nation proved stronger than the notion of economic unity of proletariat class (Khairmode, 1998: 92).

3

> The Buddha looked upon the suffering of his age as a sickness, a disease. In suggesting remedy, he even wanted to proceed according to the principle of medical science of his times. However, he announced himself as tathagata, we do not expect him to have diagnosed the real social roots of the disease, i.e. to have analyzed the tremendous historic transformations going on before his eyes: why this stupendous progress in the productive technique was bringing with it the most awful human miseries and moral degradations. Historically speaking, what was left for him was to transform the real problem into an ideal one, to interpret objective phenomenon in subjective terms; in short to produce 'a reversed world consciousness'. The result was the transformation of the mass misery of the age into metaphysics of misery. Early Buddhism thus, became the most perfect illusion of the epoch …..Every epoch has its false consciousness which, in fact, becomes the major illusion of the epoch. The false consciousness underlying early Buddhism became the ideology—the illusion par excellence—of the age of Buddha. It is this point of view, that we propose to review the four Arya Satya as well as pratitya samutpad.
>
> (Chattopadhyaya, 1992: 500)

4 Ambedkar as quoted in (Omvedt, 1994: 228).

5 Ambedkar categorically marked out the social servitude of untouchables inbuilt in baluta relations. Untouchability as a condition of existence doomed Mahars to be dependent on baluta watan. The subservience of the Mahar caste was structured by three ways: (1) by placing patronizing authority to (Savarna) castes who gave remuneration to Mahars for their labour and Mahars had to accept it as obligation, (2) by giving insufficient, meager Baluta payment far

below than needed for survival, (3) by not allowing them to take up alternative sources of livelihood. He points out that untouchable is dependent upon the touchable for earning his livelihood as well as for the purchases of the necessities of life. The total dependence of untouchable made Mahars subservient to the village community (Ambedkar, 1989: 266–7).

6 The positivist variety of Marxism is seen in the dominant notion of economic determinism reflected in the writings of Marxist thinkers like Bukharin who argued that men's will is not free. However, men supposedly enjoy choices that are produced under the material conditions constituting them.

7 Dewey says:

> An individual can live only in the present. The present is not just something, which comes after the past: much less something produced by it. It is what life is leaving the past behind it. The study of past products will not help us to understand the present a knowledge of past and its heritage is of great significance when it enters into the present but not otherwise. And the mistake of making the records and remains of the past the main material of education is that if tends to make the past rival of present and the present a more or less futile imitation of past.
>
> (Ambedkar, 1979: 79)

8 Ganguli writes that in his speech on the *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar 'donned the mantle of classic revolutionary who wanted the past as well and truly dead. He desired nothing more than disjunction between the past and Hindu Brahmanical India and the present India as a democratic republic. This was the Ambedkar who was the student of John Dewey endorsed the objectivity and empiricism of social science analysis of caste and undertook not a few such analysis himself' (Ganguli, 2005: 141–42).

9 Historicism seems to have three meanings: for most historians it is a primary historical act of perceiving historical periods in their own terms rather than imposed by historian; second and relatedly, it means accepting that every historical period has its own standards through which it determined what was trustworthy knowledge and warranted truth; third that there are inclusive, demonstrable, and determining patterns in the process of historical change. (Munslow, 2000: 130). According to Karl Popper, historicism is a dangerous belief in historical determinism and the existence of a universal pattern in the historical process. And now in a postmodern or hermeneutic fashion, it is understood by reorganizing that the-past-is-history and is used to understand the present (Munslow, 2000: 130–2).

10 Historicism is a dangerous belief in historical determinism and the existence of a universal pattern in the historical process. And now in a postmodern or hermeneutic fashion it is understood as by reorganizing that the-past-is-history and is used to understand the present. Ambedkar takes departure from these notions of historicism.

11 Hayden White writes,

> The very claim to have discerned some kind of formal coherence in the historical record brings with it theories of the nature of historical world and of historical knowledge itself which have ideological implications for attempt to understand the present however 'the present' is defined. To put it another way, the very claim to have distinguished a past from the present world of social thought and praxis, and to have determined the formal coherence of the past world, implies a conception of the form of the knowledge of the present world.
>
> (Quoted in Guha, 1989: 215)

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10

GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR ON CASTE

Valerian Rodrigues

Ambedkar wrote extensively on caste and on issues closely bound with the caste question. The same can be said about Mahatma Gandhi too. This interest to engage with concerns related to the caste question and keeping it in the forefront of the struggle for a free India is one of the bonds they shared in common among others. This chapter argues that while there were basic differences between them on this issue, they should not occlude the shared concern. For both of them the right understanding of the caste question was central to the struggle for equality and swaraj, while other significant thinkers of the nationalist lore tended to lay priority on class relations or colonial domination or national oppression as key concerns of political freedom.[1] By drawing attention to the problematics of caste, both of them turned their gaze inward, and argued that the nationalist project would be still-born without national self-reflectivity and internal reforms.

Ambedkar's earliest major essay, "Caste in India" (Ambedkar 1978a) attempts to directly engage with the anthropological discourse on caste. The later writings on caste related it to his central political concerns such as his ideas of equality, nation, democracy, marginalization, discrimination, rights, ethical basis of public life, and so on, that propose an alternative vision of politics in a post-colonial society. While the former raise puzzles in the existing body of literature, the latter interrogate the unfolding politics in India. *The Annihilation of Caste* is the inaugural moment of this new road map. In this great text he reads the implications of caste for the national project in India and makes a case to do away with it. There are however certain concerns common across this shift: There is an understated political position in *Castes in India* linking it to caste patriarchy, and *Annihilation* develops the argument that a democratic republic is not feasible in India without annihilating caste and its encompassing principle, varna. Ambedkar returns to this argument again and again in subsequent texts to demonstrate that caste and varna are antithetical to the idea of democracy and even nationalism. His last major work *The Buddha and His Dhamma* is a call to found the republic on the basis of *Dhamma* rather than *Dharma*, the latter being inevitably caught, according to him, in claims and practices of caste.[2]

The paradoxical nature of the caste system: social closures within cultural homogeneity

The essay "*Castes in India*" basically dwelt on what Ambedkar construed to be the paradox between the shared culture of India on one hand and social closure embodied in the caste system on the other. On reviewing the work of other scholars on the issue, he hypothesizes that in India numerous ethnic groups came to be commingled and there were no distinct races as in the USA.[3] The different ethnic groups in India "through constant contact and mutual intercourse….evolved a common culture that superseded their distinctive cultures"(Ambedkar 1978a, 6). Ambedkar makes this argument exactly at a point of time when colonial ethnology was working overtime to demonstrate the fragmentariness of India, particularly highlighting caste.[4] Asserting the cultural homogeneity of India, Ambedkar states, "I venture to say that there is no country that can rival the Indian Peninsula with respect to the unity of its culture"(Ambedkar 1978a, 6). He argues that, unlike the commonly held beliefs regarding caste and endogamy, exogamy is a universal feature in India and therefore not merely marriage within 'sapindas' (blood kins) is forbidden but even among 'sagotras' (common lineage). The puzzle is the compartmentalization of thick cultural affinities "into fixed and definite units" of castes, characterized by endogamy. He conjectures that caste must have arisen in India long after the diverse races had commingled.[5] According to him, the existing theories of caste[6] offer inadequate and deeply unsatisfactory explanation to this paradox: What we find in India is the superimposition of endogamy over exogamy. Through endogamy a homogeneous culture is parcelled out into tightly bound social units called castes.

According to him, endogamy to be viable requires 'numerical equality' between the sexes within a group and a large disparity between them is likely to make the system non-viable. The problem that such groups confront is how to solve the problem of numerical disparity 'between marriageable units of the two sexes', i.e., the problem of the 'surplus man' and 'surplus woman'. The problem of the surplus woman in India was sought to be taken care of by sati, i.e. burning a woman 'on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband' and thus getting rid of her, although resort to such stratagem is extremely difficult and could not be universally enforced. But if a widow is left free in the group, she might prove dangerous to the very name of the group or prove a challenge to other women. Therefore, she is cordoned off by compulsory widowhood, while degrading her at the same time to offset her potential allure. Sati, bar on widow remarriage, and demeaning confinement of a widow are all related to endogamy and consequently to caste.

However, men cannot be handled in this particular way, due to their social dominance and physical prowess. Burning him is not a solution

'because he is a man' and, if it is done, a 'sturdy soul will be lost to the group'. Many a widower may not cherish the prospect of remaining single, and if such a surplus man remains within the group, he might prove a danger to the morals of the group. It is therefore in the interest of the group to keep him *'Grahasta'*. In this case the surplus man can be provided a wife only by recruiting one from lower age-groups. Child-marriage is its inevitable outcome. Such an institutionalization of gender relations demanded that a man or woman should not feel affection for anyone other than the one with whom he or she is united. Affections were impersonally disposed. It is the system that guards and directs affections and feelings. It is marriage that begets love rather than vice-versa.

But how did a social practice such as endogamy come to be institutionalized through the caste system? For the purpose Ambedkar assumes that division of labour in a society begets classes beyond the early stages of evolution of mankind. However, the basis of such classes could differ: It could be economic, intellectual or social. In India, the division of labour assumed the caste form. Caste and class are closely entwined: *'A Caste is an Enclosed Class'* (Ambedkar 1978a, 1, 15). Social norms assigned division of labour to a system made of classes. The class that raised the enclosure around itself first could be Brahmins, since most customs related to gender relations in India were prevalent among them. But since Brahmins held the highest place in the social hierarchy the others imitated them: 'their prevalence in non-Brahmin castes is derivative of their observance (and) is neither strict nor complete' (Ibid). Brahmins therefore could be said as 'the originators of this 'unnatural institution' (Ibid).

Ambedkar does not think that any lawgiver could have created the institution of caste and, given its atrocious character, if he was to do so he 'would not have outlived this law' (Ibid, 16). Similarly imposing the caste system on non-Brahmins by Brahmins would have been impossible. Manu merely philosophized about it, codified existing caste rules and preached caste Dharma. In other words, Manu provided the rule-book, introducing his own caste-prejudices, for widely prevalent social practices.

The earliest known classes among Hindus were Brahmins, the priestly class; Kshatriyas, the military class; Vaishyas or the merchant class; and Shudras, the artisan and menial class. But this class system was essentially open-ended, classes changing their personnel, depending upon their attributes.[7] From such classes the transition to caste took place in a specific way: *"Some closed the door: Others found it closed to them"* (Ibid, 18). Once it was adopted by Brahmins, others also tended to imitate it due to the prestige the former commanded among the rest. "It is the 'the infection of imitation' that caught all these sub-divisions on their onward march of differentiation and turned them into castes"(Ibid, 18).[8] Ambedkar uses Gabriel Tarde's laws of imitation to illustrate it (Ibid, 19)[9] Brahmins as superior were the sources of imitation and they influenced 'numerous and daily

relations with other members. Those members who were nearest to the Brahmins imitated most of the aspects; however, those at a distance were not sufficiently influenced by them, even though they could not remain immune to such influence.

Caste is not an autonomous unit. Castes are bound in a system and its inexorable logic: "*Caste in the singular number is an unreality. Castes exist only in the plural number.* There is no such a thing as caste: There are always *castes*" (Ibid, 20). Once a group encloses itself, others have no chance but to enclose themselves. Any innovation that violates caste norms is likely to be spurned and such castes members would be thrown out from a caste to become another caste.

Ambedkar thought that caste operates in a milieu where there is a basic agreement across the society regarding a set of social codes. He repeats this argument in *Annihilation* where he writes that there is "similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts' (Ambedkar 1978b, 51) across India and the functioning of the caste system would not have been possible without it. At this stage, it is important to note the distinction that Ambedkar makes between endogamy among the upper castes and the lower castes. The injunctions of caste call for compliance among Brahmins and castes closest to them, while they are much more derivative/imitative as we go down the ladder. The second distinction is with respect to a social practice and a norm that links itself to the practice. Manu constructs a practice into a norm and arrests the possibility of the practice and severely limits the incidence of rebellion against the practice. The norm universalizes what was a spatially and temporarily confined practice. It is in this context that we need to understand Ambedkar's sustained vehemence against Manu and what he regards as the ideology of the varna–dharma system.[10]

It is important to stress the political significance that this understanding of caste had on Ambedkar. For the purpose we need to bear in mind the dominant concerns of the early two decades of the 20th century with its divisions on 'consent bill', social reforms and prioritization of political movement over social reforms. Against social reformers, who stressed the need for social reforms alongside political reforms, Ambedkar argued that it is not enough to strive after the abolition of sati, widow-marriage and ban on child marriage. All these social evils were closely bound with caste. Caste itself therefore has to be targeted. However, social reformers generally hailing from Brahmins showed little reflectivity on this count. Further, there was little that is of a religious character in caste although it is legitimized by attributing to it such religious resources. Against the extremists, who stressed on political reforms at the exclusion of social reforms, he argued that by attacking the caste system, pursuit of the national cause was not going to be weakened but would become stronger and beget the retrieval/rediscovery of a shared culture. Against colonial ethnology[11] he suggested that caste is neither basic nor central to the organization of wider social

relations in India but a positive hindrance. Against the arrogance of the Brahmin elite leading the national movement, his advice was physician heal thyself—the divisive markers are much more their doing rather than that of the common people. By making caste a 'derivative' institution among the non-Brahmin masses, he alludes to a strong shared bond across them compared with that between non-Brahmins and Brahmins, an observation central to Jyotirao Phule's oeuvre. Caste as endogamy subjects a woman to a twofold marginality vis-à-vis a man: On the one hand a woman confronts constantly the threat of sati or widowhood, and the elimination and degradation they imply, and secondly even a young girl is constantly faced with the prospect of marrying a much older man, with little possibility of intimacy between them. While caste patriarchy bears heavily on women of upper castes, its import and significance among lower castes is a matter of inquiry rather than a simple attribution. 'The infection of imitation' in a caste-bound society binds a woman into subjection while men are given dominion over them.

The caste system and democratic political community

Ambedkar wrote *Annihilation of Caste* 20 years after 'Castes in India' and wanted to 'recast' the former by incorporating the latter in a subsequent edition, but did not do so due to paucity of time.[12] Ambedkar's central argument in this text is that social reforms in India have not gone far enough. Hinduism cannot be reformed without annihilating caste. However, annihilation of caste cannot be done unless the principles justifying caste are rejected. The sacred scriptures themselves justify caste practices widespread in the name of Hinduism. These principles have been embodied in the scriptures and Hindus believe that their caste practices have religious sanction justifying them. Therefore, the sacred scriptures themselves have to be rejected. It is not justified to separate scriptures from social practices.

According to Ambedkar, there were two political strands pursuing the national-democratic project in India: political reformers and socialists. The former, had effectively marginalized, and ignored the concerns of the social reformers,[13] and were spearheading the cause of freedom from colonial domination. It was done by trivializing the concerns of the social reform platform, accompanied by much sloganeering and slanderous attacks. Taking his own stance on the issue he underscored the continued validity of social reforms in India, if it has to strive to be an independent political community and illustrated it by citing the condition of untouchables and the continued caste atrocities in different parts of the country. How can India justifiably seek independence when large masses were subject to the thraldom of the caste system? Even if India succeeded in securing independence

from Britain, the subjection of people to caste authority would persist. If this is the case why did the social reformers simply cave in? Ambedkar thought that social reformers who primarily hailed from upper castes had a limited agenda such as the abolition of child marriage, sati and widow remarriage issues pertaining to high caste Hindu families. They did not call for the 'reform of Hindu society,' in the sense of the 'break-up of the caste system', by "agitating for the abolition of caste or had the courage to agitate for it" (Ambedkar 1978b, 42). They advanced highly confined and superficial demands. They did not include the large masses caught in the thraldom of the caste system in their political imagination.

How about the socialists?[14] Ambedkar felt that they tend to emphasize on economic factors as the only or decisive source of power. They downplay or ignore the significance of status and religion in pursuing or restraining choices, and thereby the nature and range of freedom available to a person. This was demonstrably true in India. In India bonding on class-lines can hardly be contemplated without social reform. "Men will not join in a revolution for the equalization of property unless they know that after the revolution is achieved, they will be treated equally and there would be no discrimination of caste and creed" (Ambedkar 1978b, 46). In fact, the proletariat cannot even 'present a united front' for the purpose of revolutionary transformation unless the differential markers of class are taken into account. Caste is the 'monster' to be handled.[15]

Anatomy of caste and human dignity

How does caste affect social relations? Why is it deplorable so as to deserve 'annihilation'? Ambedkar thought that the caste system is not merely a division of labour but a division of labourers (ascribed occupations). Further, such divisions are graded, one over the other and vice-versa. While division of labour is unavoidable, division of labourers into watertight compartments militates against natural aptitude, violates the principle of fostering social and individual efficiency by nurturing individual capacities, and ignores the choice of the persons concerned. Caste displays an insensitivity to change and transformation and the economic and livelihood consequences that flow therefrom. It reduces human beings to callings that do not hold any appeal to them. It begets a sense of degradation and aversion on account of the slight and stigma associated with certain occupations. In the latter case, there is little engagement of the labourer with the kind of work that he does, his heart and soul is not in it and his natural capacities and powers are not in tune with social rules. 'Such callings constantly provoke one to aversion, ill-will and the desire to evade.....because of the blighting effect which they produce upon those who follow them owing to the slight and stigma cast upon

them' (Ambedkar 1978b, 48). If men's hearts and minds are not in their work how can such a system be efficient? Economically caste is harmful because it subordinates "man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules" (Ibid).

Ambedkar did not think that the caste system had any racial basis, and even if it did, it did not explain why inter-caste marriages were forbidden. He felt that racial theories talked a lot of nonsense in the name of heredity and eugenics. He repeats his argument made in "Castes in India": "Caste system does not demarcate racial division. Caste system is a social division of people of the same race" (Ibid, 49). The eugenics argument did not apply to caste divide; if caste divisions were racial divisions, then how to explain prohibition to marry across sub-castes? If it is race then why prevent inter-dining? If it is eugenic, then how to explain the poor quality of Hindus, in a physical sense? To quote him, "To hold that distinctions of castes are really distinctions of race and to treat different castes as though they were so many different races is a gross perversion of facts" (Ibid, 48). Therefore, the bar against inter marrying and inter dining for reasons of purity of race or blood had little scientific basis. Through a process of elimination, he was suggesting an explanation that he had advanced in "Castes in India."

Impact of caste on Hindus

Ambedkar thought that the caste system has done great harm to Hinduism. On account of it, there was nothing such as a Hindu community as an encompassing bond. Caste is a self-conscious unit and often does not even recognize that it is integrally bound with other castes. Therefore, there is no consciousness 'of kind' among Hindus. Hindu consciousness is primarily consciousness of caste. From the fact that certain ways of life are shared among Hindus one cannot conclude that they constitute a society. The mere presence of certain habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts are not enough to constitute men into society. According to Ambedkar, "Men constitute a society because they have things which they possess in common…and the only way by which they can come to possess things in common with one another, is by being in communication with one another" (Ibid, 51). It is in the appreciation and acknowledgement of the shared-common and participation in common activity that gives rise to unity. Through associated activity a man feels his success as the success of his associates and his failure as the failure of his associates. The conclusion for him was obvious, "the caste system prevents common activity, and by preventing common activity, it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being" (Ibid). Unlike in 'Castes in India,' there is much less confidence in him now that a shared culture can be retrieved without consciously forging such bonding.

Caste system breeds an antisocial spirit and hatred is inbuilt into it. One's own caste is given a noble birth and others are ascribed an ignoble origin. A caste attempts to reproduce its interest and pits those interests in opposition to other castes as if they are different nations. It makes Hindus 'many warring groups each living for itself and its selfish ideal.' He also thinks that castes treasure strong memories of caste oppression, thereby preventing solidarity and bonding.[16] The obsession of the Hindus with caste does not make them extend even humanitarian considerations to others as demonstrated by their inability to reach out to the aborigines, and they entertain no remorse or repentance in this regard. Leaving them in their primitive conditions, he felt, Hindus had harboured in their midst a potential time-bomb that could spell doom. Higher-caste Hindus have also done precious little to enable lower castes to rise to their cultural level. He felt that generally Hindus have refused to share their intellectual and social inheritance with those who were ready and willing to participate in it and it expressed a meanness that was worse than cruelty.

Ambedkar thought that conversion was impossible within Hinduism because the convert did not find a place in the social life of the community. Membership of caste is not open; it is a closed corporation. Therefore, "*Shuddi* will be both a folly and a futility" (Ambedkar 1978b, 55). The attempt of the Arya Samaj at *Sanghatan* did not have any impact because the *Sanghatan* invariably would be very weak and thin. Hindus will not come to the help of other Hindus qua Hindus. The associated mode of life of the Hindus, he felt, did not produce a fellow feeling as it did among Sikhs and Muslims. Such an associated feeling is a social cement. The celebrated tolerance of the Hindus was debunked by Ambedkar in no uncertain words,

> The Hindus claim to be very tolerant people. In my opinion this is a mistake. On many occasions they can be intolerant and if on some occasions they are tolerant, that is because they are too weak to oppose or too indifferent to oppose.
>
> (Ibid, 55)

The indifference that Hindus show towards the wronged and the oppressed, he felt, was primarily an outcome of the caste system. A good cause did not bring them together.

He felt that reform and self-evaluation became possible if the group one belonged to is deferential towards such initiatives. Caste acts as the authority of excommunication and individual Hindus have no courage to violate caste injunctions. This is because an individual member cannot do without society and caste, which indicates society has sought his complete conformity to its code in letter and spirit. A caste can therefore make the life of a reformer hell. Caste shuns reform.

With caste, Hindus cannot think of forging a cohesive public domain with which they would identify themselves against odds. Ambedkar recites a litany of factors that come in the way:

> Caste has killed the public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response….there is no appreciation of virtue but only when the man is a fellow caste man…my caste man, right or wrong; my caste man, good or bad.
>
> (Ibid, 56–57)

Due to the prevalence of caste, the national-democratic project in India is either going to be still-born or there is going to be a disjuncture between claims and practices. The tall claims made by different political actors have little to commend for them unless they dared to take caste head-on.

Irreconcilability between caste and democracy

A democratic ideal is in contradiction to a caste society. Ambedkar states this ideal as follows:

> An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in part to other parts. In an ideal society, there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points or contacts with other modes of association. In other words there must be so-cial endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy….It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.
>
> (Ibid, 57)[17]

Against such an ideal caste society fixes people into slots, laying boundaries for their outreach. Prohibitions, commands and taboos ensure that one casts his vision, if there is one possible, to the limits of one's own caste. The possibility of interacting and learning from others comes to be highly confined. The ideal of democracy or fraternity—a concept that he employs interchangeably—is informed by liberty and equality. Liberty is not merely the absence of restraint but "an effective and competent use of a person's powers" (Ibid). The latter would invariably involve freedom to choose one's profession. But a caste society is like a slave society, where human beings are "forced to accept from others the purposes which control their conduct" (Ibid). He feels that equality values a person's worth, his endeavour

and exercise of his agency, rather than mere birth. In this sense equality marks off a human being from the non-human world. It instils a sense of responsibility and accountability. It is also conducive to utility, since it is "good for the social body to get the most out of its members by making them equal as far as possible at the very start of the race" (Ibid, 58). Fairness also demands that people be regarded as equal and "those individuals in whose favour there is also birth, education, family, business connections and inherited wealth" do not corner the social produce. Only by being equally considered one can give "as much incentive as possible to the full development of everyone's powers" (Ibid).

Ambedkar thought that certain attempt at shoring up Hindu identity may not enhance fraternal ties. He critiques that the Arya Samaj attempts to forge a Hindu identity by taking recourse to *Shuddi* (purificatory rituals) while upholding the doctrine of *Chaturvarnya*. If *Chaturvarnya* is based upon worth, there is no need to ascribe labels to people such as brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra. Naming in a cultural context is not an innocent activity but begets processes that are constitutive.[18] He feels that the continuation of the labels will invariably reproduce the structures of meanings associated with it.

Apart from meanings associated, he feels that *Chaturvarnya*, as employed by the Arya Samaj or by Gandhi, is impracticable, harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure. One of the big difficulties is reducing innumerable castes into the system of *Chaturvarnya*. How to make people occupying a status vacate it for worth? How to compel people to recognize the worth of someone of a lower status? He feels that the *Chaturvarnya* scheme is close to that of Plato's *Republic* and the criticism to which Plato's doctrines of social classes is subject to is also the criticism that must apply to the system of *Chaturvarnya*. Such a system lumps together people into sharply marked off classes without conceding, "the uniqueness of every individual, of his incommensurability with others, of each individual forming a class of his own, of the infinite diversity of active tendencies and combination of tendencies of which an individual is capable" (Ibid, 60). It is not possible to pigeonhole people into classes of the kind that the *Chaturvarnya* doctrine has proposed. It is not possible to reproduce the *Chaturvarnya* system as people are free and the system has to be enforced by a law. Without a penal sanction the system is unlikely to endure for long. The *Chaturvarnya* system has no place for women. If women are classified according to the status of their husbands then, the principle of worth is violated. If it is a nominal categorization, then women are not taken seriously.

Even if it is practicable, *chaturavarnya* is a vicious system. Although it is defended on grounds of mutual support, it does not have built-in-accountability when other people fail to pursue their side of division of labour. Who then will defend the category left out? "Why make one person

depend upon another in the matter of his vital needs?" Such a system came down heavily on the lowest rung; the Shudra bore all the brunt. One of the main reasons why there has been no revolution in India has been on account of the disarming of the shudra. In India the weak have been made helpless against exploitation. Although in the West there was widespread social violence, the poor were not wholly deprived of physical, political and moral claims. This has not been the case in India. The *Chaturvarnya* system 'deadens, paralyses and cripples the people' (Ibid, 63). There is little evidence to suggest that the system does away or contains strife. There is enough in the literature to suggest that rivalry and enmity between the different varnas was endemic to the system: there was incessant fight between the brahmins and the kshatriyas.[19]

Ambedkar thought that Hindus cannot take comfort by citing the continued existence of caste among Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. In his view caste among non-Hindus is fundamentally different form caste among Hindus. Among non-Hindus there are several organic filaments that unite them. What is to be noted in this context is not merely the existence of groups among communities, which would always be there. The question to be asked is,

> How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared by the groups? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of associations? Are the forces that separate groups and classes more numerous than the forces that unite? What social significance is attached to the group life? Is exclusiveness a matter of custom and convenience or is it a matter of religion?
>
> (Ambedkar 1978b, 64)

Among other communities there are the 'organic filaments' that bind groups together but there is no integrating force among Hindus. The social significance of caste among non-Hindus is different from that among Hindus. Among the former caste is not the primary identity. This is not so among the Hindus. Besides, caste among non-Hindus has no religious sanction. It is not a sacred institution. Hindus consider caste institution as sacred. They regard it as religion. The survival of Hindus cannot be an argument for the perpetuation of caste. The question is not whether a community lives or dies: the questions are on what plane does it live and what is the quality of its survival. There is a big difference 'between merely living and living worthily' (Ibid, 66).

Ambedkar's magisterial answer from such a moral standpoint is, "You cannot build anything on the foundations of caste. You cannot build up a nation, you cannot build up a morality. Anything that you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole" (Ibid).

Rescuing Hinduism from caste

If caste is deplorable and led to the degeneration of Hinduism, how to rescue the latter from the former? Should it abolish sub-castes? (as Arya Samaj did). Such a position assumes that there is a great deal of commonality across sub-castes to forge a common unity. This is not the case. Ambedkar feels that the destruction of caste is difficult because of the internal gradation. The scaling of caste makes it impossible to organize a common front against the caste system. "All are slaves of the caste system but all the slaves are not equal in status" (Ibid, 72). Therefore there cannot be a general mobilization of Hindus. Besides, the abolition of sub-castes does not necessarily lead to the abolition of caste system. Inter-dining, even where it has been pursued as a social practice to forge unity, has not solved the problem of caste. How about inter-caste marriage? But Hindus have been vehemently opposed to it. According to Ambedkar, the known resistance to these social practices arises because they are an affront to certain deeply held beliefs:

> inter-dining and inter-marriage are repugnant to the beliefs and dogmas which the Hindus regard as sacred… Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire….Caste is a notion, it is a state of the mind. The destruction of caste does not therefore mean the destruction of a physical barrier. It means a notional change.
>
> <div align="right">(Ibid, 68)</div>

Hindus do not regard caste and its practices as deplorable. They 'observe caste because they are deeply religious" (Ibid).

If Hinduism is to be rescued from caste then those sources which engender the belief that it is religious have to be destroyed. For Ambedkar, it is the *shastras*, the texts and the tradition that they sustain, which are the sources that inculcate the belief that caste is a deserving ideal. "If this is correct, then obviously the enemy, that you must grapple with, is not the people who observe caste, but the *shastras* which teach them this religion of caste" (Ibid). 'The real remedy' for the caste ailment lies in the destruction of the sanctity of the shastras.

> Make every man and woman free from the thraldom of the shastras, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the shastras, and he or she will inter dine or intermarry. It is not merely that shastras be discarded but their authority should be denied. What is wrong with the Hindus is their religion.
>
> <div align="right">(Ibid, 68–69)</div>

Ambedkar thinks that caste is the natural outcome of certain religious beliefs that have the sanction of the shastras and therefore any attack on caste is an attack on fundamental religious notions. It makes an assault on caste a very difficult task. Brahmins do not entertain annihilation of caste even though they are in the forefront of political reforms. They are unlikely to be social reformers involving caste since their very authority springs from the latter. In Ambedkar's view, there is not much of a difference between secular brahmins and priestly brahmins in this regard. You cannot argue the case against caste, or rally against it through social movements. The scriptures do not uphold reason as authority. They uphold the three-fold authority; *shruti*, *smritis*, *sadachar/sistachar*, and dharma to conform to them.

The *shastras* "have smothered reflective thought" and have recommended compromise when caste injunctions cannot be followed. By depriving the reformer from reason and morality as his weapons, he lies protection-less at the mercy of the scriptures. Therefore, there is no alternative but to "destroy the religion of the *shrutis* and *smritis*. Nothing else will avail" (Ibid, 75). Further, Hindu religion does not distinguish between principles and rules. It is a multitude of commands and prohibitions. A principle is an appeal to reason suggesting a course of action deserving compliance freely given. A principle respects free and responsible agency. Rules prescribe a specific course of action. They are invested with finality and fixity. Hinduism is not a set of spiritual principles universal and applicable to all set of peoples. Under it there is no loyalty to ideals but only conformity to commands. It does not take into consideration conditions and circumstances. It is important to unmask Hinduism and demonstrate that it is not a religion but a set of rules under the mask of religion. People would be prepared to tear off the mask of law, 'old and archaic', if they are told that Hinduism is such. Hitherto it has sustained itself in the name of religion, arrogating to itself the sacrality associated with it.

Instituting an alternative to the regime of caste

While rejecting caste and calling for the destruction of its very basis, Ambedkar, at the same time, underscores the need for religion. Quoting Burke, he says true religion is the foundation of society. He thinks that it is important to reconstruct Hinduism on the foundations of liberty, equality and fraternity, or what he terms as democracy. For such reconstitution it might be important to draw in elements 'from foreign sources' or 'draw such principles from the Upanishads'. It might involve a lot of scrapping and chipping and remoulding of those resources. But it should result in, "a complete change in the fundamental notions of life....in the values of life. It means a complete change in outlook and in attitude to men and things... it means new life" (Ibid, 78). But such a new life demands that the old

should cease to exist. In other words, he seeks an entire metamorphosis of Hinduism.

He feels that Hindus should not take an anthropologist's view of religion and say dispassionately that there are "different beliefs, habits, morals and outlooks on life" (Ibid). The latter are enabling resources, subject to approval and disapproval on grounds of reason for the sustenance of life. It is important to separate the chaff from the grain and decide what is to be conserved and what is to be discarded. The basis of such a judgement can only be the deliberated reasoning of the present rather than the weight of the past. The past can inform the present but it cannot be its norm. Ambedkar backs his argument in this regard by drawing extensively from John Dewey. He thinks that the perspective that should govern such approach is,

> that there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing *sanatan;* that everything is changing, that change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society…if there must be standards to measure the acts of men there must also be a readiness to revive those standards.
>
> (Ibid, 79)

Ambedkar addresses these concerns in the *Draft of the Indian Constitution* and particularly in the Hindu Code Bill.[20] The resistance the constitutional regime engendered led Ambedkar to write another text called *The Buddha and His Dhamma* 20 years after *Annihilation*. The Buddha rejects caste-based social callings, and reaches out to everyone irrespective of his/her station in life. In many ways it was the standard book for Hinduism that he proposed in *Annihilation*. It was not merely to be the *Gospel of the Buddha*. In this text all major protagonists of the traditions of Brahmanism and their systems of philosophy are shown as either being refuted by the Buddha, or endorse his path.

Gandhi's approach to caste and varna

While Gandhi's rejoinder to Ambedkar's exposition on caste is important, it may be worthwhile to reconstruct his position on the issue independently of this engagement. Gandhi generally made a sharp distinction between caste and varna on one hand and caste, varna and untouchability on the other. His position on these issues also underwent significant changes over-time, particularly after his encounter with Ambedkar. While Gandhi saw caste as a social institution to be valued and assessed as per the ends it is meant to serve, he considered the *varnashramadharma* as an essential feature of Hinduism. Even as early as 1920 we see him arguing, "I consider the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural and essential. The innumerable sub-castes are sometimes a convenience, often a hindrance. The sooner there is fusion, the better" (Gandhi 1920, 67). He considered

untouchability as a social evil that has no sanction within Hinduism, and associated it primarily with the social feeling of high and low. He did not think that it is an integral component of the caste system either, but its obnoxious and evil outgrowth. The caste system itself is an associated social division of labour built around skills, competences, social cooperation and a distinctive mode of reproduction of itself, little to do with social gradation and ranking. He felt that if untouchability is removed, then the caste system itself will lose its association with considerations of high and low.

> Untouchability is the product, therefore, not of the caste system, but of the distinction of high and low that has crept into Hinduism and is corroding it. The attack on untouchability is thus an attack upon this "high-and-low"-ness. The moment untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified, that is to say.....it will resolve itself into the true *varnadharma*, the four divisions of society, each complimentary of the other and none inferior or superior to any other.
>
> (Gandhi 1933c, 228)

Initially, Gandhi defended the caste system and wrote a small booklet called *Varnavyavastha* in Gujarati in 1922 in this regard. His arguments in defence of the system were by then familiar: It has helped Hindu society survive over time; it has protected life relatively stably in spite of changing political fortunes; it has extended support and care; it has limited worldly aspirations; it has sustained skills and competences at a relatively decent pace; it has prevented social fragmentation etc. However, by the second half of that decade he had come to criticize caste:

> Caste I hold to be an obstacle to our progress and an arrogant assumption of superiority by one group over another. And untouchability is its extreme bad example. It is really high time that we got rid of the taint of untouchability and the taint of caste. Let us not degrade varnashrama by mixing it up with untouchability or caste.[21]

Writing in 1932, he states,

> Caste distinctions are not respected in the ashram because they are not a part of dharma. They have no connection with the Hindu dharma. It is sinful to regard anybody as higher or lower. All of us are equal. We are polluted by sin, never by human beings. One who wishes to serve cannot look up on anybody as higher or lower. The belief in such distinctions is a blot on Hinduism. We should remove it.
>
> (Iyer 1986, 556)

The Satyagraha Ashram Trust deed formulated on February 2, 1926 stated, "The ashram does not believe in caste, which it considers, has injured Hinduism, because its implications of superior and inferior status and of pollution by contact are contrary to the law of love" (Ibid, 538). However, his ambiguity with regard to caste persisted, and he took few initiatives to mount collective action for its abolition.

How come then he defended the *varna* system? Unlike the prevailing belief he felt that the *varna* system upheld "absolute equality; although in the way it is presently expressed it is a monstrous parody of the original" (Iyer 500). V*arna* is not ranking of status based on inherited division of labour nor is it the division of labour in accordance with innate abilities. For him, "Varna is nothing more than an indication of the duty that has been handed down to each one of us by our forefathers" (Ibid, 502). This duty is handed down and transmitted akin to natural abilities. "Just as everyone inherits a particular form so does he inherit the particular characteristics and qualities of his progenitors" (Ibid, 500). He formulated the argument afresh as follows:

> The law of varna means that everyone shall follow as a matter of dharma, duty, the heredity calling of his forefathers in so far as it is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics. He will earn his livelihood by following that calling
>
> (Ibid, 563)

The authentic culture for man is to free oneself to spiritual pursuits. Gandhi thought that this was the great discovery of Hinduism. Varna helped one to conserve one's energy by making him expend little in the cultivation and pursuit of his occupation for his livelihood from generation to generation, thereby freeing man for higher pursuits. Varna sets human beings free, "for extending the field of spiritual research and spiritual evolution" (Ibid, 500). It limits material ambitions and frees man to pursue goals appropriate to his nature. It curbs competition, and apart from saving man from being bogged down with material pursuits and all the deleterious consequences arising therefrom, prevents the growth of inequality and class conflict arising on that ground. He found that the law of varna is "the basis of all the religions of the world." It is the law of conservation of energy in the human sphere.[22] As far as the higher self is concerned, there is no difference between one man and another. Being born in a varna does not place one advantageously over the others as far as higher pursuits are concerned. Therefore, the saints and spiritual savants have hailed from all castes and communities and are seen as equally deserving of respect by one and all.

Gandhi considered varna binding as far as the mode of acquiring one's livelihood is concerned. One earns one's material sustenance by following "as a matter of duty the hereditary calling of his forefathers." It does not

prevent anyone from acquiring knowledge and skills one might wish to pursue. Therefore, "A Shudra has as much right to knowledge as a Brahmana but he falls from his estate if he tries to gain his livelihood through teaching" (Gandhi 1927c, 482). Through such distinctions Gandhi wanted to snap the link between the pursuit of a profession on one hand and access to material wealth and status that it affords on the other. Varna would save a lot of energy, which is presently expended in the name of learning. It passes on skills and talents from generation to another. Therefore, when one gives up one's varna to undertake other pursuits he sells his "soul for a mess of pottage" (Ibid). The varna system, for Gandhi, does not uphold inequality. To the contrary, by reducing competition and keeping material wants low, it is a curb on inequality. In much of his disputations and public addresses he attempted to denounce the attitude of low and high built into the varna system while at the same time persuading people to carry on their traditional callings. At the same time, he recognized that some of the callings such as *Bhangi, Chamar* etc., which were despised required mobilization of enormous moral resources to make them acceptable as equally worthy by the concerned.

Gandhi, however, felt that in the existing conditions in India both "*varnadharma* and *ashramadharma* are in abeyance" (Geetha 2004, 264). Only Shudra varna prevails, and other three varnas that were meant for spiritual and social advance have disappeared. *Varnashramadharma* as a central tenet of Hinduism has to be rediscovered afresh. He suggested that out of shudra dharma, i.e. spirit of service, "it is possible to revive spiritual knowledge, the power to defend it and the wealth to sustain it" (Ibid, 265), their correlatives being, the hallowed preoccupations of brahmins, kshatriyas and vaisyas respectively. Constitution of varnadharma thereby became an end to be pursued rather than a manifest social reality.

The social evil of untouchability

A large bulk of Gandhi's writings on caste dwelt on the issue of untouchability, a concern that he encompassed within the canvass of Hinduism, rather than Indian nationalism, as was done by Ambedkar. Gandhi argued that the responsibility of doing away with untouchability rests with the Hindus rather than the Indian nation as such. He saw untouchability as un-Hindu. It has no sanction in the Hindu tradition.[23] In fact it was the greatest "blot on Hinduism." He uses various terms to denounce it. It is 'an excrescence', 'a bar sinister', 'a sin', 'untruth' etc. He felt that 'pollution' is the essence of untouchability and was in agreement with Ambedkar on it. He speculates on the reasons for its emergence without however being definitive about them: "When cow-protection became an article of faith with our ancestors, those who persisted on eating beef were excommunicated…. Social boycott was applied not only to the recalcitrant but their

sins were visited upon their children also" (Gandhi 1921e, 375). Sometimes he advanced other reasons: "Untouchability is the product, not of the caste system but of the distinction of high and low that has crept into Hinduism and is corroding it" (Gandhi 1933a, 228).

He saw the untouchable throttled by ages through despicable treatment. He found that an untouchable not merely suffers from a complex of initial inequality, but there were few resources at his disposal to enable him to self-regulate his life:

> He has no mind or business he can call his own. Has a beast any mind or business but that of his masters? Has a Panchama a place he can call his own? He may not walk on the very roads he cleans and pays for by the sweat of his brow.
>
> (Gandhi 1924, 137)

Caste Hindus for no fault of the untouchable have taken away his honour, dignity and selfhood. He has been banished to the margins of society. His work has been considered degrading and so is he. He is outside the pale of the community. He argued that untouchables cannot be blamed for their condition: "The evils are a result, and not a cause, of untouchability" (Gandhi 1933b, 70). Reparation should come from the perpetrators of the crime.[24]

He felt that untouchability has poisoned Hinduism and is slowly undermining its very existence. A religion such as Hinduism could not have nurtured such a horrendous institution within its fold. Therefore, there is no sanction for untouchability in Hinduism; 'it is a device of Satan'. Untouchables are made to suffer for reasons of religion which are not the reasons of religion. Therefore, the struggle for the incorporation of untouchables into the Hindu fold as equals is also a struggle to reconstruct Hinduism. He thought that the practice of untouchability has been one of the major reasons for the degeneration of Hinduism and India as a whole. Therefore, if Hinduism has to redeem itself and a national bond to be forged, getting rid of untouchability was a sine qua non. He felt that existing institutions of Hinduism particularly Brahmanism and priest craft have played a major role in its perpetuation and they have done precious little to eradicate this evil.

> Let me if my voice will reach them, carry my voice to the Brahman priests who are opposing this belated reform. It is a painful fact, but it is a historical truth that priests who should have been the real custodians of religion have been instrumental in destroying the religion of which they have been custodians.

Hinduism has to be washed off from such Brahmanism. "Brahmanism that can tolerate untouchability, virgin widowhood, spoliation of virgins, stinks

in my nostrils. It is a parody of Brahmanism" (Gandhi 1927a, 48). After the initial enthusiasm of removing this evil quickly, he frankly admits its widespread prevalence and agreed with Ambedkar that a large number of Hindus practiced untouchability on religious grounds: "Millions of Hindus still consider present day institution of untouchability as a God-made institution as old as the human race itself." Gandhi felt that Hinduism can survive only if Hindus succeed in removing this taint. "If Hinduism is to live, the work has to be done, however difficult and even hopeless it may appear to be" (Gandhi 1940, 283). Further, in his estimate, only if untouchability is removed can Hinduism become "a faith to live for and, if need be, to die for" (Ibid).

Gandhi felt that the prevailing filth and squalor in India is on account of ignoring and despising the Bhangi:

> Our villages have today become seats of dirt and insanitation and the villagers come to an early and untimely death. If only we had given due recognition to the status of the Bhangi as equal to that of the Brahmana as in fact and justice he deserves our village today no less than the inhabitants would have looked a picture of cleanliness and order.
>
> (Gandhi 1936b, 127)

The respect that society pays to the Bhangi is in consonant with the respect in which they hold his work. He is regarded as dirt and his work is regarded as dirty and everyone would like to live the furthest from him. There is no regard for him, nor for his work. Sanitation, therefore, remains one of the least attended activities. Early in his campaign he felt that if higher castes

> persist in suppressing them (untouchables) time must come when the untouchables will rebel against us, and may have recourse even to violent methods. I am trying my utmost to prevent such a catastrophe and so must we all do who believe untouchability to be a sin.
>
> (Gandhi 1925d, 393)

For Gandhi untouchability is such a social atrocity that he even attributes the Bihar earthquake of 1934 as a "visitation for the sin of untouchability" (Gandhi 1934, 165). When chastised by Rabindranath Tagore that his comment would exasperate the superstition already existing in India and 'God himself does not interfere' in the inexorableness of the universal law, Gandhi defended himself saying that there is an intimate link between all the elements of the cosmos and divine providence marks it all. Untouchability is

an affront to such a balance. Even if his belief was ill-founded, it will have beneficial consequences.

Gandhi felt that the moral basis of India's freedom and independence from the British becomes weak when Indians treat the untouchables the way they did. He saw close parallels between European domination over colonies and upper caste domination over untouchables.

> We resent, and properly, the treatment meted out to our country-men in South Africa. We are impatient to establish Swaraj. But we Hindus refuse to see the incongruity in treating a fifth of our co-religionists as worse than dogs.
>
> (Gandhi 1926, 399)

He sometimes felt that Indians deserve the kind of treatment meted out to them for their "crime of untouchability." He occasionally echoed the feeling that the segregation of Indians in the British empire is the retribution they paid for their segregation of the pariah. "Has not a just nemesis overtaken us for the crime of untouchability….We have segregated the pariah and we are in turn segregated in the British colonies"(Gandhi 1921a, 225). He warned his listeners that it is "the justest retribution meted out by God to us for our exploitation of a sixth of our own race and their studied degradation in the sacred name of religion." (Gandhi 1921e, 411). All the charges that Indians have against the British can easily be laid by the untouchables against the Indians (Gandhi 1921a). He rhetorically says, "Read Sahebs for Brahmins, and Indians for Panchamas, and see how you feel" (Gandhi 1921d, 44, 297). He felt that the repression that the British practised in India cannot be countered without Indians renouncing untouchability first. He felt, "What charge that we bring against Dyer and O'Dwyer may not others, and even our own people, lay at our door? We ought to purge ourselves of this pollution." (Gandhi 1921c, 44). He almost echoes Ambedkar's charge in 1940s that without redefining the place of the untouchables their lot in free India is likely to be worse than in British India:

> If we come to power with the stain of untouchability uneffaced, I am positive that the untouchables would be far worse under the swaraj than they are now, for the simple reason that our weaknesses and our failings would then be buttressed up by accession to power.
>
> (Gandhi 1954, 14)[25]

Gandhi brought his theory of varna centrally to bear on his considerations on untouchability. The untouchables are equal to everyone else, irrespective

of their professions.[26] It was highly unreasonable if division of labour led to superiority and inferiority. In such a case the mother who does the work of cleaning the child should be treated a *Bhangi*:

> My mother was certainly a scavenger in as much as she cleaned me when I was a child but she did not on that account become an untouchable. Why then should a *Bhangi,* who renders similar necessary service be regarded as an untouchable?
>
> <div align="right">(Gandhi 1925b, 260)</div>

In fact, such services deserve greater respect from us:

> Just as we revere our mother for the sanitary service that she renders us when we are infants and the greater her service the greater is our reverence for her, similarly, the *Bhangis* are entitled to our highest reverence for the sanitary service they perform for society.
>
> <div align="right">(Gandhi 1925a, 16)</div>

Gandhi admonished that the doctrine of Karma cannot be drawn to justify the practice of untouchability:

> A man's Karma is responsible for what he is, they say. But my karma does not compel me to throw stones at a sinner. Religion is made to uplift and not to keep a man crushed under the weight of Karma.
>
> <div align="right">(Gandhi 1921d, 296)</div>

Gandhi too felt that the failure of Indians to handle untouchability had wider ramifications. It had a deep bearing on the issue of forging Hindu–Muslim unity. The Muslims would naturally suspect Hindus if the latter are not prepared to treat their own coreligionists as equals. In his interview to Louis Fischer, to the latter's great surprise, he says, "The Hindu-Muslim question, in the final analysis, was an offshoot of untouchability question" (Iyer 579). Earlier he had argued that the 'touch-me-not-ism' had affected Hindu–Muslim relations (Gandhi 1940, 282–285). He told Fisher that if Hindus had succeeded in getting rid of untouchability, there would not be a communal problem. By implication, the cause for the partition of India had to be attributed to the continued prevalence of untouchability.

Gandhi felt that the continuation of untouchability among converts to non-Hindu religions can be done away with only when Hindus succeed in removing it from among themselves. "Not until untouchability is removed from Hinduism will the taint be removed from Harijans, no matter what label they adopt" (Gandhi 1936b, 214).[27] He did not think that conversion was an effective mechanism for the removal of untouchability.

Interfacing Ambedkar and Gandhi on caste

Some of Gandhi's most valiant attempts to engage in radical modes of interpretation of the shastras and religious instructions can be found in his writings related to untouchability. He felt that there are a lot of contradictions across sacred literature and particularly the smritis. There have been interpolations into the texts. Some of them are caught in the limitations of the context and times. Therefore, there cannot be a literal reading of the texts. Texts do not speak by themselves and someone who reads a sacred text must read it from within the tradition. He further argued that a tradition such as Hinduism, if it was wholly vacuous, could not have produced so many saints including those who condemned untouchability in no uncertain terms. He said "I apply the test of Truth and Ahimsa laid down by those very scriptures for interpretation. I reject what is inconsistent with that test and I appropriate all that is consistent with it" (Gandhi 1925c, 335). He felt that only reasonable deduction be drawn from the smritis since "the texts that may be contrary to known and accepted morality, more especially to the moral precepts enjoined in the smritis themselves, must be rejected as interpolations" (Gandhi 1926, 230). He further argued that "Whilst I hold that the ancients gave us a moral code which is not to be surpassed I am unable to subscribe to the doctrine of their infallibility in every detail" (Gandhi 1923, 230–231). According to him the reasonable should hold the ground against a mere assertion of authority: "We must test on the anvil of reason everything that is capable of being tested by it and reject that which does not satisfy it even though it may appear in an ancient garb" (Gandhi 1922, 231).

He admitted that the shastras are deeply mired in ritualism and the sanctions they invoke are meant to reproduce the continued subjection of untouchables. But he felt it is necessary to distinguish between the tree and its rotten branches. It is necessary that the trunk be kept intact so that it can throw up new shoots. One cannot uproot the tree itself.

> Some of the branches and leaves I admit are rotten. Let us have the pruning knife and lop-off those diseased branches, but let us not lay the axe at the root….If you keep the root intact and keep on watering it, it will some day grow into a fine big tree.
> (Gandhi 1927b, 298)

Gandhi's reading of varna, caste and untouchability, and their mutual relationships have been challenged by many, particularly Ambedkar: Ambedkar agreed with Gandhi that texts do not speak and all readings are informed by interpretation. But he distinguished between popular religious beliefs and practices that take overboard an embedded authority of the text, and a different reading of the same by someone which does not translate itself

into appropriate beliefs and practices. While Gandhi may disown a text or a belief as interpolation, people may continue to adhere to them as authentic. This has been the case with caste which Hindus consider as religiously ordained. Ambedkar argued that Gandhi's reading of tradition in favour of equality will have little bearing on the inherited system of graded social inequality in India. He thought that the teachings of saints and holy men who proclaimed equality of the devotee before the Lord had little impact on the caste divide. According to him Gandhi's interpretation of varnadharma as earning one's livelihood by following the occupation of one's forefathers upholds the caste system frontally (Ambedkar 1991, 290). Gandhi's interpretation of varna would confine people to their inherited professions even when they are indisposed to them, and even when their talents and skills suggest a change. To maintain and reproduce a system based on varna as its foundation would call for pigeon-holing people on a scale never heard before, calling for the most extensive authoritarian rule as its inevitable outcome. The low and despised are deluded by Gandhi "into accepting their misfortunes by presenting them as the best of good fortunes" (Ibid, 291). Gandhi's attempt to morally ennoble low professions and confining their members to them was nothing but leaving them wholly at the mercy of the traditional dominant castes without a collateral binding duty.

> To preach that poverty is good for the Sudra and for none else, to preach that scavenging is good for untouchables and for none else and to make them accept these, means impositions as voluntary purposes of life…….. and a cruel joke on the helpless classes which none but Mr. Gandhi can perpetuate with equanimity and impunity.
>
> (Ambedkar 1991, 293)

Gandhi, of course, rejected Ambedkar's reading of the shastras, and charged him of "picking out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they woefully misrepresent" (Gandhi 1936a, 127).

Concluding remarks

It is remarkable that in spite of the sharp disagreements between Gandhi and Ambedkar there is much in common between them with regard to the categories of analysis and the significance they assigned to them: dharma and religion, caste, varna, untouchability, the shastras, tradition etc. These categories became central in their considerations of social reforms, swaraj and the national-democratic project. This marks them off from a large number of other thinkers of the period who wanted to provide a social analysis in different and/or 'modernist' categories. Gandhi

eventually came to deeply suspect caste as a mode of organizing society and thought that Hinduism has little to do with it (Gandhi 1936a). He held on to varna, but imparted to the institution, an entirely new connotation. Both Ambedkar and Gandhi reject untouchability as inhuman, and call for a sustained movement against it. Gandhi did not criticize Ambedkar for the significance that he assigned to caste. Gandhi had other objections to *Annihilation* (Ambedkar 1978b, 81–85) but was equally concerned with the implications of caste and untouchability for the conception of Hinduism, swaraj and human equality.[28]

Ambedkar draws attention to the regulatory and 'disciplining' role that caste plays in social relations, and the kind of ranked order it institutionalizes, allowing little space for human agency, creativity, and democracy to thrive. It is interesting that Gandhi too thought that caste played a similar role, although in his case in a positive sense, by limiting wants and reach and keeping human strivings and desires within limits. Gandhi did not think that prohibition of interdining, intermarriage etc. was necessarily a limiting attribute of caste. He thought that the principle of 'high and low' was not characteristic of the caste system but affected it due to the prevalence of untouchability. He argued that limiting wants and desires enhances swaraj, and leaves one free to pursue goals distinctive to human self. But the way castes mobilized themselves made him convinced that they were acting as closed corporations, aggrandizing their own interests. While there is a meeting point between Gandhi and Ambedkar on this count, they differed on their approaches to the issue. For Ambedkar wider and more expansive social interactions helped to reinforce democracy and were conducive to the pursuit of self-perfection. Gandhi thought that limiting human wants and placing excess resources and abilities to subserve common good was the true measure of swaraj.

Both Ambedkar and Gandhi agreed that it is *we* who read texts, and *interpret* them. But they advanced the distinct criteria of reading and interpreting religious texts, and Gandhi argued that Ambedkar's understanding of Hinduism and the interpretation of its hallowed texts were hermeneutically flawed, and was an attempt to judge Hinduism by employing criteria external to it. Ambedkar's rejoinder to this criticism as we have outlined above is complex (Rodrigues 2011). He sought to know from Gandhi that if he had a different Hinduism he should demonstrate it in social practice; that there were few to purchase his version of Hinduism; and why should those in the margins, degraded and low, bear the burden of *his* varna utopia. Why should the right to be human be bartered at the altar of his religious fancies? Gandhi, however, was battling on two fronts: defence of Hinduism of his conception, and a swarajist project that would not fall into the lap of a liberal–modernist trap.

Interestingly, both Gandhi and Ambedkar regard equality as a central value to be fostered although they disagree as to how this value has to be

fostered. Ambedkar denies that birth should necessarily be the basis of a person's occupation. It is this principal of birth that has been the basis of caste and untouchability. The untouchable is not merely polluted but is the bearer of inherited pollution. Mothers might be doing cleaning tasks towards their children but they can wash and purify themselves. The untouchables cannot. They are born with the stigma of pollution and they will die with it. Taking human agency seriously means, the choice of occupations should be left to the concerned agents. To the contrary, Gandhi argued that birth should be the basis of the occupations one pursues. He connects it to his other concerns of keeping the material requirements to the minimum, avoiding competition and conflict on account of them and freeing man to the pursuit of higher goals. Ambedkar, however, sees such relations of labour bound up with the denial of freedom, appreciation of worth, and exploitation and domination. Gandhi asserts the dignity of all labour and, by instilling it in every kind of labour, he feels the superiority and inferiority ascribed to caste gradations can be undercut. The latter is a moral defect and it has to be rectified by reconstituting a moral agency—a new set of attitudes and values. Ambedkar emphasizes on changes in social relations and not merely in imparting new meanings to existing relations.

However, what Gandhi considered as the degeneration of Hinduism is seen by Ambedkar as its essential characteristics. For Ambedkar there cannot be an impulse for equality from within the central tenets and institutions of Hinduism. It can come only from a radical reorganization of Hinduism or from outside it. To the contrary, Gandhi argued, that the central tenets of Hinduism and its institutions uphold equality. Reforms are required to shed the dross, rather than reinvent Hinduism.

There has been an argument in recent years that under colonialism caste came to be shored up to the centre-stage, made into the anchor of the religious beliefs and practices of Hindus, and led to the exclusion of other relations that were so significant in shaping India's complex socio-religious reality. It suggests that the colonial state came to play a major role in redefining social relations in general and caste relations in particular. Thereby, India was marked off as distinct from the rest. As per this view, much of the nationalist lore in India too could not remain immune to the whipped up projection of centrality of caste in determining social relations in India, and the dynamics of Indian society that it rerouted shelving off alternative ways of perceiving and engaging with India.[29] Such an account, highly exaggerated, even if accepted as true, does not affect the concerns discussed above. These concerns explore the implications to social relations informed by caste, and to the extent informed by it. It is quite possible that someone could argue that the impact of caste on social relations was limited or uneven. In fact, Ambedkar himself suggests such a conjecture in *Castes in India*, saying that caste characterized as endogamy was derivative for

non-Brahmanical social groups. If we reconstruct the picture of India from the frame of the latter, caste would acquire a very different significance!

There are those who have argued that democracy and a secular polity have sustained themselves in India due to the existence of castes, which do not lend themselves to be consolidated into a social bloc that can be pitted against minorities. The existence of castes facilitates other feasible electoral alternatives. In terms of sustaining formal and procedural democracy, Ambedkar would partly agree with such a reading. But then he would say that it is not a democracy worth cherishing in the longer run. Democracy demands a 'social endosmosis' involving a specific kind of social bonding, reach, social concerns and ways of life. It cannot merely rest on the stratagem of *'modus vivendi.'*

Notes

1 At the same time it has to be noted that the caste question was made central to the nationalist project by not only the likes of Ramaswami Naicker Periyar but a few within the Indian National Congress. See, Panikkar (1933).
2 These other writings include Ambedkar (1978c, 1991, 1994, 2014a, b, 2019).
3 Ambedkar quotes Ketkar approvingly to say,

> Whether a family is racially Aryan or Dravidian was a question which never troubled the people of India, until foreign scholars came and began to draw the line. The colour of the skin had long ceased to be a matter of importance.
> (Ketkar, 82) quoted in Ambedkar (1978a, 22)

Ambedkar repeats this argument of intermixture of races in India (see Ambedkar 1978b, 48). He refers to the work of Bhandarkar, (1911), in support.
4 For a representative writing in this regard, (see Coupland 1944).
5 Such a conjecture is repeated again in Ambedkar (1978b, 48).
6 The scholars on caste whose work Ambedkar cites are Senart, Nesfield, H. Risley,. Ketkar and Denzil Ibbetson, all well-known names during his time.
7 The nationalist ethnography is replete with such formulations from early on See Ramabai (2000, 133).
8 For the difference between such imitation, and M.N. Srinivas' concept of 'Sanskritization' see Rege (2013).
9 It is important to point out that A.A. Goldenweizer at whose seminar Ambedkar read this paper was an exponent of the cultural diffusion theory himself.
10 I feel that these two-fold distinctions are not recognized by Rege (2013). Similarly, while Ilaiah (2019) rightly recognizes an autonomous culture among Dalit Bahujans, he fails to note the impact caste patriarchy has on them.
11 See Dirks (2002)
12 See Preface to the Third Edition, *Annihilation of Caste* (Ambedkar 1978b, 26). It may be good to place this text in context. It was written for a Lahore-based body called the *Jaat-Paat Todak Sangh*, an organization of upper caste Hindu reformers who had made eradication of caste system their primary objective. Hindu consolidation was one of the principal objectives that Hindu leaders were pursuing in Punjab against the perceived threat of a Muslim majority in the province for years. Under the auspices of the Arya Samaj, they resorted to the *shuddi* practice to bring back untouchables and converts from Hinduism back to the Hindu fold. While many members of the Sangh were in favour of

social reforms or even removal of the caste system, few of them thought that their endeavour called for an attack on the foundations of Hinduism such as the Vedas and the Shastras. The *Annihilation* however stretched itself to include the latter. Given Ambedkar's refusal to confine himself to the agenda of the *Sangh*, the lecture eventually had to be called off.

13 For Ambedkar, social reformers included the likes of Justice Mahadeo Ranade and Gopalkrishna Gokhale who defended the necessity of Social Conference alongside political freedom.

14 Ambedkar uses a more inclusive category called 'socialists', rather than 'Marxists' or 'communists' for consideration. At the time this essay was written, the Communist Party of India had begun to speak about People's Front, following a resolution to that effect by the Comintern, and the Congress Socialist Party, formed in 1934, was working within the Indian National Congress. In other words, the term socialist had a broader, encompassing meaning in India.

15 While criticizing the socialists for their one-track mind, Ambedkar at the same expressed his partisanship with socialism although he thought that such a project can be pursued only by taking into account the differences that mark social classes.

16 Later on, he was to argue that nationalism called for erasing certain memories and reinforcing others. For a detailed account, see Ambedkar (2014a, 29–39).

17 This is a position closely associated with Dewey's conception of democracy.

18   All reform consists in a change in the notions, sentiment and mental attitudes of the people towards men and things. It is common experience that certain names become associated with certain notions and sentiments, which determine a person's attitude towards men and things. The names Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra are names which are associated with a definite and fixed notion in the mind of every Hindu…. that notion is that of a hierarchy based on birth.

<div align="right">Ibid, 59</div>

19 This conflict is elaborated by Ambedkar in several of his other writings. See for example, Ambedkar (1946). Also see Ambedkar (1987, 3–94).

20 It met with huge protests and the measure could not be carried out, proving in a way Ambedkar's own apprehensions with regard to the limits to which a Hindu social reformer could go, however hallowed he might regard his cause.

21 This excerpt is from a speech that was given at a public meeting (Rajapalayam 1927).

22 For Gandhi, "the law of life" is "nothing but the law of conservation of energy" (Gandhi 1937, 5a).

23 Gandhi's assertion that untouchability has no sanction in the tradition was met with strong opposition from the *sanatanists*. Gandhi did not go about disproving their objections through an alternative scholarly account in the same vein. He felt that truth and non-violence are the two supreme attributes of Hinduism. Such a religion could not be a party to the inhuman suffering imposed on untouchables. Occasionally, however, he refers to events and episodes in the tradition, generally construed as practices of untouchability, but on a closer look did not seem to be so. For instance, a boatman, generally regarded as an untouchable today, took Rama across the Ganga in his boat. Gandhi argues that there is nothing to suggest that Lord Rama was defiled by the boatman. Further God is addressed among Hindus as the 'purifier of the polluted' (1921b, 43). Besides, Gandhi wondered, how a religion which

has been considerate towards the cow as to establish its worship could countenance a cruel and inhuman boycott of human beings, as reflected in the practice of untouchability (1921f, 375).

24 Gandhi is deeply suspicious of the motivations of the leaders of Muslims and Christians and the British power with respect to the untouchables. Muslim representations at this stage had suggested that untouchables cannot be included within Hindus and they had equal right to bring them to their fold. From the later part of the 19th century Christian missions succeeded in converting large number of untouchables. Gandhi, therefore, is very cautious of the concern of Christian leaders towards the Untouchables. In the Vaikom Satyagraha he asks George Joseph not to fast in favour of throwing open the road leading to the Gurvayoor temple to the untouchables. When missionary leaders met him to discuss how they can help him in getting rid of untouchability he asks them to keep off saying that untouchability is a problem within Hinduism and their intervention is likely to lead to fishing in troubled waters. It was Gandhi's intervention which removes decisively the kinds of ambivalences that existed about untouchables among Hindus. Gandhi also argued that awakened Hinduism is quite capable of abolishing the sin of untouchability from its midst.

25 In fact, this charge came to be echoed in 1950s and the Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes had to step in to say that it was far too exaggerated. See Report 1958–59.

26 He sometimes equated the untouchables with the Shudras.

> I have asked that a *Panchama* should be regarded as a Shudra, because I hold that there is no warrant for the belief, in a fifth caste. A *Panchama* does the work of a Shudra and he is therefore naturally classified as such when he ceases to be regarded as a *Panchama*.
>
> (Gandhi 1927b, 298)

27 Gandhi overtly takes this position after Ambedkar had announced at Yeola that he had decided to leave Hinduism for good.

28 In his rejoinder to Ambedkar, Gandhi is exclusively concerned about defending Hinduism from his attack, rather than commenting on the pernicious impact that caste has on India's democratic aspirations and strivings towards nationhood.

29 One of the influential works in this regard is Dirks (2002).

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Part IV

RELIGION, MODERNITY AND NAVAYĀNA BUDDHISM

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY OR INDIVIDUAL PERFECTION

Conceptions of religion in Ambedkar and Radhakrishnan

Kanchana Mahadevan[1]

> …[I]t is an error to look upon religion as a matter which is individual, private and personal…The correct view is that religion like language is social…
>
> (Ambedkar 2002d, 225)

Ambedkar's transition from Hinduism to Buddhism is a prescient point to examine the potential of his philosophy of religion that emphasizes social morality. By developing his concept of religion through a critique of caste Hinduism, his critical approach contrasts with Radhakrishnan's subtle advocacy of caste Hinduism. Ambedkar's Buddhism, articulated through a critique of both Hinduism and Buddhism, can be extended to other religions (including Hinduism) in its quest for egalitarianism and tolerance. Unlike Radhakrishnan's view of religion as self-perfection (a widely held opinion), Ambedkar's notion connects religion to critique. On a Kantian note, such a critique is positive in that it examines the constructive role of religion; but such a positive critique becomes possible only when critique in its negative sense is also adopted, the latter having destroyed centuries-old inegalitarian dogmas and rituals. This chapter examines Ambedkar's "religion within the boundaries of mere reason"[2] as especially relevant in the contemporary context of the rising religious identities and conflicts.

Caste as the foundation of religion: Radhakrishnan

The popular film *Aarakshan* (Jha 2011)[3] encapsulates Ambedkar's neglect by mainstream India. Despite gesturing towards the problem of caste identity on a larger national canvas,[4] its focus is privileged caste heroism. The image of Radhakrishnan—literally as a picture in the office of a college principal—looms over its erratic depiction of Dalit struggle for

recognition and justice (Sen 2011). Consequently, it glosses over Radhakrishnan's justification of caste and Ambedkar's caste criticism. In the film, the eponymous school principal, Prabhakar Anand, whose patronage towards oppressed castes is the vehicle for social transformation, represents Radhakrishnan. In a rare gesture, the film has a famous actor playing a Dalit professor Deepak Kumar, who appears to have agency. Yet, the latter comes to naught because he depends on the privileged caste principal Anand, representing the modern-day Radhakrishnan. *Aarakshan*, its title notwithstanding, does not examine the social persistence of caste hierarchy and the arduous struggles against it.[5] Moreover, the film is paternalistic in that it replaces the collective voices of oppressed castes with that of just one individual, namely Kumar, who is under the moral guidance of the upper caste principal's intuitive knowledge. With the figure of Radhakrishnan, the film is also enmeshed in patriarchal strands in projecting a man as an ideal aspiration. It, thus, reflects prevalent social attitudes to caste, gender and religion. As Sen observes, Radhakrishnan might not have a direct influence on Indians at the political or even popular level,[6] but his view of caste as division for labour that was "class by birth, but not class by heredity" (Minor 397) is still accepted at the mainstream level.[7] One might add that the sexual division of labour between men and women is also similarly endorsed. So is Radhakrishnan's related notion of religion as a solitary experience (personal or indirect) of the divine (1932, 84–126).

It might be argued that Radhakrishnan critiqued the Hindu justification of caste as a "scandal" (1967, 27) with no place in modern India.[8] He also objected to caste distinctions being based on pollution and purity (Minor 1997, 387) by reinterpreting caste. Caste for Radhakrishnan, is not determined by birth or heredity, but is rather the outcome of aptitude, effort and character (1927, 127–30). In addition, he concedes to caste mobility, whereby someone born a *Sudra* can move to a higher level through conduct (1967, 131–2). Radhakrishnan's reconstructed notion of caste hierarchy attempts to enable all human beings to develop their abilities in the modern context. He adapts the traditional Hindu notion of caste rigidity to liberal notions of class, mobility and division of labour.[9] He thus believes that caste-based work in society is not hereditary, but founded on pre-given functions in an organically knit society. The functions in turn arise from individual pre-given psychological temperaments. Thus, "The four castes represent men of thought, men (sic) of action, men of feeling, and others in whom none of these is highly developed" (Radhakrishnan 1927, 111). He notes that all four traits—or *varnas*—are needed in society, and moreover, these traits can be present in specific individuals simultaneously. Moreover, individuals can change their caste position provided they have the appropriate temperamental backing. Caste implies action that arises from specific characteristics over which individuals have no control.[10] Radhakrishnan's modern version[11] upholds that caste was not injurious when it originated,

but became rigid with time (1927, 93, 106–7, 127). He justifies the notion of caste as *varna* as the basis of a graded social order united through a harmonious performance of diverse functions.

Radhakrishnan's account of caste fits in with his spiritual conception of society as an organic whole with interrelated parts each of which contribute to the unity of purpose (1927, 93–95; Minor 388). For him such a notion of spiritual society is inclusive as native caste groups absorbed those who came from outside India, each caste group had a functional role in a larger totality. He upholds the four-fold caste structure as integral to social development; he understands caste to accommodate differences of culture and race, as well as, harmonize social relations through fellowship (Radhakrishnan 1927, 104–5; Minor 395–6). He does not perceive any domination in such a social order. Moreover, Radhakrishnan maintains that each tier in the caste system is equally important for the functioning of the whole. Thus, for Radhakrishnan, caste is founded on human aptitude, which all human beings have an equal opportunity to develop into character (1927, 111–2). Each individual, on this view, had to develop his or her capacity to contribute to the progress of society as a whole. As Minor observes, Radhakrishnan integrates caste with modern ideals of equality and democracy (397), wherein he defines democracy as the right to develop one's endowment (1927, 116). He also advocates a modern conception of religion based on these ideals.

Radhakrishnan does connect religion to the social domain, critiquing the indifference of religious practitioners to vulnerability and suffering, especially in what he terms as the context of the 'East' (1967, 29). He upholds religion as an individual's inclination towards the spiritual, which is realized through human perfection (1967, 42, 50). Since it is a binding force, such a religion, according to him, can be realized on the basis of caste-based social relations. Radhakrishnan discerns contemporary Hinduism as a move in this direction, a continuous "process" (1927, 129) of renewal and change through interface between tradition and the contemporary. He names Upanishadic commentators and saint poets as diverse contributors to its ethos. There is for Radhakrishnan "a common clay of human nature" (1927, 120) that is nevertheless differentiated as wise and foolish or high and low. These differences are the outcome of varied human abilities towards self-realization. Radhakrishnan discerns caste as ideally working towards a common human purpose of social cooperation, despite admittedly degenerating into segregation and untouchability (1927, 93–130). He sees it as fulfilling social needs through the development of human nature that constraints the framework of human potential and action. For Radhakrishnan, by developing one's nature from perspectives as diverse as artist, worker or saint, one gives one's bit to society by practising unity in diversity (1927, 127). He upholds what he terms as such a Hindu[12] socio-religious order as allowing each individual to focus on realizing his or her inner temperament

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to spontaneously harmonize with society. It does not require its members to commune in solidarity with each other; instead its focus is on individual perfection that comes from the spiritual self of all beings as one. The social aspect of caste merely facilitates such spirituality. Radhakrishnan's notion of religion as self-realization and perfection of an individual's temperament is rooted in the culturally specific idea of caste.

The seeming flexibility in his account of caste and religion notwithstanding, Radhakrishnan's egalitarianism remains partial. His reconstruction of caste, which divides human beings by ability, is as problematic as the traditional caste system's division by birth. Moreover, it is paradoxical considering his premise of the "common clay of human nature." His idea of society as based on four pre-given graded tasks actively encourages inequality. Human beings are divided into thought, action and feeling and those with lesser capacity for the same. Radhakrishnan's social distinction is not merely pluralism, as it revers those with greater abilities and powers of self-reflection as the three privileged castes (1927, 120). Moreover, it restricts the diversity of the social to a graded hierarchy of four with demarcated boundaries. Radhakrishnan does not engage with the possibility of simultaneously occupying two or three or four social locations, whereby a thinker is also simultaneously a labourer. In addition, his notion of mobility within such a rigid caste order is predicated upon the chance factor of given human tendencies. On such a view, society does not have the responsibility of cultivating aptitudes that encourage caste mobility. Radhakrishnan's version of religion reproduces this lack of social solidarity inherent to his account of caste; individuals develop their abilities within their preordained caste order. Radhakrishnan regards perfection, rather than social solidarity as the goal of religion.

For him, religion fulfills a personal quest for spirituality in a secular scientific modern world where it does not have space in the public domain. He laments that the religious impulse was fast receding among human beings as "untenable" (1932, 50) in being subject to skepticism on a global scale. He discerns the rise of communism, divisive religious boundaries and moral ineffectiveness as contributing to suspicion over religion (1932, 13–51). In the Indian context, he identifies the prioritization of scientific temperament, freedom from material impoverishment and political tutelage as grounds for departing from religion. He proclaims that the need for religion has to be reaffirmed to restore creative sense among human beings. This requires turning to prophets, rather than priests, whose personal experience and vision can inspire the resurrection of faith in religion (1932, 89). For Radhakrishnan, the very need for religion can be seen in the various substitutes that are offered for it such as, naturalistic atheism, agnosticism, skepticism, humanism, pragmatism, modernism, authoritarianism and the lack of a spiritual note (1932, 52–83). Thus, he upholds religion as a personal experience and activity that unifies all other human activities and

transcends them towards spiritual life (1932, 88). All faiths are founded on intuitive experience underlining the search for the eternal.[13]

With this individualistic approach, Radhakrishnan attempts to address the vacuum created by the neglect of religion in modern political systems such as capitalism and socialism. In the context of this vacuum, religion has entered mass culture and the public sphere with renewed vigour.[14] This persistence of religious identity reveals the need for assessing its role in social life following Ambedkar; religion cannot simply be restricted to a private pursuit of belief facilitated by a caste order in Radhakrishnan's spirit. The idea that religion is a solitary quest for personal happiness or spirituality needs to be interrogated and so does its relation to social hierarchy. As Ambedkar's critique reveals, such a view has encouraged the inegalitarianism of caste and gender in the Indian context.

Critique of caste as a foundation of religion: Ambedkar

Ambedkar questions the "…assumption that religion is a purely personal matter… It is supernatural. It has nothing to do with the social…" (2002d). This view upheld by Radhakrishnan tends to homogenize religion and locate it on a transcendent plane. Radhakrishnan's stress on the intuitive authority of prophets merely substitutes for the supremacy of the priest. The pursuit of the personal takes place in social and historical contexts of religious institutions and communities. Radhakrishnan implicitly acknowledges as much by rooting his notion of personal religion in the socio-religious context of caste. Consequently, as Ambedkar argues, religion becomes a source of power in society, through which the freedom of one group of people is controlled by the other (1990, 44). Such a conception of religion differs from ideal religion or *Dhamma*. For Ambedkar the former is theistic religion, while *Dhamma* is religion based on morality.[15] In theistic religion, one's relationship to a transcendent entity is central, rendering morality as secondary. According to Ambedkar, *Dhamma*, on the other hand, necessitates egalitarian moral relation between human beings as essential. Religion as understood by Radhakrishnan was based on the God–human relation or *jīva–Brahman* as asocial and personal; it could consequently, accommodate and endorse caste and inequality at a practical–social level. Ambedkar notes that religious freedom is not evenly accessible to all, given the internal hierarchies of power, such as caste, which afflict certain religions. Again, given religious diversity, the external strife between religions too can intrude into the personal space of spirituality.

Radhakrishnan's personal space of spirituality separates religion from morality. The lack of equality both within certain religions and between them indicates that Radhakrishnan's notion of spiritual enjoyment would become irresponsible, if the aspect of morality is not taken into account. Thus, acknowledging the social and public leads to the moral dimension

of religion.[16] Hence, as Ambedkar outlines, religion is a social practice/institution that inculcates "spiritual values" (2002b, 189), which in turn are moral principles that bind human beings in a fellowship (2002b, 174–5). Thus, "*Maitri* or fellowship towards all must never be abandoned. One owes it even to one's enemy" (Ambedkar 2002b, 174). Ambedkar comprehends religion as a moral force based on the affective dimension of togetherness that unites human beings and captures its etymological root of *religare*. Thus, it is not a personal relationship between the human being and a divine force as Radhakrishnan assumes. He argues that such a quest for moral togetherness cannot be equated with material well-being. These values need not be "other-worldly" nor need they breed a complacence with injustices like poverty (2002b, 187–8).[17]

The very existence of caste in Hindu religion shows that it is neither personal nor metaphysical, but social. From its social point of view, according to Ambedkar, Hinduism is a division of people from the same race into hierarchical and watertight castes (Ambedkar 1990, 47–48). Thus, just as one needs to investigate the dynamics between different religions in the context of religious pluralism, Ambedkar upholds the need to investigate the internal divide within the fold of Hinduism. Thus, caste is not a way of accommodating or harmonizing racial difference, as Radhakrishnan claims. A social harmony that is grounded on caste suppresses conflict through forced assimilation and labour. Ambedkar's critique of the *varna* system reveals that social stability could be maintained through caste only because it bred a sense of fatalism, stagnation, rivalry and fear of reprisal against social change.[18] He concludes that the *varna* system is both impracticable and harmful (1990, 68).

In light of Ambedkar's argument, caste cannot be reconstructed through Radhakrishnan's apparently benign lens. Ambedkar points out that caste came into existence in India, much after the co-mingling of races; it cannot therefore, be understood as based on heredity and eugenics (1990, 50–51). Rather caste is a hierarchical form of an exploitative Hindu social, economic and political order (1990, 52). Ambedkar maintains that one would have to unlearn caste or *jati* relations of several centuries to reach the idealized state of *varna* by merit. Further, caste is not just division of labour, it is a division of labourers—and an exploitative and interlinked one at that (1990, 47–48). This division is not based on choice but on tasks preordained in scriptures. Caste-based tasks are not just descriptive but also normative, in that manual labour is degraded and stigmatized by Hinduism (Ambedkar 1990, 49). Therefore, political inclusiveness and economic well-being mandate abolishing the caste character of Hindu religion in the social domain.

Radhakrishnan's harmony that is based on pre-ordained social roles is critiqued by Ambedkar who argues that Hindu society for him is a collection of stratified and isolated castes (1990, 52–54). The latter he upholds

have a deep-rooted "warring" and "anti-social spirit" (1990, 55). He links the awareness of caste identity to the persistence of old rivalries inhibiting social solidarity (Ambedkar 1990, 56). Since these castes do not have a common social ground, Hindu society does not exist as a cooperative endeavour that brings people together. Ambedkar is well aware that caste segregation is a socio-psychological mode of embodiment and not just a "physical object like a wall of bricks" (1990, 83) that can be simply razed to create social equality. He also notes responding to Radhakrishnan that given caste Hinduism's segregated mode, "the mere fact" (Ambedkar 2014, 19) of it persisting through centuries does not imply that it has qualitative value. One has to critique the manner in which Hinduism has survived without solidarity. One has to critique its social and psychological dimensions in a sustained way as physical proximity alone does not constitute the lived relation of cooperative quest for the spiritual. Each caste is separated from every other—and each goes about performing the rites and rituals as it deems on its own. Such parallel activity, argues Ambedkar, cannot be termed as commonly shared. "The caste system prevents common activity and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with unified life and a consciousness of its own being" (Ambedkar 1990, 54). He further notes that the absence of a common Hindu consciousness or lack of public spirit hinders it from participating in morality or politics. Common activity requires communication and dialogue that takes place among equals. Hence, for such communication to be possible within Hinduism and between diverse religions, the oppressive feature of caste must be eradicated.

Ambedkar observes that Hindus cannot become humanitarian as long as they adhere to caste. An individual cannot enter the Hindu fold voluntarily as though it were a club, as membership in caste is based on *shuddhi* or 'purity" of birth. One can extend this line of argument to Radhakrishnan's notion of temperaments on which he founds caste; a temperament is an accidental matter of birth. Thus, there is no possibility for an outsider to adopt the Hindu set of beliefs and practices as a convert (1990, 60). This has hindered Hindu caste groups from cooperatively associating with each other through *Sanghas*. Moreover, Hinduism is at its core a highly individualist religion, which has discouraged the "associated form of life" unlike Islam or Sikhism (61). It prevents openness and tolerance towards those who are different. Such a dialogue leads to adopting those who are different as one's own, living in their midst with a sense of fellowship and "in short loving" (57) the other. Ambedkar argues that caste has prevented Hindus from engaging in any such acts with members of other caste groups or indigenous tribes (56–57). Hence, he appeals for a fundamental change to take place at the level of social relations so that Hindus can unlearn caste (68).

Ambedkar indicts Hindu *dharma* for offering rules of segregation that are ritualistic, social, economic and political (95–96). Rules centre around

groups to merely prescribe and proscribe, without offering reasons. They demand an unthinking obedience to the "law or at best legalized class-ethics" (96). Against rules, principles offer universal ideals such as justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. These are intellectually grounded and offer guides for judgement. They are grounded on critique and reason. Ambedkar turns to Buddhist tradition in his search for a "Religion of Principles" (97), rather than mere rules. His arguments for Buddhism are both reflective and emotive. Religion in the sense of principled morality or Buddhist Dhamma is social in offering a fellowship of equals to human beings in the *Sangha*. It, thus, breaks with the anti-social isolationism of Hinduism. It is compatible with the domains of science, morality and politics. It accords a central position to critical thought and is integral to the development of modernity. Thus, as Christopher Queen says "Ambedkar concluded that Buddhism was the only viable religion, not only for the untouchables of India, but for the modern world at large" (Rathore and Verma 2011, xv).

Thus, unlike Radhakrishnan, Ambedkar presents an inclusive democratic way of thinking about religion in the modern context. Moreover, he has a pan-Indian relevance although he is typically regarded as a Dalit leader and constitutionalist.[19] For it is by engaging with caste inequality that Ambedkar critiques unconditional devotion as a way of maintaining the caste system. Moreover, his thesis that social democracy is a necessary condition for its political counterpart also emerges from the reality of caste relations persisting despite constitutional prohibitions. Ambedkar relates the removal of caste to so-called wider struggles such as women's equality, tolerance, religious freedom, secularism and the like. Thus, the problem of oppressed castes must matters to all Indians, regardless of their own caste origin, whereby Ambedkar's critique of caste as an analytical category has both a pan-Indian and a global relevance. It is by problematizing difference in the specific socio-historical context of caste difference that Ambedkar opens the possibility of comprehending the so-called abstract human concerns such as religion and its place in a constitutional democracy.

His critique of caste hierarchy in Hinduism, enables Ambedkar to turn to Buddhism as a non-casteist alternative. But Ambedkar's turn to Buddhism was not uncritical, nor did he think of it as a ready-made solution to the problem of caste.[20] He expressed the need for reforming some of the problematic practical aspects of Buddhism such as the lack of a single text or its "Bible", the renewal of the *Sangha* as a socially/morally relevant association and an urgent proselytization effort for transmitting the message of Buddhism (1950). Ambedkar's text *Buddha and His Dhamma* was an attempt to provide a unified reformed Buddhist text. In his introduction to this text, he is critical of some of the doctrinal and standard views associated with classical Buddhism (xli–xlii). These include explaining Prince Siddhartha's awakening to suffering through the epiphanies of death, sickness and old age; the fetishization of suffering through the four noble

truths; the adherence to the law of karma and rebirth, which presupposes the soul that is denied by Buddhism; the ambivalent status of the Bhikkhu who oscillates between a perfect person and a social activist. Ambedkar's critique of Buddhism is also directed towards bringing its commitment to the morality of principles to the forefront. It also aimed at demonstrating that the conversion to the Buddhist point of view did not entail accepting its dogmas and practices mechanically; rather it entailed a critical scrutiny of beliefs and practices. This in turn implied historicizing the Buddhist tradition and desacralizing it. Indeed, in his rethinking of the sacred, Ambedkar notes that the sacred as inviolable applies to the universal, rather than "group" morality (1957, 232). He defends such a morality as a fellowship that forms the basis of an individual's growth. Further, Buddhist doctrines that are not acceptable to reason or scientific temper, such as the law of karma or the Bhikkhu as an omniscient perfect being would have to be renounced. Ambedkar's critical relation to Buddhism opened the space for reconstructing it as a moral point of view or *Dhamma* to pave way for the identification of religion with morality in a community of equals. Thus, unlike Hinduism, Buddhism had the potential to be social and foreground the principles of liberty, equality and democracy, which were central to modernity.

There have been two sets of responses to Ambedkar's writings on Buddhism that have been overlooked for decades in the academic world (Rodrigues 1993; Gokhale 2008a,b). They have been viewed from the oppositional lens as distorting the original teachings of Buddhism, promulgating a new cult and offering an ineffective politics of identity. Buddhist clerics, for instance, saw *The Buddha and his Dhamma* as effecting a break with the Buddhist cannon to dissipate the original message of Buddhism as the quest for personal salvation by reducing it to a social system (Rodrigues 1993; Gokhale 2008a, 133). Thus, Buddhist bhikshusanghas or traditionalists critiqued Ambedkar's book *The Buddha and His Dhamma* on the pages of the very same journal of the Mahabodhi society in which he had published his "Buddha and the Future of his Religion" (Rodrigues 300–1). The clergy maintained that Ambedkar departed from the Buddhist canon with his interpretation of karma, ahimsa and nibbana. They upheld that he preached a dangerous doctrine that would 'shock any real Buddhist'. Their reaction was directed towards Ambedkar's critique of the clergy as doctrinal and rigid. Another Buddhist journal indicted Ambedkar for not giving the sources of his book *The Buddha and His Dhamma* to charge him with false sources and mere ideology. According to this view, Ambedkar advocated a religion of hate while Buddhism is a religion of love. But in contrast to these orthodox monks, Sangharakshita, the Head of the World Buddhist Order, adopted an accommodative approach to Ambedkar's Buddhism. However, despite his respect for Ambedkar's conversion, tended to underplay Ambedkar's divergences with classical Buddhism.[21] Critics with

a Marxist persuasion viewed Ambedkar as neglecting the material conditions of poverty faced by the Dalit community.[22]

However, Ambedkar does not believe in turning to scriptural authority as the basis of religious experience. This is indeed why he critiqued Hinduism. Hence, scholastic preoccupations with the word of Buddha would be tantamount to a fundamentalist reading of scripture from Ambedkar's point of view. In fact, against the orthodox clerics, for him it is only a free reading of Buddha that will allow for a free religion to emerge. For Ambedkar, Buddhism is an orally transmitted tradition so that interpretation is inherent with no one orthodox literal view. The *sanghas* and their social context became the basis for his rethinking Buddhism. Further, religion is political from Ambedkar's point of view. For, an oppressive political practice where there is no recognition of freedom will give rise to a bonded religion, while a free political practice will give rise to a free religion. His linking of politics and religion is an attempt to avoid intellectualization of Buddhism—to acknowledge the oppressed situation and their need for emancipatory practice. For Ambedkar, religion is a genuine need and cannot be left to individual choice. Further, its social role cannot be reduced to politics. Yet religion is also closely related to politics—the two cannot be separated from each other.[23]

Ambedkar's followers offer a contrasting response to that of the Buddhist clergy. They focused on its continuity with the canon and as faithful to the original teachings of the Buddha. By removing the burden of clerical authority, his followers argue that Ambedkar restores its original meaning to Buddhism and also makes it relevant from the contemporary point of view (Rodrigues 301). For many of Ambedkar's neo-Buddhist followers, his work *The Buddha and his Dhamma* has the same global status as classical Buddhist canon. In fact, he is said to live up to the true spirit of Buddhism and is even viewed as a modern Bodhisattva. This attitude of iconization has shown the towering role of Ambedkar in the reenergization of Buddhism and the role he played in raising the question of human dignity with respect to the oppressed castes. Thus, as Jadhav notes there is a sense of intense "gratitude" (2013) in those who follow Ambedkar without necessarily subjecting him to critical scrutiny. As Gokhale notes, Ambedkar's neo-Buddhism is viewed as a "finished product" (2008b, 150), mitigating his spirit of critique as a process. Moreover, it overlooks that there is an ongoing struggle to realize Ambedkar's progressive ideals, including the annihilation of caste. One should instead turn to Ambedkar as someone who has opened up a direction (Gokhale 2008b, 150), which should be explored further. Moreover, such a response overlooks Ambedkar's own stress on an enlightened evaluation as its foundation. His vision can develop further only if there is a transcendence of adulation. Ambedkar's own warning is telling in this respect. As Guha himself notes, Ambedkar believed that the people of India should not "lay their liberties at the feet of

even a great man, or to trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions."[24]

The oppositional and sympathetic responses to Ambedkar's Buddhism reveal the difficulties that are entailed in spelling out the contribution and legacy of a larger than life leader. As Jadhav puts it succinctly, "...every leader is defeated twice once by his opponents and once by his followers" (2013). Ambedkar's opponents believed that he reduced Buddhism to a mere social system, whereas for some of his followers, Ambedkar has a completed system of emancipation. Neither take Ambedkar as offering a work in progress of critique and conversion. The very spirit of a new Buddhist practice that emerged in Maharashtra as a result of his conversion to Buddhism with 380,000 followers on October 15, 1956 was the outcome of Ambedkar's critique of caste. Moreover, both his detractors and followers see Ambedkar as turning to a new religion spurred by his interpretation of Buddhism. But none of these views focus on how he arrived at his interpretation through a critical assessment of both Hinduism and Buddhism (Gokhale 2008, 109). In this preference for Buddhism, Ambedkar does not quite adhere to the position that all religions are one; but rather privileges Buddhism in the course of a comparative assessment of all religions (Gokhale 2008b, 113).[25] This critique was framed by his social understanding of religion in the "wide sense" (110) as morality or a "Religion of Principles" or *Dhamma*. Further, his view that religion has the social role of creating a moral and compassionate fellowship among human beings from diverse backgrounds tends to be undermined by these approaches. It is from this point of view that there is an urgent relevance of Ambedkar's writings on religion today. His choice of Buddhism was governed by the absence of metaphysical entities like God and soul, rationality, egalitarianism and tolerance (Gokhale 2008b, 114). It can be adopted by those who think critically, a crucial need in a democracy. Thus, Ambedkar's contribution to religion can be summarized in Rodrigues' words as that of making tradition critical.[26] For this he takes the relations of power that prevail within them into account in his comparative study of religions. Moreover, such a comparison requires that there be an evaluation of religions, which requires taking its social relations into consideration.

However, an important question emerges in the context of Ambedkar's relevance at the national (and global) level. Is the critical function of religion to be restricted to Buddhism? Can one move beyond his disparagers and devotees to extend his secular Buddhism to all other religions?[27] At first sight a negative answer seems most appropriate. There are several reasons for such a prima facie answer. Ambedkar's own conversion to Buddhism was difficult and complex in the context of the violence of caste afflicted on Dalits and his comparative study of religions (Kamble 2003; Gokhale 2008b, 111; Zelliot 2013, 143–73). Consequently, he devoted much time to the caste problem of Hinduism (1990), spelt out the disunities between Hinduism

and Buddhism (1950; 1957, 242; 2002d), upheld Buddhism over Christianity, Islam and Hinduism (1950) and exhorted the masses oppressed by caste to convert to Buddhism (2002d). Indeed, one of the conversion vows that he advocates is renouncing the worship of Hindu Gods; "I embrace today the Bauddha Dhamma discarding the Hindu Religion which is detrimental to the emancipation of human beings and which believes in inequality and regards human beings other than Brahmins as low born."[28] Further Ambedkar also proclaimed that Hindus who realize the problem of caste will adopt Buddhism (1950). This statement clearly opposes tendencies to "Hinduize" (Guru 1991a, b) Ambedkar's Buddhism, whose academic roots lie in Radhakrishnan (1923, 341–476). These instances reveal that Ambedkar's break with Hinduism seems decisive to the transition to a secular Buddhism. Does this then foreclose the possibility—at least theoretically—of envisaging a reformed Hinduism without the scourge of caste? Can the lessons of Buddhism be applied to religions such as Hinduism? A deeper look at some of his works prior to his work in 1950, "The Future of Buddhism" and the posthumous *The Buddha and His Dhamma* reveals the possibility of an affirmative answer to these questions. In his 1936 Speech "Annihilation of Caste," Ambedkar suggests that Hinduism change its beliefs and practices in keeping with a changing society, which does not uphold eternal values (1990, 103). He upholds that these changes be brought into effect through a standardized book and the subjugation of priests to the authority of the state law. The latter involves abolition of hereditary priesthood, equality between laity and priests and state regulation of priests (1990, 98). Ambedkar also suggests that Hindus introspect their traditional doctrines and practices to selectively appropriate only those that are conducive to the moral growth of the whole society, which alone allows for the growth of an individual (1990, 102). He mentions the possibility of effecting change in Hinduism through contact with Buddhism. He cites the *Bhagvad Gita* as deriving its principles of social morality such as *Nirvana*, *Maitri* and *Karuna* from Buddhism (2002c, 202–4). In his *Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar gives an account of some of the Vedic Rishis who were upheld as worthy of respect by the Buddha (1957, 58–60). He also gives a detailed account of Kapila and the Sankhya philosophy as a significant influence on the Buddha for adopting its rationalism, rejection of God and acceptance of suffering (61–63).[29] Given the reciprocal influence of Buddhism and Hinduism on each other, one cannot rule out the possibility of restricting Hinduism along the egalitarian and secular lines of Buddhism. Buddhism can then be understood as a model or metaphor for a secular religion that is founded on the principles of modern morality, whose spirit can be adopted by all other religions in their endeavour to reform.

The spirit of Buddhism informs Ambedkar's critique of Brahmanical patriarchy in the practical consequence of reforming Hinduism and introducing gender parity through his reforms on the Hindu Code Bill (Rege 2013,

101–201). He critiqued the 19th-century social reform movement—which for most part concentrated on Hinduism—that split family reform from its social counterpart (1990, 37). Thus, it worked towards the abolition of child marriage and advocated widow remarriage. However, the secondary status of women in Hindu society was never linked to caste oppression; hence, social reformers did not focus on the specific need to abolish caste as a structural phenomenon. In contrast, Ambedkar introduced reforms in the Hindu Personal Law, by paying special attention to women; he did so by abolishing birth-right to property, giving half the share to the daughter, making women's limited estate absolute, ending caste hierarchy in marriage and adoption as well as advocating the principle of monogamy and divorce (2013, 212–3). In each of these, he took the secondary status of women in Hinduism as his point of departure, which again distinguishes him from Radhakrishnan. For Radhakrishnan, women in Hinduism occupy a superior position in virtue of their domestic roles (1956, 371–8). Although he does concede to their discrimination under patriarchy and defend their ability to pursue spiritual and social vocations, he upholds the primacy of their reproductive role. Radhakrishnan fails to comprehend that reproduction—biological, social and cultural—reinforces the caste system by disciplining women. Ambedkar acknowledges this through his critique of Brahmanical patriarchy as detrimental to both women and underprivileged castes. This is precisely why the Bill faced bitter opposition from orthodox Hindu groups, government apathy, as well as, piecemeal discussion and implementation, contributing to Ambedkar's resignation as a Law Minister in 1951. As Rege observes, Ambedkar's critique of caste reveals how endogamous marriage sustains both caste and gender hierarchy (2013). By arguing that the caste system is maintained through the repression of women's rights, Ambedkar reconstructs and reforms Hinduism in a gender-inclusive manner.[30] His critique's integration of faith, reason and morality also resonates with Kant.

Ambedkar's reconciliation of reason, morality and faith: Kantian resonance

Ambedkar's social and moral interpretation of Buddhism aims at bringing about a change in social relations at the grassroots level. He defends religion against socialists as a spiritual need, and as a public practice against the liberal private faith by emphasizing the precedence of the social over the political. Against both liberals and the socialists, Ambedkar makes social change in the religious sphere the precondition for political participation (1990). The liberal view believes that one can go about the matter of democratic politics independently of the democratization of society. This is reflected in its version of secularism that separates politics and religion. However, such a separation allows caste and gender oppressions to

continue, for instance by denying underprivileged castes and women entry to temples. Thus, political intervention in religious practice is sometimes necessary; but then it is not effective, if caste discrimination persists in civil society. Thus, social perspectives have to be transformed prior to political intervention. Ambedkar, therefore, connects society (of which religion is a part) with politics. Socialists believed that economic well-being alone matters so that neither social nor political reform are important. This is reflected, he believes, in the socialist thesis that religion will wither away with economic progress. However, Ambedkar did not agree with such economic determinism. He maintains that the power of the priest, who holds greater social authority than the judge, is proof of how religion controls people in India (1990, 42). He narrates how plebeians in Rome could not acquire power despite getting elected through separate electorates because patrician priests were in charge of the oracle at Delphi who would initiate people into political duty only after the goddess permitted it (1990, 43–44).

Ambedkar diagnoses the political exclusion of the oppressed castes as related to their social identity as Hindus. Hence, social change requires a change in religious identity for political participation. Thus, religious reform and egalitarian identity within civil society have implications for political participation. The sanction of law in the political sphere required that the sanction of morality be adhered to in the social sphere. The latter is enforced through religion, which has a critical role in an unjust and impoverished society. It was because Hinduism failed to humanize them that Ambedkar thought it necessary for Dalits to embrace a religion that would permit them to gain equality of status, opportunity and treatment. In his *Buddha and His Dhamma* Ambedkar distinguishes between religion as doctrine or ritual and Buddhist *dhamma* as a moral commitment to core principles of liberty, equality and fraternity (1957, 225–32).[31] Thus, instead of separating civil society and politics like liberalism, Ambedkar attempts to reinvent their relation. His philosophy of religion resonates with the spirit of Marx's call for the revolution in civil society preceding a political one (1967).[32] Ambedkar's critical approach to religion also differs from that of Radhakrishnan in its affinities with Kant's project of reconciling rationality, morality and faith within religion.

Rather than pioneer an exclusively rational approach to religion that privileges Christianity, as Skaria notes (454–5), Kant dwells on the limits of reason to make room for faith (1998, Bxxx-Bxxxi).[33] Kant does suggest that religion be made compatible with reason by eradicating its irrational elements. His kingdom of ends as a version of the kingdom of god attests to a secular philosophical translation of religious terminology (Bernstein 2009, 1046; Habermas 2008, 216). Thus, standard readings of Kant suggest that he subjugates faith to reason to which Radhakrishnan subscribes. He indicts Kant for conflating religion's difference with morality and reducing them to a broad philosophical idea (Radhakrishnan 1932, 88).

Radhakrishnan discerns the personal pursuit of perfection as religion's distinctive feature that transcends morality. Further, his discussion of Kantian morality also is in tune with conventional Kant scholarship that perceives him as a rationalist who severs morality from the domain of lived experience (1911).[34] For Radhakrishnan the personal unconditional character of religion disallows it from being a part of morality that Kant upholds as it is the "apprehension of the real and an enjoyment of it for its own sake which is absent in moral consciousness" (Radhakrishnan 1932, 88). Yet his account of Kant as upholding a rational conception of religion, which is based exclusively on his ethical writings is partial and neglects Kant's discussions of religion.[35] Moreover, he also ignores the inherent conflicts in Kant's reflections on ethics and religion, which testify to the complex relationship between religion and morality.[36] Thus, Kant (begins his discussion on religion) by claiming that morality does not rest on religion to spell out an antagonism between rational morality and historically situated faith (DiCenso 2007, 168; Kant 1996, 57).[37] However, he goes on to point out that the presence of evil reveals that individuals cannot self-sufficiently attain moral ideals, as the latter are influenced by the presence of others. Mitigating evil—so as to freely follow the moral law—requires constructive relations with others, which can be garnered for Kant from shared religious institutions (DiCenso 2007, 168). Thus, religion can play a psychological and pedagogical[38] role in making individuals morally sensitized. The hermeneutics of historical religions can contribute to ethical awareness, choice and practice, as DiCenso notes. This in turn requires adopting a critical approach to religion for Kant where elements like fanaticism are filtered.

Turning to Ambedkar, he critiques Radhakrishnan's arguments in his *Hindu View of Life* (1927) that considers Hinduism's persistence through centuries of history as its strength (1990, 79–80).[39] He notes that it wishes away the role of caste hierarchy in defining the social context in India to overlook how the social frames the opportunities that are available for individual pursuit. Moreover, Ambedkar argues that by taking refuge in Hinduism's centuries-old survival, Radhakrishnan sidesteps the distinction between surviving and doing so in a worthwhile manner (1990). For Ambedkar, Brahminical patriarchy in India that accords maximum opportunities to those with caste and gender privilege has survived but this does not attest to its worth.

One can read the Kantian spirit of critique in Ambedkar's attempt to both critique Hinduism's dogma of caste and also Buddhism (a religion of his choice). Kant's critique of priesthood as "counterfeit service of God" (1996, 6:151–6:153, 6:168) breeding rules of inegalitarian social relations, powerful priesthood and ritualism resonates with Ambedkar. Kant considers such an investment as sacrificing moral conduct through subjective approval in God. Thus, morality requires religion not as its foundation but as its consequence, where the will of the mighty nonhuman lawgiver

coincides with the human will in the formation of an ethical community on earth (1996, 6:99–96:100). Ambedkar's redefinition of key Buddhist themes through the ideals of the French revolution reflect Kant's claim that human beings aspire to achieve their moral goals through a community founded on ethical religion. One can advance similar claims regarding his attempt to reform Hinduism with the Hindu Code Bill. Radhakrishnan overlooks how Kant is well aware of the limits of rationality. Kant's critique of rational theology reveals as much (1998, A568/B596-A642/B670). As Bernstein notes, his critique of reason aims at creating space for faith. Hence, he also advocates a positive role to religion with God as a postulate who motivates human beings to be moral (1999a, 5:133–5:134) and later tracing religion to be the outcome of an ethical community that is forged through faith in God (1998, 6:91–96:147). Kant views religion as a psychological and moral need, rather than a cognitive fact, but does not reduce religion to morality as Radhakrishnan assumes. Similarly, for Ambedkar, religion's foundation on morality mandates that an individual exercise his or her capacity to think independently to create harmonious social relations within the empirical world. Thus, religion need not have *nibbana* or liberation from this world as its focus.

Kant also recognizes the need for a religion compatible with science. Thus, against views such as those of Radhakrishnan, science is not a challenge to religion, since they can be reconciled. For this Kant suggests that instead of reading religious texts in a literal way as biblical theology, one adopts the approach of philosophical theology (1996, 6:9–6:10). The latter acknowledges the boundaries of reason, while engaging with religion. According to Kant, the transition from being evil to being good requires taking the moral point of view. Morality is based on the idea of a free human being who is also able to bind him/herself to laws that are unconditional. It is deontological and self-sufficient in not requiring divine sanction. Yet Kant also recognizes that human beings who honour the moral law aspire to create a world in which morality could be realized, even though such a world would require the sacrifice of personal happiness. The aspiration for the realization of morality is also a hope for its endorsement by another impartial being who recognizes the human respect of the moral law in an ethical community that fulfills the conditions of freedom and equality for moral transformation.

Kant and Ambedkar share the concept of critique in their approaches to religious traditions and practices. Kant defines critique as a way of assessing the limits of an enterprise (1998, B xxii-xxv). A critical approach does not spell out substantive doctrines or systems, it instead examines the conditions of what exists through its evaluation. It has a negative role of indicating problems, but critique also has a positive role of articulating the conditions of any given phenomenon (1998, Bxxv–xxvii). Yet the constructive role of religion as bringing about a moral social order becomes

possible only when there is a destruction of immoral anti-social traditions, an aspect that is missing in Radhakrishnan. Ambedkar's philosophy of religion is based on the interdependent positive and negative functions of critique, which are founded in the human being's capacity for enlightenment. The latter's Kantian sense as thinking without external force is central to Ambedkar's analysis of religion as compatible with rationality and science.

Ambedkar's reflection on religion and modernity has relevance in the search for answers that go beyond the limited approach of attempts such as Radhakrishnan's that fail to comprehend the role of the social in the private pursuit of religion. Ambedkar understands religion within a modern world as not simply individual faith, but rather as a commitment to inclusiveness and egalitarianism in the quest for faith.

Notes

1 I am indebted to Pradeep Gokhale for a detailed discussion on this paper. I thank him, the organizers and participants of the I.C.P.R. seminar *Buddhism, NeoBuddhism and the Question of Caste* at Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath (held from October 3–5, 2013) for their helpful feedback. My gratitude to Aakash Singh Rathore, Biraj Mehta and Rucha Pawar for their comments on the paper, although its weaknesses are mine.

2 This expression is derived from the title of Kant's essay (Kant 1996).

3 Its title, *Aarakshan* or 'reservation', suggested that it would engage with the theme of affirmative action for underprivileged castes in India. This film was directed by Prakash Jha.

4 This detour to the world of popular culture, through Hindi commercial cinema and Avirook Sen's blog site (2011), is in keeping with Ambedkar's own awareness of the significance of the same (Rege 2013, 194, n.5).

5 The film does not historically contextualize the reservation policy. In the 1930s Dalits, under Ambedkar's leadership, asked for a separate electorate. However, it was due to Gandhi's opposition and fast that a compromise was made with reservation for underprivileged castes and tribes in government jobs, education and parliament in the Poona Pact in 1932.

6 In this respect his appearance in a popular film is an "oddity" to use Sen's term.

7 See (Hatcher 2007) for an account of what he terms as "bourgeois" Hinduism, which tried to retain supposed time-less traditional beliefs by reconstructing them in the modern context. Hatcher discusses how reform Hinduism balanced desire and spirituality wherein spirituality could be consumed. One can also argue the same for caste. Modern versions of Hinduism have tried to underplay Hinduism's caste hierarchy by redefining it in alternate ways. They have also homogenized a discrete set of practices as a world religion termed "Hinduism." One attempt is that of Radhakrishnan who is being considered in this paper, whom Hatcher mentions (2007, 302). Others include Tilak and Aurobindo. See King (96–142) for an account of modern Hinduism as a European-influenced phenomenon. King cites Radhakrishnan, among others, as an instance (60). There is no central core of Hinduism as its modern advocates such as Radhakrishnan uphold.

8 Also see Radhakrishnan (1956, 357–62) for a critique of caste as based on heredity and its defense through aptitude.

9 Also see Kiran (1950) for a similar defense of Hindu caste system against Ambedkar.

10 Radhakrishnan terms these as *gunas* (1927, 111).

11 See for instance, Radhakrishnan (1927). Sen makes a special mention of Radhakrishnan's defence of *varna* in his blog.

12 As King notes the idea of Hinduism as a unified domain is not upheld by indigenous Indians but is the outcome of colonial definitions (98–101). Moreover, it is influenced by Brahmin scholars from whom colonial rulers took help (King 102–4).

13 Thus, for instance he upholds that "The whole scheme of Buddhism centers on Buddha's enlightenment" (1932, 90).

14 At the global level, key issues pertaining to the relationship between communities—such as Islam in Europe—have addressed the relationship between religion and politics. This is precisely why European and American philosophers have started addressing the issue of religion with greater vigour, despite neglecting it in the past. Derrida, Rorty, Rawls and Habermas have all linked the resurgence of religion to the disquietudes of secularism.

15 I am indebted to Pradeep Gokhale for this clarification.

16 See Skaria (2015) for an account of Ambedkar's notion of public religion.

17 Ambedkar uses the term "spiritual" to indicate human aspiration for social freedom and equality. His use is reminiscent of the German idealistic tradition's use of the term "Geist."

18 For his critique of the four *varnas* see Ambedkar (1990, 67–76).

19 Narendra Jadhav April 13, 2013 interview. Guha too laments that the architects of modern India have become "victims of sectarian diminution" (2010, 22). Thus, Tagore is venerated by Bengalis, Patel by Gujaratis, Nehru by the Congress party and Ambedkar by Dalits. Guha himself attempts to reconstruct Ambedkar as having national significance having played an active role in drafting the Constitution of India. He approvingly cites three key themes from Ambedkar's speech to the Constituent Assembly as relevant to India at 60 (see Ambedkar 1949). These include Ambedkar's opposition to violence in civil society and hero-worship of political figures, as well as, his view that social democracy precedes political democracy. Each of these themes emerge from Ambedkar's critique of caste violence in civil society. Hence, Ambedkar's arguments regarding caste and religion are relevant to non-Dalits as well. Ambedkar's speech to the Constituent Assembly is relevant to all Indians only because caste is relevant to all Indians.

20 Skaria rightly notes that Ambedkar did not embrace an already existing form of Buddhism (452).

21 See Gokhale (2008, 134–8).

22 Gokhale gives an assessment of Kasbe in this respect, see Gokhale (2008, 138–44). Skaria makes an attempt to reconcile Ambedkar's neo-Buddhism with Marx's critique of religion (459–61). See Ambedkar 2002a for an account of the relation between caste and class.

23 With respect to the accommodative approach of Sangharakshita, as Gokhale notes one cannot overlook the differences between classical Buddhism and that of Ambedkar (2008, 144). Conversely, one cannot reduce Ambedkar's Buddhism to Marxism (Gokhale 2008b, 144).

24 Ambedkar's last speech to the Constituent Assembly quoted in Guha (22–23).

25 Ambedkar's critical approach also contrasts with the Orientalist interpretation of Buddhism as based on canonical texts and focusing on self-perfection

through meditative practice (for a brief description of Orientalist Buddhism, see King (143–60)). Ambedkar does reflect the early Orientalist idea of considering the Buddha to be a social reformer against excesses of ritualism. However, he does not regard the Buddha as a "Hindu Protestantism" (King 145) in the manner of Orientalists or Radhakrishnan as Buddhism is not a branch of Hinduism. Nor does Ambedkar advocate "Protestant Buddhism" (King 150–51). For it is not grounded in any single canon like Protestant Christianity. Ambedkar advocates Buddhism as a process of social criticism that could lead to a transformative perspective towards hierarchical and stagnant social relations.

26 This is the title of Rodrigues's essay (1993).
27 Also see Gokhale (2008b, 111–2).
28 This is Oath 19 quoted in Zelliot (2013, 171).
29 Thanks to Prof. Gokhale for bringing this point to my attention.
30 Guha has not discussed the internationalization of Ambedkar's thought in his critique of Ambedkar's sectarian reception (2010).
31 Ambedkar's interpretation of the prospects for Buddhism differs radically from colonial writers such as Karl Bleitreu who offered a "post-Enlightenment" (Manjapra 58) notion of Buddhism. For Bleibtreu, Buddhism's value rests in its commitment to rebirth and offering a perspective that goes beyond the ideals of the French revolution. His essay entitled "Buddhism: Religion of the Future" in his 1899 book *From Robespierre to the Buddha* is discussed by Manjapra (57–58). However, the relationship between Ambedkar and Orientalism is a subject for another paper.
32 Also see Skaria (2015, 452). Yet there has been a general academic neglect of Ambedkar as a philosopher of religion.
33 "Thus, I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith" (Kant 1998, Bxxx). For a brief overview of the complex terrain of scholarship on Kant's religious perspective, see Davies (2017). Davies rightly notes that Kant cannot be read as a Christian defender or as rooting religion in rationality. Also, see Wood (1996) and Rossi (2009) for nuanced perspectives on Kant's relation to religion and morality.
34 Radhakrishnan attempts to distinguish his own position in this respect from the widely accepted view that both Kant and the ethics of Gita are deontological and non-hedonistic (1911, 465). But he believes that Kant cannot quite be assimilated with Hindu ethics, since he has the privilege of reason and yet commits himself to a causally deterministic phenomenal world. The latter, according to Radhakrishnan, makes Kantian freedom "empty and unreal" (470) as its noumenal position does not impact the phenomenal. For Radhakrishnan, in contrast, the Gita explores ethics through concrete dilemmas between duty and inclination. Unlike Kant, the Gita does not suggest that inclinations should be destroyed but that on the contrary, they should be sublimated to freedom and reflection (474–5). According to Radhakrishnan, the Gita is, thus, a non-hedonistic and non-rationalistic alternative to Kantian ethics (466). Kant was however well aware of the problem of empty universals. This is precisely why he supplements the first formulation of the categorical imperative as a universal principle with that of humanity as an end in itself (second formulation) and that of autonomous willing (third formulation). As DiCenso notes (following Allen Wood who he acknowledges), the second and third formulations of the categorical imperative are attempts to connect its universality with the domain of lived experience and interpersonal relations (168). Radhakrishnan, however, appears to be oblivious to this.

35 Radhakrishnan subscribes to what DiCenso terms as "A strictly idealistic ethics and a corresponding view of rational religion…" (167) with respect to Kant.
36 This notion of "tension" is DiCenso's essay (2007, 167–8).
37 As DiCenso notes, Kant's universal ethics is based on this antagonism (168) In the second part of his "Metaphysics of Morals" Kant distinguishes between formal religion, which considers duties as divine commands and its material counterpart (1999b, 561). For the latter, religion comprises duties to god.
38 DiCenso aptly distinguishes such edification from determinism (169).
39 See (Bharti 2018) for a critique of Radhakrishnan's caste hierarchy from Sankrityayan's perspective as "illiberal liberalism." Also see Sankrityayan's (1982) text in Hindi for the same critique.

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12

RELIGION, CASTE AND MODERNITY

Ambedkar's reconstruction of Buddhism

P. Kesava Kumar

In recent times, religion is a rallying point for many struggles all over the world. Religion becomes a part of public discourse and rights are articulated in the name of religion. Western modernity has been contested for detaching religion and community. Liberal theory is either reformulated or rejected for its atomistic individualism. Against the liberal self, the self, embedded in the social, gets its philosophical prominence. It is clear that religion is centre stage in inaugurating one's own self and as a driving force for politics. The debates of moral and political philosophy are refashioned on religion. Communitarian thinkers are not only upholding a life located in social/cultural/ religious community but also in reframing modernity. The horizon of modernity has broadened. In pursuing justice, they differentiate themselves from conservatism and making their philosophical theories much more egalitarian. The contemporary religious revivalist struggles appear to be meaningful in this context. The Islamic religious nationalist movements in the Middle East against western imperialism and Hindu nationalist movement's confrontation with the secular state in India have succeeded in religionizing politics. It appealed to the people of the respective nations against shallow modernity. Simultaneously, there are manifestations of struggles of the oppressed against structural injustice by asserting one's own social and cultural life. Indigenous traditions, beliefs and practices are used as a social protest against dominance in securing dignity, self-respect and social justice. These struggles are appropriating and defending normative modernity rather than the former. In India, struggles of untouchables have established a tradition of this kind It has its historic continuity with contemporary Dalit movements inspired by the philosophy of Ambedkar. This chapter explores the importance of religion in everyday social and political life of contemporary times by redefining the very idea of religion by Ambedkar. Ambedkar not only defines the religion from a normative and rationalist point of view but also upholds religion against the assumptions of modernity. In this connection, he reconstructs Buddhism as

an egalitarian and humanistic religion and negates Hinduism as a religion for its sanctity due to the hierarchical, inhuman, immoral and oppressive caste system. This chapter highlights the primacy of the righteous social life as a source of religion by locating Ambedkar's conception of religion in general and Buddhism in particular in contemporary debates of moral and political philosophy.

Dalit modernity: a critique of colonial and Brahmanical modernity

Ambedkar's modernity has been a constructive vehicle for struggles of equality on the part of those oppressed by caste. His conception of modernity goes against the colonial mediated modernity and the modernity appropriated by Brahmanical Hindu elite. For him, religion has a different meaning. He has reconstructed the very idea of religion by making it rational, normative and democratic. In fact, he viewed religion as a basis for morality and righteous social life. He explains the function of religion is the reconstruction of society based on the principles of utility and justice. He is critical about Indian modernity (Brahmanical) for grounding in Hinduism and the caste system. He argued that both Hinduism and its caste system are essentially based on the principle of inequality and immorality, against the claims of reformation by the social elite. Moreover, Ambedkar's religion is atheistic, rationalistic, human-centric and based on the morality of the community. He reconstructs Buddhism on these lines. He identifies religion with the 'saddhamma' of Buddhism. For him religion is an emancipatory idea that has the potential in liberating the oppressed (Dalits). In other words, he provides an alternative modernity that negotiates with religion rather than negating religion.

Modernity has been connoted with many meanings. The world is living with 'multiple modernities.' Ambedkar's conception of modernity has its own characterization, which both converges and diverges from dominant Western modernity. It is much more complex and is even ambiguous. Colonial modernity is an immediate available reference point for Indian intellectuals. The concept of Indian modernity has varied with the appropriation of the respective social agency, especially Dalit modernity has its own traits and is different from the Brahmanical Hindu social elite. Interestingly, both overcome the dichotomy of tradition and modernity maintained with the interest of Western modernity. Dalit modernity has been very well articulated by Ambedkar. Dalit modernity is based on the value of human dignity and self-respect. In persuasion of this, he interrogates irrational, unjust and exploitative practices of the traditional Hindu social order by invoking rationality and ethicality. He upholds the Dalit self, nurtured in indigenous tradition by claiming the elements of humane and

democratic practices. On the other hand, Brahmanical class is selective of the elements of modernity. The fruits of modernity are enjoyed and even monopolized by this class at the material level, and, at the same time, they are maintained intact within their own tradition at the spiritual/religious level. The modernity project of the Hindu Brahmanical class initially seems to provide scope for reforming the traditional order and religious life but ultimately ends up as anti-modern. As an ideal of modernity, it professed equality in the spiritual realm but not ready to extend equality in the material realm. This trajectory of modernity could be seen from the continuity of the social reform of colonial times to Hindu nationalism of post-colonial times. Dalits have been systematically excluded from the project of Brahmanical modernity. In this context, Dalits are negotiating with the ideals of modernity to overcome the social exclusion, exploitation, suffering and humiliation imposed by Hindu tradition. Dalit modernity has very much mediated the liberal, radical and communitarian philosophies in its own way, both by associating and differentiating from these political traditions on different points (Kesava Kumar 2013).

In the colonial context of India, religion has invoked as the social self of the nation. People are mobilized around religion and there are attempts to redefine the very idea of religion to suit contemporary political interests. Hinduism is depicted as a symbol of spiritualism against western materialism. The intellectuals engaged in social reform and nationalist movements were actively involved in this process. As the intellectuals mostly drew from the elite Brahmanical class and imagined a nation from their subjective position, their immediate concern was to consolidate their cultural/social identity against colonial rulers. On one hand, they tried to juxtapose Hinduism as the Indian tradition with Western tradition and on other side attempted to minimize the differences within Hinduism. In that process, they were compelled to talk about their social reality, which is caste-ridden. Moreover, they were afraid that lower castes are asserting their cultural identity by moving outside of the Hindu fold. Parallel to this, the intellectuals drawn from Dalit-Bahujans have started consolidating their social identity alternative to the dominant construction of Hinduism. The scheme of this intellectual tradition exposes the nexus between caste and religion and its oppressive character. They argued for dignity and justice. They projected their cultural tradition as indigenous, naturalistic, rationalistic and humane in nature against Brahmanical Hinduism. Ambedkar is a figure of culmination of this democratic tradition and normative modernity.

In post-independent India, from the decade of the eighties, the rise of the Dalit movement, and, on the other side, the Hindu nationalist movement, brings back the discussion on religion and its relation to caste in modern times. Against the ideals of modernity, there are attempts to defend Hindu

nationalism with the logic of postmodernism. Dalits are asserting their own identity by invoking the indigenous cultural traditions and at the same time articulating their rights through the logic and language of modernity. The identification of Dalits with religion and modernity is complex and it definitely differs from both Western colonial and Brahmanical modernity. Ambedkar provides historical and philosophical inputs in understanding the religion of the untouchables against the dominant conception of religion. He finds rational/natural and democratic potential of the religion of untouchables. The social rationality he put forward through the method of philosophy of religion is central to the discourse of modernity. This chapter explores the general understanding of the very idea of religion with an emphasis on the philosophical method adopted by Ambedkar in understanding religion. This has been illustrated through Ambedkar's reading of anti-egalitarian Hinduism and his construction of humanistic, naturalistic, rationalistic and ethical religion of Buddhism.

Towards an understanding of religion

Religion has been conceptualized from the debates such as tradition versus modernity, religion versus science and reason versus faith. Historically, religion has undergone many changes. Its meaning has been derived from the social context. Religion becomes a metaphor for the identity of a social group and has an invariable relation with one's own life and social practices. Historically religion has many meanings. It has been understood as a principle of governance and also as a means of exploitation of the masses. The idea of religion has changed significantly with changing social, economic and political conditions. It has the quality of both endurance and change. There are social forces defending the religion and also opposing the religion. The origin and function of religion has been explained by various philosophical, theological, anthropological/sociological, historical and psychological theories.

Religion has been viewed critically from many fronts in modern times. It was understood as a pre-modern idea. It was considered as a hurdle for progress and development. Religious faith could not stand for reason. Modernity is interwoven with the elements of rationality, science, humanism, secularism, progress and development, whereas religion was identified with tradition, irrationality, faith, dogmatism and backwardness. Marxists propagated religion as the opium of the masses, as the sigh of an oppressed creature, soul of the soulless and heart of the heartless (Marx 1970). Freud explained religion as illusion. According to him, religion was an expression of underlying psychological neurosis and distress (Freud 1961: 14). Liberal thinkers pushed it to a private affair. Liberalism favoured freedom of religion but separated religion from state. There are many strands of liberalism and there are distinguishable attitudes towards religion. Liberalism could

be hostile, indifferent, mixed, cooperative or favourable with respect to religion. One kind of liberalism is hostile to religion. It proceeds from the view that institutional religion was a disreputable record of oppression, persecution and violence. This hostile liberalism finds its themes in French enlightenment. The Enlightenment arose from an antipathy to what it perceived to be blind adherence to authority, tradition, custom, habit and faith. It valourized reason, independent thought, autonomy and scientific method. This strand of liberalism was represented by Voltaire, John Dewey, Alan Ryan and Richard Rorty.[1] Voltaire's "secular philosophy was a formidable, almost irresistible rival of Christianity. For Voltaire, the "church was the implacable enemy of progress, decency, humanity, and rationality."[2] Dewey did not object to God talk, but he rejected any concept of the supernatural. He argued for democratic religion and common faith. Conservatives or Satanists, on the other hand, upheld religion. For them, God is the only solution for worldly problems. They were opposed to any kind of change in the sacred texts/shastras. Edmund Burke is the typical representative of conservative tradition. Burke contrasted tradition and reason, and in so doing placed stability, consensus, prejudice and prescription on the side of tradition. On the side of reason, Burke placed conflict, rational reflection and revolution. He was critical of French revolution on this account. In his book *Why I am not a Christian?* Bertrand Russell regards religion as a disease born of fear and as a source of untold misery to the human race. Interestingly, he differentiates Buddhism from other historic religions. 'Of the great religions of history, I prefer Buddhism, especially in its earliest forms, because it has had the smallest element of persecution. Buddhism is a combination of both speculative and scientific philosophy. It advocates the scientific method and pursues that to a finality that may be called rationalistic. In it are to be found answers to such question of interest as 'What is mind and matter? Of them which is of great importance? Is the universe moving towards a goal?'[3] It is clear that there are strong attempts to undermine religion in the wake of modernity, reason and scientific understanding of the world. In other words, modernity is opposed to religious world views by considering these views as traditional. Tradition is considered as an uncritical acceptance of the past, which is in the form of beliefs, rituals and scriptural authority. Tradition has vested in religion and its irrational social practices and mythical authority. Modernity is considered to be breaking away from tradition. We can see that a kind of dichotomous opposition between tradition and modernity has been constructed.

Construction of religion: overcoming the dichotomy of tradition–modernity

In the Indian context, both religion and modernity have acquired different meanings. Most of the Indian intellectuals contested the dichotomous

opposition between tradition and modernity. The social reformers and nationalist thinkers blurred the binary between tradition and modernity in the backdrop of colonial modernity. It is argued that the dominant construction of modernity suited colonial interests at the expense of the colonized. The dominant perspective of modernity is equated with industrialization and scientific and technological advancement, which were limited to western countries. Indian thinkers were critical about the dogmatic social practices of tradition that are often identified with religion, and at the same time, they negotiated religion with modernity through the reformation of religion. Indian intellectuals have overcome the tradition–modernity dichotomy in their own way rather than accepting readymade alternatives to tradition manufactured in the west. They engaged with 'religion' on different grounds. For instance, Indian intellectuals such as Gandhi, Ambedkar and J. Krishnamurti argued in favour of religiousness (Kesava Kumar 2015). Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* is critical of modern western civilization and argues in favour of life based on spirituality. To fulfil this idea, he proposed a universal notion of religion, Hinduism. On the other hand, Ambedkar too proposes Buddhism as the religion that is based on righteous social life. He upholds a tradition that stands for reason and morality. J. Krishnamurti totally rejects tradition, which is the product of thought and has continuity with the past. He believed that tradition is built upon myths, dogmas, beliefs and authority. Interestingly, he too argues for religion. For him, religion means deprogramming the mind of all the systems, beliefs, dogmas, superstitions and conditionings. He considers the essence of religion as freedom. It is the feeling of love and compassion, the seeking of truth. To be religious is to be chiocelessly aware that there is freedom from the known (Kesava Kumar 2015: 164).

In India, religion is often projected as a way of life. There is a strong opinion that Indian philosophy is inseparable from religion. Religion has been used as a means to suit the political interests of intellectuals. On one hand, it has been used as a means of protest by Brahmanical and anti-Brahmanical forces from different political positions against the colonial rule. On the other hand, there have been conscious attempts to converse religion in modern, scientific and rationalistic terminology. Indian intellectual history reveals that almost all major thinkers engaged with the idea of religion. Religion seems to be central to their writings, and for social and political actions. The colonial experience provided them with an occasion to rethink about their traditions and socio-cultural practices that are intertwined with religion. The policies were articulated as a protest against colonial domination in the language of religion. In other words, Indian intellectuals set religion as a protest against domination. In the process, either they reformed their religion or dogmatically supported tradition without any critical scrutiny. They came up with a new language

to articulate their social anxieties and political aspirations through religion. Religion too acquired new meanings. Social reformers and nationalists of colonial times made conscious attempts to reconstruct religion in the backdrop of colonial/Western rationality and enlightenment. The Dalit-Bahujan intellectuals too reconstructed religion as a protest and this protest was launched against both—colonial dominance and Brahmanical exploitation. It is argued by some of the scholars that the Indian intellectuals of both Brahmanical and Dalit-Bahujan camps constructed religion from the source of anglicized and orientalist's exposition of Indian religious tradition. Although Ambedkar too used material supplied by the anglicized and Orientalist scholars, we can see him developing a novel, critical and creative approach in understanding religion.

The modern construction of religion is traced back to Anglicized and Orientalist understanding and intervention of Indian cultural traditions. Anglicists considered India to be corrupt. They believed that its culture was degenerate and its population irrational, retarded, superstitious and morally depraved. The Orientalists, on the other hand, genuinely sought to understand the foreign culture. Surely, they wanted to bring reform. But they were certain that a transformation could only be successful if it resonated with the mores of the natives. In their assessment of the fundamental structure of Indian society, unerringly, both identified brahmins as the 'priests'. They both were convinced that these 'priests' had a negative influence on religion and society. Brahmins were held responsible for the creation and sanctification of the caste system, which brought social development to a halt. They held that this system consisted of a rigid social compartmentalization and that it was created to preserve religious and social privileges of the Brahmin caste. Anglicists found Indian culture and society to be intrinsically corrupt from the very beginning. Orientalists, however, saw India's culture as being based on sound principles that steadily degenerated. The cause of corruption, however, was the same in both cases, viz. 'Brahmanism' (Gelders and Derde 2003: 4611). Raf Gelders and Willem Derde (2003: 4611) proposed that both the idea of religious degeneration and the role played by the priests in this process are derived from deep-seated Christian conceptions of religion. Europeans from diverse ideological and religious backgrounds identified brahmins as priests and Brahmanism as a 'religion of the priests'. This common understanding derived its consistency from a Christian understanding of religion. They further argue (2003: 4611–17) that even the writings of Ram Mohan Roy and Babasaheb Ambedkar reveal an unconditional acceptance of Europe's conceptualization in a debate over religion that continued in the 20th century. Romila Thapar too pointed out that modern construction of Hinduism is often acclaimed as following the defence of Orientalism: "The work integrating a vast collection of myths, beliefs, rituals and laws into a coherent religion and of

shaping an amorphous heritage into a rational faith known now as "Hinduism" were endeavours initiated by Orientalists."[4] As she invokes Gramsci to understand the modern Hindu identity, in Gramsci's terms, the class, which wishes to become hegemonic, has to nationalize itself and the new 'nationalist' Hinduism comes from the middle class.[5] Romila Thapar further explores the nexus between caste and religion or the sects of religion in earlier times.' She reminds us that this social dimension as well as the degree to which a religious sect had its identity in caste or alternatively was inclusive of caste, has been largely ignored in the modern interpretation of early Hinduism. With the erosion of social observances and caste identity, there is now a search for a new identity and here the creation of a new Hinduism becomes relevant.[6] Sumit Sarkar observed that on the whole the major social reform initiatives were much more related to gender injustice within the reformers' own middle class, high-caste milieu. Caste was critiqued in such circles primarily for contributing to disunion, as a hindrance to the process of gradual unification of Indian people. They thought this to be progress under a fundamentally 'providential', modernizing British rule. The social injustice argument, while not absent, remained secondary (Sarkar 1998: 365). Caste was critiqued for obstructing national unity or being a hindrance for high-caste improvement. They never bothered to take note of grievances or protests of lower castes. While at the time of the Nationalist movement, political freedom was the priority and they were not bothered about either social reform or social freedom.

At this historical juncture, the dominant religion, Hinduism has not only been redefined by the Indian intellectuals but also contested by drawing from non-Brahmin sections. They even counter-posed Hinduism with alternative religions and indigenous traditions. In restructuring or democratizing the society, they recognized the nexus between religion and social institution such as caste, and eventually fought against both. The non-Brahmin thinkers such as Jyotiba Phule and Periyar treated Hinduism as an Aryan religion. They argued that their religion is distinctive from Brahmanical Hinduism. They proposed alternatives to Hinduism that were free from Brahmanical dominance. Phule proposed *sarvajank satya dharma* and Periyar attacked Hinduism from an atheistic point by arguing for the distinctiveness of Dravidian culture from Brahmanical Aryan religion. Some of the Dalit Bahujan scholars searched their identity in Buddhism. They considered Buddhism as an egalitarian religion opposed to caste dominance. Moreover, they believed that Buddhism had an impulse of modernity and stood for reason. Iyothee Thassar and Lakshmi Narasu of Madras presidency invoked Buddhism against Hinduism (Narasu 2003). G. Aloysius observed that there were attempts even before the Ambedkar's historic conversion to Buddhism, to resuscitate the core philosophical and social ideas of the Buddha, across the subcontinent, mostly

in the vernacular idiom, as a means to express the existential problems of subalternized, but also as a vehicle of their socio-political emancipation (Aloysius 2004).

In early 20th century of Madras presidency, M. Singaravelu, P. Lakshmi Narasu and Iyothee Thassar of different social backgrounds with the encouragement and support of Colonel Olcott of Theosophical Society, united in their commitment to Buddhism and tended to interpret it somewhat differently to suit their own existential needs. Singaravelu, with his inclination towards the rising communist paradigm in the west, saw Buddha as an atheistic rationalist; for Lakshmi Narasu, the Buddha was a humanist rationalist par excellence; and for Iyothee Thassar, the Buddha and his teachings were primarily embodied within Tamil-Dravidian traditions contesting the conservative-vedic cultural and historical traditions, hence to be reconstructed as a main force of socio-cultural rationality (Aloysius 2004: xiii). It may be noted that though both Lakshmi Narasu and Iyothee Thassar shared similarity in fundamentals and were distinct from others, they had also minor differences in their Buddhist vision. Narasu drew inspiration from the rationalist–humanistic and scientific writings of the Western world, while Iyothee Thassar was soaked within the Tamil tradition, literature, culture and history. Iyothee Thassar did not perceive the same level of resonance with Lakshmi Narasu, he was quick to brand Narasu's Buddhism as 'strange' and 'scientific', meaning thereby that it did not make anti-casteism the central issue (Aloysius 2004: xvi).

In constructing Buddhist identity against Brahmanical Hinduism, caste occupied the central role in modern times. The Dalit intellectuals Iyothee Thassar and Ambedkar constructed their social and cultural identity by invoking Buddhism as their native religion. Both of them embraced Buddhist religion as an emancipatory identity. They identified Buddhism as a religion of the oppressed. Further, Dalit identification with Buddhism was presented as the recovery of cultural past rather than their conversion to it. As Aloysius explained the religion of the oppressed is a self-conscious, self-differentiating and self-defining sacralized ideology, set against the dominant, unethical challenge and superiority. It is an ethically ideal world view, embodying a social order that is egalitarian and by implication, envisaging a more just share in society for themselves (Aloysius 2015: 15–18).

Religion, morality and modernity

Generally, religion is viewed as an irrational belief and a matter of faith. Religion is considered to be a pre-modern idea. Modernity has been celebrated as an expression of freedom, reason, scientific rationality, enlightenment, secularism and humanism. Modernity has undermined religion by its critical

approach towards the latter. According to modern rationalism, truth about the world can be reached by way of human faculties, in particular through methods that give us access to things as they really are. Such rationalism takes human comprehension as the determiner not only of how we come to know the world, but also what constitutes legitimate knowledge. Modernity has different connotations and is experienced in different ways. Across the cultures, we may find crucial differences in the ways modernity is experienced and defined. In the west, there is an increasingly critical attitude towards the modern condition in general and Western legacy of post-enlightenment rationalism in particular. Both within west and outside the west, we may find different propositions of modernity. Some came with the idea of multiple modernities. Charles Taylor (1989) and MacIntyre (2011) are critical about dominant western notions and articulated a communitarian position against the liberal view. Radical individualism, which is centred on the self and not attached to any other society, eroded the meaningfulness of life. He argues that the dominant conception of modernity has undermined the family, citizenship and community and even eroded the conditions of freedom. Modernity is a new conception of moral order of the society. Taylor (1989: 195–7) argues that the atomistic Western modernity is narrowing our horizons and flattening our lives. He holds that the normative authority of instrumental reason and social atomism is responsible for humans not realizing the richness and fuller meaning of life. He differentiates *acultural* modernity from cultural modernity (1999: 42–43). For Taylor (2007: 61, 572) modernity is grounded in religion and MacIntyre prefers a Homeric life, which is prominently viewed as pre-modern. Both argued that the meaning of life is embedded in social life. Taylor believed that the notion of 'good' shapes and opens up our moral world thereby disclosing or establishing our identity as moral agents. He reflects on morality by inviting a philosophical conversation with diverse voices of modernity and their respective sources and traditions (Taylor 1989: 62, 122). The cultural theory of modernity understands society as a picture of plurality of human cultures, each of which has a language and set of practices that define specific understandings of personhood, social relations, state of mind/soul, good and bad, virtues and vices. Taylor seeks the reflexive and hermeneutic kind of modernity (Taylor 1989: 51, 171). He distinguishes two distinctive kinds of elements of modernity—the moral order and social imaginary. The moral order is an explicit set of ideas about how we should act and why the social world is arranged in the way that it is. The social imaginary is a more elusive set of self-understandings, background practices and horizons of common expectations that are not always explicitly articulated, but that gives people a sense of shared group life. Further Taylor argues that demand for recognition is a basic human good

Ambedkar too believes that religion safeguards the moral domain. It deploys sentiments, feelings and culture to secure the moral domain and make

it universal (Rodrigues 2002: 19). He too searches for a moral order in the community. In his search, he argues that Hinduism is not qualified as community and it is anti-social in spirit. He invokes Buddhism as a religion qualified as community and social. It stands for reason and morality. His notion of religion is rational, secular and modern.

Modernity does not have different meanings in India but it has come with different versions. The Indian nationalists have an ambivalent attitude to colonial modernity. Their discourse towards modernity is philosophical and cultural but often epistemologically insensitive and inconsistent to the ideal of modernity. Viewing modernity as a significant advance over the pre-modern past, Dalit Bahujan thought upholds a distinctive version, and is markedly different from mainstream nationalism. The cultural nationalism proposed by the nationalists is viewed as oppressive by these intellectuals. Gopal Guru pointed out that the celebration of India's spiritual superiority over the material west could be understood in the context of national imagination. Invoking spiritual/cultural superiority by nationalist thinkers and leaders by implication seeks to ignore the internal forms of humiliation that emanate from the social practices based on caste, untouchability and gender discrimination. He further argues that the emergence of modern society is both enabling and constraining at the same time. However, modernity creates an awareness of the conditions of the servile class and claimable rights (Guru 2009: 4).

According to Dalit Bahujan thought, the principles of modernity are superior to the principles expressed in the existing social institutions, and can therefore, be used to interrogate both colonial modernity and the modernity that brahmins were trying to install in India. Dalit-Bahujan intellectuals uphold human reason in scrutinizing traditions and customs. For brahmins, therefore, modernity is of instrumental value, while for Dalit-Bahujans, it throws up resources for their enablement and emancipation. Ambedkar resorts to Buddha's teachings and practices rather than to customs and practices, as the very embodiment of reason. Reason is contra-posed to the ritualistic and other-worldly ways. It is available to the people without the need to depend on external resources. It is embedded in the sensuous ways of life as it is in the reflective (Rodrigues 2008: 17–18). Ambedkar's understanding of religion provides a new dimension to modernity. His religion is based on a moral theory that internalizes the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. It ensures human dignity and self-respect. For him, religion is an ideal of emancipation.

Ambedkar: a conceptual understanding of religion

For Ambedkar, religion is a moral force in governing a society. He considers religion as a social factor that provides a feeling of community and belonging. Religion is a rational and moral ideal. For him, an ideal society

is that which is governed by the moral conscience with free flow of communication. Keeping in view of this conception of religion, he is critical about Hinduism and termed it as "anti-social." He held an opinion that Hindus cannot be said to form a society or nation due to lack of 'consciousness of kind'. The consciousness that exists in Hindus is the consciousness of caste (BAWS-1: 50–51). He characterizes society as a people sharing and participating in common activity rather than living in physical proximity and having similar habits, customs and beliefs. As he says, "the caste system prevents common activity and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and consciousness of its own kind" (BAWS-1: 51). He characterizes that inequality is the soul of Hinduism. It is grounded on a social system called the caste system. It kills the public spirit. Ambedkar felt that there is an immediate need to reform Hinduism in his work *Annihilation of Caste* (BAWS-1: 37–80). For a healthy society, the caste system has to be annihilated. Before initiating any change, we have to reform society. In *Philosophy of Hinduism*, he provides a methodology to understand religion. He calls this methodology as a philosophy of religion. He evaluates Hinduism and its social order by this method. He found that 'Hinduism is inimical to equality, antagonistic to liberty and opposed to fraternity (BAWS-3: 66).' He understood that reforming Hinduism using his line of thought is difficult. He interprets Indian history in religious terms. He viewed Indian history as the struggle between a revolutionary religion, Buddhism, and counterrevolutionary religion, Brahmanism, in his work *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India* (BAWS-3: 151–429). In pursuing his moral society, he constructs Buddhism in his *Buddha and His Dhamma* (BAWS-11). He brings Buddhism parallel to Marxism in *Buddha or Karl Marx* (BAWS-3: 441–64).

Ambedkar is not against religion per se. In fact, he recognizes the primacy of religion. Religion is central to his philosophy and had implications for social and political life. He often refers to Burke in realizing the importance of religion and at the same time he maintains the critical distance from Burke's philosophical position. Ambedkar, in agreement with Burke notes that 'true religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true civil governments rests, and both their sanction.'(BAWS-1: 76) Further he agrees with his teacher John Dewey on the recognition of the importance of religion and the need for democratizing religion. He follows the method adopted by Dewey in evaluating religion. Like him, he is critical about supernaturalism and looks for reasoned religion. In this way Ambedkar overcomes the tradition–modernity dichotomy. We could not treat him either as traditionalist or modernist in generally known terms. He locates the individual in the social, and demands that the social has to be regulated by principles of morality. He adopts social morality, internalizing

the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity as criteria in evaluating religion. He philosophizes about religion and brings about the philosophy of religion as methodology. He connects religion and politics in their capacity to govern our lives. He politicizes religion from a moral framework.

Ambedkar's conception of religion has different dimensions. He unifies diverse approaches in understanding religious–anthropological, sociological, historical, theological/religious and philosophical. His approach is anthropological in explaining the origin and evolution of religion from savage to modern religion. As Ambedkar explains, it is true that savage society practices magic, believes in taboo and worships the totem. But it is wrong to suppose that these constitute religion or form the source of religion. To take such a view is to elevate what is incidental to the position of the principal. These elemental facts of human existence are incidental and means but are not ends. *The end is life and the preservation of life.* Ambedkar comes to the conclusion that "*Life and preservation of life are the core and centre of the religion of the savage society*". (BAWS-3: 10) It is these life processes that constitute the substance and source of religion. Prof Crawley endorses this (BAWS-3: 11). In both savage and civilized religions, the central interest is in the life processes by which individuals are preserved and hence maintained. But they differ on some points. In savage society there is religion without god. In savage society there is morality but it is independent of religion. (BAWS-3: 10–11).

Ambedkar's approach to religion is historical as it is about explaining the transformation of religion. For him, religion is not eternal or static but undergoes constant change with changing conditions. He argues that Hindus must recognize that there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing sanatan, that everything is changing, that change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society. He explains how religions have undergone change with changing conditions. He argues that Hinduism is no exception to this.[7] He acknowledges that science has influenced religion and has implications for our knowledge.[8] He provides the historical interpretation of religious revolution. As he quotes Tiele, all religions of the civilized and uncivilized world, dead or living are a historical and psychological phenomenon, in all their manifestations (BAWS-3: 4). It is the history of religion that provides facts. He argues that historical facts have to be understood comprehensively. He calls it as a philosophy of religion. As he opined on the philosophy of religion, we should be able to discover in the varied manifestations a common principle to whose roots in human nature we can point, whose evolution we can trace by intelligent stages from lower to higher and more adequate forms, as well as its intimate relations with the other main factors in human civilization (BAWS-3: 4).

From the historical facts, he constructs the sociological/social theory of religion. For all his philosophical discourses, the social is central.

He regards religion as based on the principle of social solidarity. He is critical of caste and Hinduism for its anti-social tendencies. He tries to understand the social from rationalistic, moralistic and naturalistic perspectives. He prefers critical tradition that is relevant in modern times. The dead past has no meaning for him. He looks for a just social order. He is critical about Hinduism for its unjust social order and demands for reforming it. He maintains that any change or revolution is futile unless and until it brings a change in the social realm. He believes that the social precedes the political.

Ambedkar's social theory is in tune with his philosophy of religion. *Philosophy is concerned with knowing the truth. Religion is concerned with the love of truth. Philosophy is static. Religion is dynamic. These differences are merely two aspects of one and the same. Philosophy is static because it is concerned only with knowing truth. Religion is dynamic because it is concerned with the love of truth* (BAWS-3: 86). It means that Ambedkar was concerned more about living with truth rather than knowing the truth. Ambedkar points out that a Hindu is not prepared to face inquiry about religion. He either argues that religion is of no importance or he takes shelter behind the view—fostered by a study of comparative religions—that all religions are good. There is no doubt that both these views are mistaken and untenable (BAWS-3: 22).

In *Philosophy of Hinduism*, Ambedkar uses his philosophical method in understanding religion and applies it to Hinduism. Ambedkar considers philosophy of religion as having both descriptive and normative character. In so far as it deals with the teachings of a religion, philosophy of religion becomes a descriptive science. In so far as it involves the use of critical reason for passing judgement on those teachings, the philosophy of religion becomes a normative science (BAWS-3: 5). He further explains that a study of philosophy of religion involves determination of three dimensions. First, what is the definition of religion? Second, the ideal scheme for which religion stands. Third, philosophy of religion is the criterion to be adopted for judging the value of the ideal scheme of divine governance for which a given religion stands. Ambedkar too approaches religion from theological point of view. He differs with traditional theologies such as mythological, civil and revealed theologies and offers natural theology. Natural theology is the doctrine of god and divine, as an integral part of the theory of nature. Ambedkar considers *religion to mean the propounding of an ideal scheme of divine governance, the aim and object of which is to make the social order in which men live a moral order* (BAWS-3: 6). According to him, the best method to ascertain the criterion by which to judge the philosophy of religion is to study the revolutions which religion has been through. To know the philosophy of any movement or any institution, one must study the revolutions that the movement or the institution has been through. Revolution is the mother of philosophy and if it is not the mother of philosophy,

it is a lamp that illuminates philosophy (BAWS-3: 8). Ambedkar illustrates the religious revolutions of India. He maintains that a religious revolution touches the nature and content of ruling conceptions of the relations of god to man, of society to man and of man to man.

Ambedkar explains the historical journey of religion from savage society to civilized society. Savage society is marked by the performance of rites and ceremonies, the practice of magic or taboo and the worship of fetish or totem. Ambedkar observes that in savage society, there is no trace of god. There is no bond between morality and religion. Morality is independent of religion. These are connected to a certain occasion that represents the crisis of human life. Although the relation between God and religion is not quite integral, the relation between religion and morality is. Both religion and morality are connected with the same elemental facts of human existence—namely life, death, birth and marriage. Religion consecrates these life processes while morality furnishes rules for their preservation (BAWS-3: 12).

In civilized society god comes in the scheme of religion and morality becomes sanctified by religion. The civilized religion has undergone further radical revolution from religion of antique society to religion of modern society (BAWS-3: 12). It may be that the idea of god had its origin in the worship of the great man in society, the hero-giving rise to theism—with the society building a faith in its living god. It may be that the philosophical speculation upon the problem as to who created life—giving rise to deism—has given rise to the society's belief in god as architect of the universe. In any case the idea of god is not integral to religion. How it got fused into religion is difficult to explain.

Ambedkar elaborately explains the evolution of religion from ancient to modern. He even acknowledges science in changing the conceptions and practices of religion. He comes to an understanding that in ancient society men and their Gods formed a social, political as well as a religious whole. Religion was founded on kinship between god and worshippers. Modern society has eliminated god from its composition. It consists only of people (BAWS-3: 14). The God of the antique society was an exclusive god. God was owned by and bound to one single community. Solidarity was found between god and community. God had become attached to community, and the community had become attached to its god. This view has its own implications. Antique society never came to conceive that god could be a universal god, the god of all. It could not conceive that there was any such thing as humanity in general. As Ambedkar note, at one end of the revolution was the antique society with its religious ideal in which the end was society. At the other end of revolution is the modern society with its religious ideal in which the end is the individual. To put the same fact in terms of norms, it can be said that the norm or the criterion, for judging right and wrong in the antique society was utility, while the norm or the criterion for judging

right and wrong in modern society is justice (BAWS-3: 22). In *Philosophy of Hinduism*, Ambedkar concludes that Hinduism is not qualified to be called a religion. The philosophy of Hinduism is such that it cannot be called the religion of humanity. The philosophy of Hinduism neither satisfies the test of social utility nor does it satisfy the test of individual justice (BAWS-3: 71).

In *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar looks out for the possibility of reforming Hinduism based on his conception of religion. He argues that we have to recognize that Hindu society is a myth. Caste has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. Ambedkar opposes rule-based religion and favours a religion based on principles. He maintains that Hinduism is bound by rules rather than principles. Hindu religion, as contained in the *Vedas* and *Smirits*, is nothing but a mass of sacrificial, social, political and sanitary rules and regulations, all mixed up. For Hindu dharma means commands and prohibitions. The word dharma as used in the Vedas in most cases means religious ordinances or rites. Even Jaimini in Purva Mimamsa defines dharma as a desirable goal or result that is indicated by injunctive (vedic) passages. What Hindus call religion is really law or best legalized class-ethics. Ambedkar refuses to call this code of ordinances, as religion. The first evil of such a code of ordinances, misrepresented to the people as religion is that it tends to deprive moral life of freedom and spontaneity and to reduce it to a more or less anxious and servile conformity to externally imposed rules (BAWS-1: 75).

Religion and caste

Historically, we may find many interpretations of a relation between religion and caste. We find an invariable relation between Hinduism and caste. Dumont in his work *Homo Hierachicus* holds that political and economic domains of social life in India are encompassed by the 'religious life.' The religious principle becomes articulated in terms of the opposition of purity and pollution. F.G. Bailey argues that caste was not a unique moral or religious system. It was merely a more elaborate form of social stratification to be found in many other societies: the true basis of the distinction between those of low and high caste was the differential access to political and economic resources.[9] Ambedkar at length discusses in *Castes in India* the nexus between caste and religion in Indian society. He explains that the caste system is sustained by Hinduism. The caste system is considered by him as a perversion of the Chaturvarnya order ascribed by Brahmanism. According to Ambedkar, hierarchy, lack of social efficiency, social immobility, disruptive tendencies, ex-communication, and endogamy are the primary features of the caste system. The caste system opposes natural law and the spirit of human development (BAWS-1). In *Annihilation of Caste*,

Ambedkar further argues that caste is anti-social, resists the spread of civilization, kills the public spirit, and denies common culture. '*The caste system prevents common activity and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and conscious of its own being*' (BAWS-1: 51).

Caste is identified with social life most often regulated/prompted by principles of religion. In other words, caste is a social function of religion. The dominant Indian philosophic thought has supported the *varnashrama dharama* as a religious principle for the good of society as a whole. This kind of thinking and practice has sustained for many generations until it got contested by the victims of this social/religious phenomenon.

Colonial modernity has significantly influenced the Western liberal educated intellectuals of elite communities in reformulating their ideas on religion and caste. The reforming of religion has implications for caste. But the religious reformers are not explicit about caste. They appeal that originally religion has nothing to do with caste. The religious literature, especially Vedic, and Upanishadic and the Gita have no sanctity for the caste system of contemporary times. Gandhi is the culmination of this kind of thinking. On the one hand he broadens the scope of Hinduism through the claim of its universal inclusiveness of every religion, and on the other supports varnashrama dharma as the age-old wisdom. The practice of untouchability and caste has nothing to do with his scheme of religion although he opposes untouchability. The ideals of modernity have not changed the core of religion and caste, and their nexus. It has only altered the language in justifying religion and its relation to caste. At the same time, there exists a counter current to the dominant construction of religion, especially to Hinduism from non-Brahmanical communities. They may be marginalized in our academic discourse but had an established intellectual tradition with sound logic among their communities. The late-medieval subaltern saints fought against caste system within the religious terms. Kabir, Ravidas, Chokamela and Veerabraham are known exemplary figures. In colonial times, Jyotiba Phule and Ramaswamy Periyar came against the Brahmanical Hinduism by claiming that their traditions have nothing to do with caste. They had an attempt to read history and culture from a non-Brahmanical perspective. Scholars such as Lakshmi Narasu and Iyothee Thassar have not only exposed the Brahmanical philosophies but also redefined religion from moral and rationalistic perspectives. They counterposed Buddhism against Hinduism in contemporary times. The argument has consolidated in Ambedkar's life and works. His understanding of religion is novel and rational. His conception of religion is both modern and ethical. He negotiates Buddhism with modern sensibilities.

Ambedkar understood that inequality is the soul of Hinduism. He felt that it is a misnomer to call it religion. Its philosophy is opposed to the

very thing for which religion stands. He asserted, "Hinduism! Thy name is inequality!" (BAWS-1: 86). There is no dignity and recognition for the untouchables in Hinduism due to the caste system. He opposed Hinduism, which is based on *sruti* and *smriti* tradition. He says, if you wish to bring about a breach in the caste system then you have got to apply the dynamite to the Vedas and the Shastras, which deny any part to reason, to morality. You must destroy the religion of the shrutis and the smritis. Nothing else will avail. You must discard the authority of the shastras and destroy the religion of shastras to live in the present. Ambedkar in *Annihilation of caste* made a concluding remark that only when the Hindu society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself. Without such strength, *swaraj* for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery.

Buddhism as revolution

Despite Orientalist scholarship, many Indian scholars interpreted religion in their own way. The Hindu intellectuals even tried to assimilate Buddhism into the Hindu fold and even propagated that the Buddha is one of the avatars of Vishnu. The thinkers of progressive movements recognized the strength of Buddhism. Especially, the Dalit Bahujan intellectuals resisted the assimilation of Buddhism with Brahmanism. They even embraced Buddhism as their own tradition. As Aloysius observed the Dalit-subaltern intellectuals and ideologists, in the course of their self-recovery, also discovered a unified and genuinely traditional stream of thought, code of ethics and sacralized symbol system with which meaningful ideological linkages and lineages could be forged, without distorting their historical truth. This brings to the fore the epistemological and ethical superiority of their collective terms (Aloysius 2004: 16). Prior to Ambedkar or as contemporary to Ambedkar, Iyothee Thassar and Lakshmi Narasu made an attempt to shape Buddhism in modern times. Ambedkar provided the unified theory of Buddhism by internalizing the positions of Iyothee Thassar and Lakshmi Narasu.[10] According to Ambedkar, the emergence of Buddhism was more than a revolution: *Buddhism was a revolution. It was as great a Revolution as the French Revolution. Though it began as a Religious revolution, it became more than Religious revolution. It became a Social and Political Revolution* (BAWS-3: 153).

Ambedkar constructed his own version of Buddhism by making it modern, moral, natural and rational. He viewed the Buddha as an enduring philosopher of mankind. Buddhism for him was a social philosophy. The Buddha according to him has not only provided a comprehensive understanding of the world that unifies economy, society and polity, but also has stood against Brahmanism. Buddhism emerged as an egalitarian

and revolutionary thought against ritualistic, fatalistic, supernaturalistic philosophies. As it is observed, many major ideas of Indian philosophy can be seen, at least in rudimentary form, in the 6th century BC. The philosophers articulated their world view through their ideas on the one hand and through the institutional practices within which they created their organizations on the other. Buddhism against fatalistic philosophies strongly believed in the power of human action. The Brahmanical emphasis on social hierarchy based on varna divisions was countered by the Buddha with the practice of equal access to the *sangha* for all. Buddhist social philosophy came in response to the social inequality and the subordination of women to the patriarchal kinship system of 6th century BC (Chakravarthy 2004: 12).

Buddhism has changed over the period of time and many sects are formed. It has spread in many countries and has become a global religion, but has declined in India. It has been appropriated by Hinduism in course of time and has acquired many tendencies of Hinduism. In modern India, when the Brahmanical intellectuals were valourizing Hinduism, Ambedkar embraced Buddhism. He constructed modern Buddhism, popularly known as *Navayana* Buddhism.

Ambedkar had strong reasons for his choice of Buddhism. Buddhism was an indigenous religion that fulfilled his ideal of religion and a vision of society. It is not a religion of rituals but a rationalistic one. Its morality is not derived from a supernatural source but it is this-worldly. One's own actions determine morality rather than being controlled by an external authority. It is not dogmatic but stands for reason. It proposes a righteous life. It is an egalitarian and humanistic religion. It is a godless and soulless religion. It is the religion of present but not of a dead past. It is a living tradition. It is the original religion of the untouchables. Hence conversion to it would amount to the recovery of a cultural past of untouchable communities. Further, the Buddhist social order is based on the principles of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice. Its ultimate aim is the end of suffering like the Marxist ideal of a classless society. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism on October 14, 1956, took oath that the converted should reject the Hindu deities as well as rituals and fight for an equal and just society. While reconstructing Buddhism, Ambedkar extensively consulted Buddhist literature. By reading the literature of Hinduism and Orientalists texts about Indian religions, he developed a critical approach.[11] His hermeneutic reading of religious texts offers new meanings with contemporary sensibility. He read these texts along with the social life that lies in these works. In *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*, he interprets Indian history as the history of conflict between Buddhism and Brahminism. It is the struggle between two world views. It is the contestation over value systems. He treats struggles of Buddhism as revolutionary and Brahmanism as counter

revolutionary. In the Aryan society a Shudra or a low caste person could never become a Brahman. But Buddha not only preached against caste but admitted the shudras and the low caste to the rank of a Bhikkhu who held the same rank in Buddhism as the Brahman did in Brahmanism. Buddha repudiated the authority of the Vedas, and he denounced the Yajna as a form of religion. Thirdly Buddha denounced was the caste system (BAWS-3: 188. 204). The principle of inequality, which is the basis of the caste system, had become well established, and it was against this principle that Buddha carried on a determined and a bitter fight. How strongly was he opposed to the pretensions of the Brahmins on their superiority over other castes is to be found in many of his dialogues such as the Ambattha Sutta (BAWS-3: 220). Far from being spiritual and elevating, the hymns of the Rig Veda are saturated with wicked thoughts and wicked purposes. According to Ambedkar the Aryan religion never concerned itself with what is called a righteous life (BAWS-3: 176). As against this, morality was basic to Buddhism. The similarity with Taylor can be brought out. Both consider religion as a moral stance that provides a meaningful community life. In other words, self is located in moral community. For Taylor those who believe cannot do so in a naive way. They have to become critically connected to religion: This is the challenge of the secular age. In Ambedkar's case, a critical approach to religion is not a challenge of the secular age. Rather, critiquing religion and reconciling religion with modernity allows one to acquire a tradition when one has been deprived of it as an underprivileged caste. Ambedkar in *The Buddha and the Future of His Religion* considers: 'The religion of the Buddha is morality. It is imbedded in religion. Buddhist religion is nothing if not morality. It is true that in Buddhism there is no god. In place of god there is morality. What god is to other religions, morality is to Buddhism' (BAWS-17.2: 98).

While underlining the rational character of Buddhism Ambedkar with conviction maintains that

> In his (Buddha's) opinion, nothing was infallible and nothing could be final. Everything must be open to re-examination and re-consideration whenever grounds for re-examination and re-consideration arise... Believe only in those doctrines, which you have scrutinized and of which you are totally convinced.
>
> (BAWS-11: 89)

Further Ambedkar holds that the Buddha held to the doctrine of wisdom as firmly as he did to the doctrine of love. He held that moral life began with knowledge and 'ended with wisdom' (BAWS-3: 188). *Buddha and His Dhamma* provides the notes for his conception of philosophy of religion as *saddharma*. A unique amalgam of *Prajna* and *Karuna* is the Dhamma of the Buddha (Ambedkar 1974: III.V.III.2). Aishwary Kumar proposes that

maitri is central to Ambedkar's *Buddha and His Dhamma*. For Ambedkar, *maitri* categorically refuses the foundational distinction between friendship and hostility. It is extending fellow feeling to all beings. Maitri is an anti-sovereign and non-theological principle. It is an act of adoration rather than force (Aishwary 2013). In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar goes beyond love. As he says, 'Love is not enough. What is required is *maitri*.' *Maitri* is foundational for Ambedkar's conception of religion/social/democracy/spiritualism. It is the principle of governance of life, society and state.

Conclusion

Ambedkar's philosophy of religion is a breakthrough in the history of Indian philosophy. His engagement with the 'social' provides a realistic approach. He argued that philosophical ideas have to be grounded in social and cultural life. He sometimes differentiates between philosophy and religion by regarding the former as static and the latter as dynamic. That is because philosophy is concerned about knowing the truth, and religion is proclaimed to be about the love of truth. His conception of religion is moralistic, rationalistic and naturalistic. The criteria for evaluating religion are the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. By applying his method of philosophy of religion, he felt that Hinduism could not be qualified as a religion due to its anti-social spirit. For Ambedkar, religion is righteous and social. The ideal society he considers is one that provides a sense of belongingness and community life based on morality. For him society means people participating in and sharing in a common activity. It is an act of mutual communication rather than keeping in isolation. But the Hindu social order is based on the caste system. Caste kills the public spirit. Both caste and Hinduism are anti-humanitarian in nature and consequently anti-modern in their attitude. Hinduism is a religion based on rituals and regulations and it is the religion of *shastras*. It does not stand for reason. He thought of reforming Hinduism in his line of understanding of religion in *Annihilation of Caste*. But soon he realized that it is a futile exercise and chose Buddhism as a religion. Through his reconstruction he brought to the foreground the humanistic, rationalistic and democratic essence of Buddhism. He found that Buddhism has a revolutionary zeal in transforming society. Ambedkar's Buddhism internalizes the scientific and modernistic Buddhism of Lakshmi Narasu and Iyothee Thassar's location of Buddhism in cultural traditions of untouchables (Dalits). Ambedkar overcomes the binaries of tradition and modernity as it is generally understood. His notion of modernity differs from the dominant Western notion of modernity and the modernity appropriated by the Brahmanical elite. Social rationalization is central to his modernity. The realization of a moral community is his ideal of modernity.

Ambedkar's conception of religion adds a new dimension to the liberal–communitarian debate. Like the communitarian thinker Charles Taylor, he recognized the primacy of the social. He believed that the rights of individual is embedded in social life. Ambedkar was not only concerned about values and rights but also about social solidarity. In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, he proposed *Maitri* as adoration for others, along with *Prajna* and *Karuna*. *Maitri* is foundational for social/religious/spiritualism/democracy. In moral and political philosophy, Ambedkar's philosophy links up the individual and community, tradition and modernity, religion and science, materialism and spiritualism, liberalism and communitarianism in his own terms. In other words, Ambedkar's philosophy provides the basic foundations for an egalitarian social life.

Notes

1 Shiffrin, Steven H. (2006).
2 Quoted in Shiffrin (2012: 98).
3 Quoted in *Buddhist News* (1992).
4 Quoted by Romila Thapar (1998: 35) from D. Knopf. (1980).
5 Quoted by Romila Thapar (1998: 27).
6 Quoted by Romila Thapar (1998: 10).
7 Ambedkar quotes Max Muller's observation of Hinduism as he says that we have seen a religion growing up from stage to stage, from the simplest childish prayers to the highest metaphysical abstractions. In the majority of the hymns of the Vedas, we might recognize the childhood; in the Brahmanas and their sacrificial, domestic and moral ordinances, the busy manhood; in the Upanishads the old age of the Vedic religion. We could have well understood if, with the historical progress of the Indian mind.
8 Ambedkar observed that there was a time when religion had covered the whole field of human knowledge and claimed infallibility for what it thought. It covered astronomy, biology, geology, physiology and psychology. Bit by bit this vast empire of religion was destroyed. The Copernican revolution freed astronomy from the domination of religion. The Darwinian revolution freed biology and geology from the trammels of religion. The authority of theology in medicine is not yet completely destroyed. Psychology has not completely freed itself from its entanglements. The warfare of science is against theology for 400 years.
9 Quoted in Bayle (1999: 12).
10 Lakshmi Narasu is the author of *What is Buddhism*, *The Essence of Buddhism*, and *Religion of Modern Buddhist*. Ambedkar has written a foreword for the second edition of *Essence of Buddhism* and he was acquainted with the unpublished work of *Religion of Modern Buddhist*.
11 Ambedkar argued that ancient Indian history must be exhumed. Without its exhumation ancient India will go without history. Fortunately, with the help of the Buddhist literature, ancient Indian history can be dug out of the debris that the Brahmin writers have heaped upon in a fit of madness. The Buddhist literature helps a great deal to remove the debris and see the underlying substance quite clearly and distinctively (BAWS-3: 152).

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13

AMBEDKAR AND MODERN BUDDHISM

Continuity and discontinuity

Pradeep P. Gokhale[1]

By leading a mass conversion and by reconstructing Buddha's Dhamma, Ambedkar has made a significant contribution to the world of Buddhism. Its significance, however, needs to be understood in proper perspective. One way to understand it is to consider how Ambedkar's reconstruction is related to the Buddhist tradition: To consider how it is based on tradition and how it deviates from it. But it is not proper or is at least insufficient to consider Ambedkar's reconstruction of Buddhism as isolated from what has happened to Buddhism outside India, or to be more precise, outside Ambedkarite Buddhism, in the last century. Many orthodox followers of Ambedkarite Buddhism follow it parochially. Some of them regard *The Buddha and His Dhamma* the last word on Buddhism. They think that Ambedkar's pioneering restatement of Buddhism was complete, authentic and final. But I want to suggest that that is not true. Re-understanding Buddhism was a problem faced by many Buddhist thinkers in different parts of the world. They shared some common concerns and responses. Ambedkar's contribution needs to be understood and appreciated on this world map of shared concerns and responses.

  Like followers of Ambedkar, the critics of Ambedkar's reconstruction of Buddhism also have seen him in isolation. They have compared Ambedkar's reconstruction with traditional Buddhism and highlighted Ambedkar's radical deviation from the tradition. They do not consider the fact that different Buddhist leaders in the last two centuries—particularly the last century—have reinterpreted tradition and deviated from it in different ways. Hence it is important to locate Ambedkar on the world map of the modernization of Buddhism. Some scholars have duly given him a respectable position among the engaged Buddhist leaders all over the world. The works of Christopher Queen and Sallie King are remarkable in this respect. What I am doing in this paper is partly based on their work. But there is a minute difference. Their work is focused on the notion of 'Engaged

Buddhism,' which is mainly concerned with the applied aspect of Buddhism. Here I am mainly concerned with the new understanding of Buddhism, and also the re-interpretation and reconstruction of Buddhism that the engaged Buddhist thinkers have introduced and developed.

In this regard, I have tried to see in this paper how Ambedkar's understanding of Buddhism is continuous with that of many other engaged Buddhist thinkers in different parts of the world, and when it is discontinuous, how and why it becomes discontinuous.

Continuity between Ambedkar and other engaged Buddhist thinkers can be seen in relation to many different issues or themes. I have chosen the following seven representative themes for this chapter:

1   Buddhism as a religion vis-á-vis other religions;
2   Reconciling the sectarian divisions within Buddhism;
3   Affinity to science
4   Secularism (this-worldliness)
5   Protestantism and democratization
6   Attitude to Marxism
7   Status of women.

Buddhism as a religion and its relation with other religions

'Is Buddhism a religion?' Ambedkar raised this question and answered it by saying that Buddhism is Dhamma and not a religion. The question Ambedkar was facing was not unusual, as Ambedkar himself pointed out that some European theologians refused to recognize the Buddha's Dhamma as a religion (Ambedkar, 1974: IV.I.2.5). Buddhism in the modern world had an encounter with theologians advocating a Semitic conception of religion, who denied the status of religion to Buddhism.

There was a twofold response to this problem from the Buddhist side. On the one hand the Buddhists accepted the charge but not with a sense of inferiority but with pride. Unlike Christianity or Islam, Buddhism is based not on uncritical faith, dogma, a belief in God etc., but on a rational approach and emphasis on one's own experience and there was nothing to feel inferior about. On the other hand, Buddhists acknowledged the wider conception of religion and a more rational conception of ideal religion that was more fitting to Buddhism than to other religions.

We find both these types of responses Ambedkar's writings. In his 1950 article "Buddha and the future of his religion", he showed how Buddhism fulfils the criteria of ideal religion (Ambedkar, 1980) and in *The Buddha and His Dhamma* he elucidated how the Buddha's *dhamma* radically differs from religion (Ambedkar, 1974: III.IV.2).

We can trace a similar duel approach in a few other modern Buddhist thinkers. Narada Thero (a monk scholar of Sri Lanka (1898–1983)) in his work *The Buddha and his Teachings* raised the question whether Buddhism is a religion. He said,

> Buddhism cannot … be strictly called a religion, because it is nei-ther a system of faith and worship nor "the outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a God or Gods…" … However if by religion is meant … a system of de-liverance from the ills of life, then certainly Buddhism is a religion of religions.
>
> (Narada, 1988: 290)

Some thinkers took the negative step of identifying Buddhism as a non-religion, but at a constructive level, they took the egalitarian step of treat-ing Buddhism and other religions on a par. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (a Thai Buddhist ascetic thinker (1906–93)) denied the status of religion not only to Buddhism, but to all religions (Buddhadasa (1969: 6)), but at a more constructive level, he equates Buddhism with other religions by treating Dhamma and God as two expressions of the same truth (Buddhadasa, 1993: 48).

Similarly, Thich Nhat Hanh (a Vietnamese Zen master and engaged Bud-dhist leader (born 1926)) on the one hand remarks, "Many people regard Buddhism as religion, but if we say that it is a way of life, we may be closer to truth." The main reason he gives is that faith in Buddhism does not mean faith in God or a metaphysical principle the existence of which we cannot really prove (Hanh, 1993: 217). But, in a more constructive mood, he acknowledges the essential similarity of all religions, "…any genuine religious life must express reverence toward life, non-violence, communion between man and man, man and the absolute" (Hanh, 2001: 20). By using the metaphor of a fruit salad of religions, he said,

> …religious life is life and I cannot imagine how someone could eat only one kind of fruit. Although there are kinds of fruit that one does not like, there are many kinds that one can appreciate. Besides, only authentic fruits can make fruit salad.
>
> (Hanh, 2001: 31)

Another Buddhist thinker S.N. Goenka (a leading lay teacher of Vipassanā meditation (1924–2013) expresses a similar dual attitude. He distinguishes Dhamma from sectarian religions and in this way denies the status of reli-gion to Buddha's Dhamma. In doing so he also exhibits an egalitarian spirit by treating different sectarian religions (including Buddhism as a sect) as

on a par and also acknowledging the availability of the Vipassanā type of insight in different spiritual traditions (Gokhale, 2004).

H. H. the fourteenth Dalai Lama (the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader (born 1935)) also presents a dual approach to Buddhism, although in a different way. He does not seem to question the status of Buddhism as a religion, but he does distinguish between spirituality and religion. He also supports equality of all religions insofar as their spiritual and moral aspects are concerned (Puri, 2006: 128–9). (Bharati Puri observes that while the 'earlier' Dalai Lama was less flexible and believed that Buddhism was the best way, the 'later' Dalai Lama finds a larger concern in serving all humanity without appealing to religious faith (Puri, 2006: 128)). While appreciating spiritual and moral aspects of religions, he treats all religions as equally good and is opposed to criticizing a religion, either one's own or that of others.

With this background, if we revisit Ambedkar, we realize that Ambedkar was not a religious egalitarian in his approach. He regards Buddhism as different from and more advanced than other religions. This view of Ambedkar has closer similarities with the views of Anagarika Dharmapala (a Sri Lankan Buddhist revivalist (1864–1933)). Dharmapala in his early part of religious career was under the influence of Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) and the Theosophical Society. But eventually he broke with them because of their stance on universal religion. Dharmapala stated: "Theosophy was only consolidating Krishna worship;" "To say that all religions have a common foundation only shows the ignorance of the speaker. Dhamma alone is supreme to Buddhism" (Kaweesha, 2013). Dharmapala in this way represents an exclusionist approach.

Another engaged Buddhist leader who ideologically comes close to Ambedkar is Sangharakshita (the founder of Friends of Western Buddhist Order (1925–2018). Their affinity is worth considering because they were influenced by each other. Ambedkar had high regard for Sangharakshita as an ideal bhikkhu and Sangharakshita had high regard for Ambedkar as one who demonstrated substantially the social dimension of the Buddha's Dhamma (Spanberg, 82). Both aimed at propagation of Buddhism in the modern world, and in doing that they had an exclusivist attitude towards Buddhism. Both had a tendency not to assimilate Buddhism with other religions and sought to preserve its distinctive character. But an important difference between the two also needs to be noticed. For Sangharakshita, Buddhism is a religion in the conventional sense of the term. The Buddha's dhamma as presented by Ambedkar is not a religion in its conventional sense, but in an unconventional sense: as a way of life based on rationality and sacred morality. Against this background the association between Ambedkarite Buddhism and Sangharakshita's engaged Buddhist movement raises some ideological issues. We will not go into them here, to avoid digression.

Reconciling sectarian divisions within Buddhism

After the schism of Buddhism into different sects, and particularly the twofold division into Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, we find two approaches to this schism. The Hīnayānists, particularly the Theravādins did not acknowledge the Mahāyāna as a genuine form of Buddhism; instead they regarded it as a later development, or rather as a later distortion of Buddhism. As against this, Mahāyānists acknowledge the Hīnayāna (or the Śrāvakayāna) as a genuine form of Buddhism, but as a lower form, based on the Buddha's message that was meant for people incapable of grasping the higher truths of Mahāyāna. Tibetan Buddhism largely accepts this approach and builds on it.

Against this background in modern times we come across some Buddhist scholars and thinkers primarily initiated in one sect, but gradually exposed to different sectarian traditions and arriving at the new combinations or syntheses of different sectarian views. Many engaged Buddhist thinkers can be seen from this angle.

When on the eve of the conversion ceremony Ambedkar was asked in a press conference as to which form of Buddhism he would be adopting when he embraced Buddhism, he told the assembled reporters that his Buddhism would adhere to the tenets of the faith as taught by the Buddha himself. It would be neither Hīnayāna nor Mahāyāna, but it could be called Navayāna according to him (Sangharakshita, 1986: 130–1). In his *The Buddha and His Dhamma* Ambedkar included in great proportion the elements of Theravāda Buddhism in a demythologized and secularized form. But he also included some Mahāyāna elements by dissociating them from idealistic metaphysics. For instance, he made *pāramitā* doctrine applicable to all, which in the Theravāda had a restrictive application, and included it in the Buddha's first sermon. He criticized the schools emphasizing only *prajñā* or only *karuṇā* and asserted that *prajñā* and *karuṇā* are equally important in the Buddha's *dhamma* (Ambedkar, 1974: III. V. III.2.6–7). Thus Ambedkar tried to blur the differences between the two major sects in his construction of Navayāna.

We find comparable instances in other engaged Buddhists. *Buddhadasa Bhikkhu* was trained in the Theravāda tradition, but he incorporated the Mādhyamika ideal, namely, śūnyatā in his reconstruction of Buddhism. Thich Nath Hanh underwent a complex training in Buddhism. As Sallie King observes: "Vietnamese Buddhism has long embraced both Theravāda and Mahāyāna tradition … Nhat Hanh's studies included both traditions with emphasis upon mindfulness, gāthā and koan" (King, 1996: 322). Sulak Sivaraksa (contemporary Thai engaged Buddhist Leader, born 1933) was trained in Theravāda tradition; but he acknowledges his indebtedness to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Thich Nhat Hanh and also H.H. the Dalai Lama.

Sangharakshita, "Although ordained a Theravadin, had long felt an affinity with the spiritual heights of Mahāyāna" (Sponsberg, 1996: 81). He received Vajrayāna initiation as well. He tried to synthesize different sects of Buddhism in his work *Survey of Buddhism* (1966). One can say that Sangharakshita has affinity with Ambedkar on the point of reconciliation between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna (like he has on the point of exclusionism). However, I feel that their affinity on this point should be appreciated with some reservations. Although we find an attempt to reconcile different sects of Buddhism in the thoughts of both, the ways they tried to do that are quite different. Sangharakshita was trying to present different sects as being on par, preserving the distinct identity of each other and at the same time maintaining their common core as Buddhism. He was presenting these sects as distinct and yet overlapping religious sects. Sangharakshita's version of Buddhism has been aptly called neo-traditional Buddhism (Sponsberg, 1996: 84). As against this, Ambedkar's version of Buddhism can be called trans-traditional Buddhism. Ambedkar synthesized Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in his reconstruction. But the two sects do not retain their own identity in the synthesis; Ambedkar extracts some of their elements, and gives them a secularized, rationalized and humanized form.

Affinity to science

In the past two centuries the growth of science has posed a challenge before all religions. The encounter between religion and science has given rise to reformist thinking in different religions, which has tended to reconcile the two. This has happened in Buddhism without much conflict between the two. Some Buddhist thinkers claimed that the rationalist and scientific temper has been present in Buddhism from its inception. The *Kālāmasutta* and a verse from *Jñānasārasamuccaya* (in which the Buddha encourages scrutiny of what he says)[2] have often been quoted in this context. Since Buddhism as a traditional religion contained many otherworldly and superstitious elements, the reformist Buddhist thinkers tried to eliminate or suppress them and tried to rationally reconstruct the Buddha's *dhamma*. In his reconstruction of the Buddha's *dhamma,* Ambedkar reduced otherworldly elements, rituals, ceremonies and miracles; he even eliminated the traditional doctrines of karma and rebirth. One of the earliest Buddhist reformers who emphasized affinity of Buddhism to science was Anagarika Dharmapala. In this context, Dharmapala emphasizes three aspects of Buddhism: one, its non-dogmatic approach; two, its emphasis on cause–effect relation and three, its psychology. To elaborate:

1   He calls Buddhism a science because it had no dogma of permanent *ātman* or a creator and no prayer is needed because everything is changing with electronic rapidity. Creator God according to Dharmapala is

the doctrine of the unscientific theological dogmatists (Dharmapala, 1965: 123).

2   Darwinian Theory of Evolution according to Dharmapala is instrumental to the growth of science in the west—which has challenged the doctrine of God accepted by theistic religions. The empirical law of causation is a corollary of Darwinian law (Dharmapala, 1965: 102). Dharmapala emphasizes that the Buddha's law of *pratītyasamutpāda* is the law of cause and effect. He correlates the doctrine of causation (and also that of *Kamma*) with the denial of God as creator.

3   Dharmapala describes Buddhism as 'biological psychical science' (Dharmapala, 1965: 123). He appreciates the moral psychology of Buddhism and also its parapsychological aspects—what he calls psychicism.

Out of the above three features, the first one, namely the Buddha's non-dogmatic or rational approach and its rejection of the doctrines of the permanent *ātman* and God as creator is appreciated by many modern Buddhist thinkers—Ambedkar, Satyanarayan Goenka and the Dalai Lama, to cite a few. But after this their appreciations of the scientific character of Buddhism go in different directions. Goenka emphasizes Buddha's investigation into Dhamma—the universal causal law—with special reference to cravings and suffering. Accordingly, when one realizes this law with the help of Vipassanā meditation, one develops detachment and becomes free from suffering. The core of Buddha's science according to Goenka is his psychology with its moral and soteriological implications. In his analysis of the mind, he also believes in the possibility of coming across subtle sensations rooted in past lives. The Dalai Lama would agree with all this, but he expects much more from Buddhism as a science. He interprets *pratītyasamutpāda*, not just as causal law but as 'interdependence of all phenomena' and draws its implications to environmental science and environmental ethics. Moreover, through his continuous dialogues with scientists, the Dalai Lama makes scientists take seriously the claims of Buddhism regarding the extraordinary powers of the mind. Although scientists participating in these dialogues do not accept all the claims, they at least take them seriously. The Dalai Lama's attitude in these dialogues seems to be dual: on one hand he is a Buddhist religious scholar and a believer; on the other hand, he is an open-minded rational being (which is again consistent with the spirit of Buddhism) leaving his questions open for scientific scrutiny.

With this background Ambedkar's affinity to science seems to be more radical. He does not make room for the queer phenomenon such as 'rebirth' (as it is popularly understood). He explains the relation between body and consciousness in materialistic terms, as that between an electric field and a magnetic field.

This brings us to another theme in modern Buddhism, namely secularism or this-worldliness.

Secularism (this-worldliness)

Ambedkar in his reconstruction of Buddhism clearly denied other worlds and also rebirth (in its traditional sense). He interpreted rebirth and karma in such a way that the basic framework of materialist ontology is preserved. Other modern Buddhists did not go to this extent; but to emphasize this world and this life and deemphasize other worlds and afterlife was more or less a common tendency among the modern Buddhists.

Though Anagarika Dharmapala as a spokesman of Buddhist religious heritage sometimes records the other-worldly views of the traditional Buddhism, his own interpretation of Buddhism emphasizes this-worldly existence. According to his interpretation of the Buddha's message, "the kingdom of Heaven is within man himself. There is no heaven or hell, but our own making" (Dharmapala, 1965: XLIX). "The Buddhist heaven is clearer than hands or breathing and is to be won in this life, not in hereafter" (Dharmapala, 1965: L). When asked straightaway whether he believed that there is nothing beyond death, he replied that he believed in pure life (Dharmapala, 1965: XLVII).

Another modern Buddhist scholar who questioned rebirth and life after death was the Thai spiritual leader Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. Buddhadasa interpreted the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* as applicable to any event in this life and rejected the traditional interpretation according to which the operation of the doctrine ranges over three consecutive lives (Buddhadasa, 1992: 29). Two other engaged Buddhist leaders, the Dalai Lama and S. N. Goenka express a liberal attitude to the doctrine of rebirth. The Dalai Lama makes it open to scientific scrutiny and S. N. Goenka regards it as non-essential for Vipassanā meditation. Sulak Sivaraksa has strikingly highlighted the distinction between otherworldly-ritualistic-dogmatic form of Buddhism and this-worldly-secular-rational form as one between 'Capital B Buddhism' and 'Small b Buddhism' (Swearer, 1996: 215).

Protestantism and democratization

Modern Buddhism is sometimes described as Protestant Buddhism. Gananath Obeyesekere coined this term with reference to Anagarika Dharmapala. Dharmapala was a protestant Buddhist in two senses. One, as a Buddhist he combatted with the Christian criticism of Buddhism that the latter was too otherworldly. We have seen how Dharmapala tried to give this-worldly interpretation of Buddhism. Secondly, and more importantly, Dharmapala tried to deemphasize the centrality of the monastic order to Buddhism as religion and held that lay persons have at least as good or perhaps better chances to attain Nirvāṇa in this life. To give authority to lay followers in the religious praxis of Buddhism can be called a move towards democratization of Buddhism.

We find this spirit of Protestantism and democratization clearly and strongly carried forward by Ambedkar both in theory and practice. Dharmapala was critical about the performance of the then Bhikkhus when he said, "The Bhikkus are indolent; they have lost the spirit of heroism and altruism of their ancient examples" (Quoted by Queen, 1996: 124). Ambedkar expressed a similar critical attitude about the role of Bhikkhus in his 1950 essay and then in *The Buddha and his Dhamma*. Both of these thinkers expressed their expectation that the Bhikkhus should live the life of social service and responsibility.

On the other hand, they asserted that the lay followers can attain the religious ideal without becoming a Bhikkhu. It is customary in Buddhism to hold that lay Buddhists by practicing *Śīla*, can attain *svarga* after death, but they cannot attain *Nirvāṇa*. As against this, Ambedkar held that a person can live in *Nirvāṇa* by following the eightfold path. The Buddha of Ambedkar tells the lay follower Anāthapiṇḍaka that "The bliss of religious life is attainable by anyone who walks in the noble eightfold path" and going into homelessness is not required for that (Ambedkar, 1974: II.III.5.17–20).

This democratic understanding of Buddhism led Ambedkar to go beyond the traditional bhikkhu-centric method of ordination. Traditionally, only a Bhikkhu could give ordination to anyone even to become an upāsaka. Ambedkar in the mass conversion ceremony, when he was himself ordinated as upāsaka, gave ordination to thousands of his followers to become upāsaka. As Sangharakshita observes:

> Indeed, by demonstrating that an Upāsaka no less than a Bhikshu could administer the Refuges and Precepts Ambedkar was reminding both the old Buddhists and the new that those who lived as Bhikshus and those who lived as Upāsakas and Upāsikās was only a difference, not a division….
>
> (Sangharakshita, 1986: 139)

In Theravāda tradition the gap between upāsaka and bhikkhu was remarkable partly because the two did not seem to have a common goal. In Mahāyāna tradition the gap gets reduced because bodhisattva is the common ideal for both upāsakas and bhikkhus. It is the ideal of an extreme altruist. In Mahāyāna literature we come across Bodhisattvas who lived outwardly like upāsakas but whose spiritual status was higher than that of many senior bhikkhus. It seems to me that Ambedkar by including *pāramitā* doctrine in the first sermon of the Buddha and by making altruistic social service central to the mission of a bhikkhu synthesizes the bodhisattva ideal with that of an ideal Buddhist of Theravāda tradition and also bridges the gap between bhikkhu and upāsaka.

Engaged Buddhists and Marxism

Engaged Buddhist thinkers have been generally opposed to capitalism; and some of them have been favourable to Marxism. The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh had to face violent actions of communist governments. But they neither developed hatred towards the governments, nor aversion towards communism as such. The Dalai Lama, as his thought matured, held that Buddhism and Marxism can be complementary. As he said, "Buddhism can take many points from Marxist, Socialist and Democratic system. Similarly, those systems can benefit from many points in Buddhist theory, especially in terms of socially beneficial attitudes" (Puri, 2006: 124).

Thich Nhat Hanh led a peace movement in Vietnam. His movement was based on Buddhist principles. It refused to side with either capitalism or communism (King, 1996: 331). At a more constructive level, Hanh assimilated Buddhist community (Sangha) life with a communist way of life. There he referred to rules that the Buddhist community follows such as sharing knowledge, reconciliation and holding common property (Hanh, 2001: 110–1).

This assimilation between Buddhist Sangha life and the communistic way of life, was anticipated by Ambedkar in his essay "Buddha or Karl Marx". In this essay Ambedkar discusses what he calls the original creed of Karl Marx and what survives of that creed. According to Ambedkar what survives of the original creed of Marx consists of four points:

1   The function of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to explain the origin of the world.
2   There is a conflict of interests between class and class.
3   Private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to the other through exploitation.
4   In a good society private property should be abolished (Ambedkar, 1987: 444).

In his reconstruction of Buddhism Ambedkar shows how all these four points are already present in Buddhism. According to Ambedkar, Buddhism departs from Marxism mainly on the question of the means to be employed for bringing about an ideal society. Like John Dewey, the Buddha of Ambedkar accepts the principle, that the end determines the means, whereas Marx does not accept it.

Like Thich Nhat Hanh and Ambedkar, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu also tried to find a way between capitalism and communism. Buddhadasa calls his ideology dhāmmic socialism and distinguishes it from both liberal capitalism and communism. Both the latter ideologies are adhāmmic according to Buddhadasa. Liberal capitalism is adhāmmic because of extreme individualism and communism too falls into the same category because of the brutality rooted in authoritarianism (Buddhadasa, 1993: 31).

It is possible that the criticism of communism made by many engaged Buddhists was at least partly due to their (mis-)interpretation of Marxism guided by the way it was put into practice in Russia. It seems, however, that even if we accept a democratic interpretation of Marxism, some differences between Marxism and Buddhism will remain untouched. For instance though mental or cultural elements have a role to play in Marxian theory, primacy is given to the material or economic conditions whereas, the Buddha gave primacy to the mental ("*manopubbangamā dhammā*"— Dhammapada 1.1) In his reconstruction of Buddhism, Ambedkar gave a materialistic explanation of the origination of consciousness, but he retained the primacy of the mental in the context of individual and social life, as he says, "Once consciousness arises, man becomes a sentient being. Consciousness is, therefore, the chief thing in man's life" (Ambedkar, 1974: III. IV.4.55). But this is not my main point here. My simple point is that opposition to capitalism and closeness to Marx or finding a socialist way between capitalism and Marxism is a common concern to Ambedkar and many other engaged Buddhist leaders.

Status of women

Like capitalism, patriarchy has been a chief concern of many modern egalitarians. Ambedkar too, when he expressed his egalitarian concerns was keen on the equal status to be given to men and women. As a modern interpreter of Buddhism, he asserted and argued that the Buddha supported gender equality.

As a matter of fact, all religious traditions exhibit signs of patriarchy with a greater or less extent and religious reformers belonging to different religious traditions address the question in different ways. The question arises basically at two levels. Firstly, the question arises whether women have equal right or the capacity to attain liberation (or the ultimate goal of the given religion), as men. Secondly the question arises whether women have equal status as men in mundane aspects of life—physical, sexual, economic, political, social and cultural. Some modern Buddhist thinkers have acknowledged the Buddhist approach of gender equality in religious as well as mundane realm. Anagarika Dharmapala makes a blanket declaration of gender equality on behalf of Buddhism when he says—"The same rights are given to women as to men. Not the least difference is shown and perfect equality has been proclaimed" (Dharmapala, 1965: 21).

Ambedkar is keen on contrasting Buddhism with Hinduism on the issue of caste and gender equality. As he asserts in his 1950 article:

> According to Hinduism neither a shudra nor a woman could become a teacher of religion nor could they take Sannyasa (or initiation into the ascetic life) and reach God. Buddha on the other hand admitted

shudras into the Bhikshu Sangha. He also admitted women to be-
come Bhikshunis. Why did he do this? Few people seem to realize
the importance of this step. The answer is that Buddha wanted to
take concrete steps to destroy the gospel of inequality.

(Ambedkar, 1980: 7)

The 14th Dalai Lama refers to the fourth class of Buddhist Tantras accord-
ing to which there is no distinction between masculine and feminine; en-
lightenment may come about just as easily in a woman's body as in a man's
(Dalai Lama, 1994: 77). Rita Gross in her work "Buddhism after Patriar-
chy" demonstrates that the core teachings of Buddhism promote gender
equality rather than male dominance.

   Barring such general claims, Buddhism has to address some specific is-
sues before it can make a strong case for gender equality.

1   According to popular narrative, Gotama the Bodhisattva, left home
    and became a recluse by keeping his wife in the dark, when he should
    have sought her permission before leaving her.
2   Though the Buddha agreed that women are equally capable of attaining
    Nirvāṇa as men, he was hesitant in the formation of Bhikkhuṇī-saṅgha;
    and even when he allowed the formation, he suspected that this would
    affect the longevity of his Dhamma.
3   While allowing Mahāprajāpati Gautamī to become a Bhikkhuṇī, he en-
    forced eight chief rules on Bhikkhuṇīs, some of which were humiliating
    to them.
4   As an offshoot of the number (2) above, we come across the tendency
    to disallow the formation of Bhikkhuṇī-saṅgha, that is, to oppose full
    ordination to be given to the women aspirants, in Theravāda Buddhist
    communities even today.

From among the above four issues Ambedkar can be said to have answered
the first two issues. By rejecting the popular narrative of Gotama's renun-
ciation, Ambedkar accepted the narrative constructed by Dharmananda
Kosambi on the basis of the latter's research in Pali canons. According to
this narrative Gautama left home for a social cause with full notice and
permission of his wife Yaśodharā. While narrating the incidence of admit-
ting Gautamī to enter the Sangha, Ambedkar makes the Buddha explain
his initial hesitation to admit Gautamī as being based not on gender ine-
quality, but on practical grounds (Ambedkar, 1974: II.VII.1.20). He refers
to 'Eight Chief Rules', but avoids giving details and hence appears to have
bypassed the issue of the humiliating character of some of the rules. It is
possible that Ambedkar had reservations about the content of the rules
and that was the reason for excluding the details from the narrative.

   After Ambedkar we find many thinkers and leaders entering the con-
troversy and trying to restore justice to women in Buddhism. The Dalai

Lama's efforts to consider the possibility of reform in the Buddhist Order, by bringing together the representatives of monastic communities, are an important step in this direction.

How is Ambedkar different?

One objective of this paper was to show how Ambedkar's conception of Buddhism is continuous with the conceptions of Buddhism according to other modern/engaged Buddhist thinkers. These conceptions of Buddhism are continuous partly because they are conceptions of Buddhism and partly because they are modern conceptions. Because they are conceptions of Buddhism, they promote universal love, and not violence. They promote primacy of mind, not that of material conditions. They promote moral and democratic values and not military rule or authoritarianism. And because they are modern conceptions, they promote modern values like liberty, equality, scientific temper and secularism and are critical about poverty, superstitions, ritualism and other-worldly beliefs.

In a very broad way these conceptions follow a common pattern, but they also differ from thinker to thinker, depending upon each thinker's sectarian background, his own psychological and intellectual makeup and the challenge Buddhism has to face in the regions to which he belongs. Ambedkar's conception of Buddhism becomes different for the same reasons. On this background I will mention some of the major aspects that make Ambedkar's conception different.

One important point of difference was that other engaged Buddhist thinkers were first Buddhists and then they became socially engaged and modern. In the case of Ambedkar, the order is reverse. First, he was socially engaged and modern and then he became a Buddhist. The other leaders had an advantage: the new manifestations and applications suggested by them were more deeply rooted in the tradition. But the disadvantage was that many of them could not radically transcend the traditional limitations. As against this, before deciding to embrace Buddhism, Ambedkar was thoroughly grounded in modern values. He was influenced by the values of the French Revolution, those of liberalism, pragmatism and socialism; rationalism and scientific temper. With this background he was to leave Hinduism and embrace a different religion. Naturally these values became the criteria for the choice of Buddhism as the new religion and they also became the principles of re-interpretation and reconstruction of Buddhism. Probably this is one of the reasons why Ambedkar's reconstruction of Buddhism is more radical than that of many others. It questions the traditional Karma–rebirth framework, gives a materialistic interpretation of the rise of consciousness; regards dhāmmic pursuit and achievement as essentially social and does not attach a central role to meditation.

Although Ambedkar gives a subordinate status to meditation, it is doubtful whether he was radically opposed to it. Social issues are central for Buddhism as interpreted by Ambedkar and meditation can play only an instrumental role according to him. Bhikkhu according to him is a model social worker. According to Ambedkar's analysis, the Bhikkhu should discharge both the functions: practicing self-culture and providing service and guidance to people (Ambedkar, 1974: V.II.4). 'Practicing self-culture' includes meditation. For Ambedkar self-culture is necessary, but not enough; it should be translated as social activity. This view can be compared with the views of Sulak Sivaraksa, a contemporary engaged Buddhist leader:

> Those who want to change society must understand the society as well as the dimension of the inner personal change. It is this personal transformation that true spirituality can provide.
> (Sivaraksa, 2005: 13)

And more precisely:

> We should not treat meditation as a form of escapism or personal salvation. Rather mental training must awaken our wisdom; so we will be able to wisely engage with society and deal with the multiple crises of greed, hatred and delusion in the present.
> (Sivaraksa, 2005: 72)

It is possible that the difference between Ambedkar's approach to meditation and that of other engaged Buddhist leaders is that of degree than that of kind.

What prompted Ambedkar to abandon Hinduism and embrace a different religion was his realization that Hindu society cannot annihilate the caste system and give equal and respectable status to the people of the downtrodden castes. Naturally he looked at the Buddha as giving a solution to this problem. In his image the Buddha was essentially a critic of Brahmanism in general and of the caste system in particular.

Other engaged Buddhist leaders were concerned with different problems, like those of war, violence and consumerism. They were looking at the Buddha as the messenger of peace, non-violence and a simple life. Caste was not the central problem for them[3] (except for Sangharakshita and his followers whose organization in India accommodated Ambedkarite Buddhism at its core). Since Gandhiji was an influential advocate of values like peace, non-violence and simplicity, he was looked upon as the modern symbol of Buddhism by many modern Buddhists.[4] Ambedkar could not appreciate Gandhi as symbolizing Buddhism, because Gandhi was handling the issue of caste not as a rational, egalitarian thinker, but as a Hindu apologist.

This also explains why Ambedkar's Buddhism is so exclusivist with regard to Hinduism. His inclusion of 22 vows as an essential part of the

conversion ceremony clearly indicates that he wanted to avoid every possible admixture of Buddhism with Hinduism, and to keep Buddhism always at a safe distance from Hinduism.

It should be noted here that the question of inclusivism with regard to Hinduism and that with regard to other religions are not of the same type. Hinduism is a non-egalitarian religion in its practical philosophy as the varṇa–caste system is a core-aspect of the Hindu social philosophy. Comparatively, other religions are by and large egalitarian at their core. With regard to other religions, Buddhism has an issue at the metaphysical level; with regard to Hinduism, it has an issue with regard to both the metaphysical and practical levels. Apart from the metaphysical gap between Hinduism and Buddhism, the latter cannot take an inclusive stance with respect to the former for the following reasons:

1   Hinduism has already tried to appropriate Buddhism by treating the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. Naturally if Buddhism reconciles with Hinduism, it will have a subordinate status with regard to Hinduism, that of a sect of Hinduism and not an equal and independent status.
2   Since Hinduism is already crippled by the varṇa–jāti system, if Buddhism seeks reconciliation with Hinduism, it will have to adjust with the varṇa–jāti system, leading to a moral defeat of Buddhism.

The inclusive Buddhist thinkers who speak the language of the equality of all religions do not seem to be clearly aware of this problem. This happens because Hinduism has two faces—one external and the other internal. The external face is that of Vedānta, the face it shows to the outer world, the one through which it has dialogue with other religions. The internal face of orthodox Hinduism, which the Hindu society has not rejected in spite of many reform movements, is that of inequalities, hierarchies with which it speaks to the members of the Hindu community, with which Hindus talk and interact with one another. The inclusive Buddhist leaders highlight the external face of Hinduism and leave the internal face suppressed as the orthodox Hindu leaders would like it. As against this, Ambedkar was primarily concerned with the internal face and on this background refused to make compromises or admixtures with Hinduism.

Twenty-five hundred years ago Buddhism started a combat with Brahmanism. This task of Buddhism is still incomplete and it is to Ambedkar's credit that he re-launched the combat through the mass conversion and a rational reconstruction of Buddhism. This task of combating Brahmanism is not a matter of serious concern for most of the engaged Buddhist thinkers and hence the difference between Ambedkar and the other thinkers remains glaring.

To conclude, Ambedkar would agree with many engaged Buddhist leaders on many points, but there are some points on which he differs from many others arguably for just reasons.

Notes

1 This paper was presented as Buddha Jayanti Lecture on December 28, 2013 at the 88th session of Indian Philosophical Congress held at Madurai, India. It was subsequently published in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 45, Nos. 2–3, April to September 2018, pp. 91–114, and is used here with permission.
2 In Kālāmasutta the Buddha says to Kālāmas;

> Do not accept anything on mere hearsay, ..tradition, ..rumours, …because it accords to your scriptures, ..by mere supposition, .. inference, ..appearances, …because it agrees with your preconceived notions, ..because it seems acceptable… thinking that the ascetic is respected by us. But when you know for yourself, that these things are immoral, ..blameworthy, ..conducive to ruin and sorrow.. do reject them. When you know for yourself that these things are moral, ..blameless,…conducive to wellbeing and happiness… do live and act accordingly.
>
> (Abridged from Narada (1988: 284–5))

> In the verse from *Jñānasārasamuccaya*, the Buddha says: "As the wise test gold by burning, cutting and rubbing it (on a piece of a touchstone), so are you to accept my words after examining them and not merely out of regard for me." (Narada, 1988: 285)

3 I am not suggesting that other (Non-Indian) engaged Buddhist leaders were not aware of the evils of the caste system. Thich Nhat Hanh, for instance, held that the self that people of Buddha's time used to worship was the real cause of social injustice, through ignorance, through stagnation; that society was full of evils; the system of castes, the control of life by the brahmins, the treatment of the untouchables. It is not clear, however, whether Hanh was aware that this situation still persists in India and it was Ambedkar who tried to alter it through different means including the revival of Buddhism. Similarly, the Dalai Lama in one of his interviews mentions that the Buddha spoke very critically about the caste system and adds that there is no need to take a certain position on caste, racial discrimination (Puri, 2006: 167), probably meaning thereby that the Buddha's criticism of caste is valid and no justification of caste is needed. But he does not seem to show any special concern for the issue.
4 With reference to different influences on engaged Buddhism, Sallie King, in her introduction to *Socially Engaged Buddhism* says,

> The greatest influence from non-Buddhists comes from Gandhi (himself Western educated), who has exerted a great influence on the engaged Buddhist leaders, with the exception of Dr. Ambedkar (who worked with Gandhi but eventually broke with him owing to Gandhi's refusal to reject the caste system.) (Her claim that Dr. Ambedkar worked with Gandhi is questionable.)

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Appendix I

VAJRASŪCI

Sanghasen Singh[1]

[**Preface:** The text *Vajrasūcī* came into light in this modern age, when B. H. Hodgson translated it in 1829 and L. Wilkinson edited it for the first time in 1839. It is understood that the purpose of this work is to refute the system of four *varṇa*s based on birth. The author has stressed upon unity of the four *varṇa*s and has said that the four *varṇa*s were classified on the basis of expertise in deeds and action and not based on birth. He has emphasized the importance of conduct. However, he has accepted on the other hand the authority of the *Veda*s, *Smṛti*s and the *Mahābhārata*. He seems to be an advocate of the doctrine of soul also because he has considered the soul and body separate from each other.

Aśvaghoṣa has been regarded as the author of this work. The introduction of the work mentions the name 'Aśvaghoṣa' and the colophon mentions the name 'Siddhācārya Aśvaghoṣa.' Given this situation, there is a question whether the author of this work and the author of *Buddhacarita* may be considered as one and the same. This is a moot question. After a careful study of this work, it is clear that it is not the composition of Aśvaghoṣa, the author of *Buddhacarita*. There is a possibility that there were two or more Aśvaghoṣas. There must have been a considerable time gap between Aśvaghoṣa, the composer of *Buddhacarita* and Siddhācārya Aśvaghoṣa, the composer of *Vajrasūcī*. There is great difference between the styles of the language of both these authors. The language of *Vajrasūcī* seems to be comparatively later than the language of *Buddhacarita*. Apart from this, there are some more evidences to prove that the composition of this work has taken place after a significant time gap between both these texts. It is possibly composed in the 8th to 9th CE. To facilitate clarity in providing evidences, we divide them into two, viz external evidences and internal evidences. Firstly, let us focus on external evidences:

1   None of the scholars after Aśvaghoṣa (the author of *Buddhacarita*) has mentioned this work (*Vajrasūcī*) to be composed by him.
2   Itsing has not mentioned this work along with other compositions of Aśvaghoṣa.

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3   The Chinese translation of this work, which is found in the Chinese *Tripīṭaka* catalogues as '*Vajrasūcī*' has been between 973 and 981 CE. The name of the composer has been mentioned as Dharmakīrti. As per the opinion of Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya, the Chinese translation or rendition of this work has been undertaken in the last lap of 10th CE.[2] Had the work been the composition of Aśvaghoṣa, the author of *Buddhacarita*, it would have been translated or rendered long before 10th CE.

4   The Tibetan sources neither mention this work along with the other works of Aśvaghoṣa nor its translation. Enthusiastic Indian scholars and Tibetan Lamas even undertook the translation or rendition of non-Buddhistic works. It is a matter of surprise as to why they had not translated this work, especially when they knew that this is the work of the noble Aśvaghoṣa?

Internal evidences appear to be stronger than external evidences. One can claim on the basis of them that this work is not the composition of Aśvaghoṣa, the author of *Buddhacarita*.

1   A careful examination of *Vajrasūcī* proves that the author of this work was not a staunch Buddhist. He was an admixture of a Buddhist and a brāhmaṇa. Some thoughts expressed by him prove him to be a Buddhist, while other thoughts prove him to be a brāhmaṇa or a supporter of the brāhmaṇa community. On the one hand the text opens with '*om namo mañjunāthāya*' and stresses on the importance of *śīla* i.e. (good) conduct. On the other hand, the verse employed in the introduction of this text has accepted the authority of *Veda*s, *Smṛti*s and 'other statements' related to *dharma* and *artha*.[3] As far as the composer of *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* is concerned, one can clearly perceive Brahmanical influence on him, however, he has not dared to accept the authority of *Veda*s, *Smṛti*s etc. and '*om namo mañjunāthāya*' cannot be his opening obeisance. The author of *Vajrasūcī* has neither doubted the authoritativeness of the *Veda*s, *Bhārata* i.e. *Mahābhārata*, *Mānavadharma* i.e. *Manusmṛti* nor has he challenged them. It is natural for the Buddhist thinker to challenge the authoritativeness of these Brahmanical texts and refute the superiority of the brāhmaṇa varṇa. There has been nothing of this sort in this text.

2   Buddhist tradition has accepted the following order of varṇas—kṣatriya, brāhmaṇa, vaiśya and śūdra. But this text has retained the Brahmanical order as it is. This order has been in agreement with the *Smṛti*s and *Purāṇa*s. This proves that the present text has been a later composition, when Buddhist tradition had become weak and blurred.

3   This text has clear reference to the four *Veda*s. The tradition of three *Veda*s has been clearly forgotten. This shift (from three *Veda*s to four)

happened in the Brahmanical tradition quite late. This indicates that the text has been of a later date.

4   The author of this text has accepted the system of four varṇas based on the 'line of action and deed'. Buddhist tradition has been against the varṇa-system be it based on birth or 'line of action and deed'. This (acceptance of) the four varṇa system has been the line of thought of a later thinker and not Aśvaghoṣa, the early Buddhist thinker.

5   This text has references to *Harivaṁśa*, which has been mentioned by the author as *Bhārata* (*Mahābhārata*). It appears that by the time of the composition of this text, *Harivaṁśa* was accepted as a part of the *Mahābhārata*.[4] Historically, this situation has happened quite late. While establishing the date of this work, Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya has not paid attention to this internal evidence.

6   The entire text mentions neither the Buddha, nor *dharma* nor *saṅgha*. Aśvaghoṣa (the author of the *Buddhacarita*), who has eulogized the Buddha cannot be expected not to praise the Buddha or not to quote the sayings of the Buddha. The first 1,000 years of Buddhism had not shown such an anomaly, because the hold of *dharma* had been quite strong in this period and it would not have been possible to take such an audacious step. This evidence too proves that the text is a composition of a later author.

By these evidences one can say that this work is a composition of some author of 8th to 9th century CE whose name probably was Siddhācārya Aśvaghoṣa. As has been said earlier, the text was translated or rendered later in Chinese in 10th century CE.

   There is one more point emerging clearly about this author. Although he quotes from the *Smṛti*s or the *Mahābhārata*, many of the quotations are not located in the respective texts. The statements made here regarding the origins (births) of the sages are not generally in consonance with the traditional account. Taking into consideration all these aspects, it seems that this work might have been composed by some later spiritual masters (*siddha*s), who had no concern of displaying their scholarship but their purpose was to present their contention in simple words so as to make it acceptable to all. For that if they required any evidences, they unhesitatingly quoted them, whether they were available or unavailable in the quoted texts.]

Vajrasūci

(English Translation)

1   Salutations to Mañjunātha
2   After having offered obeisance (salutations) to Mañjughoṣa (alias Mañ-junātha), the teacher of the whole universe, with my speech, body and

mind, I Aśvaghoṣa (hereby) write in the form of concise rules *Vajrasūcī* in consonance with (śāstric) injunctions (1).[5]

3   *Veda*s are the authority (*pramāṇa*), *smṛti*s are the authority; the speech (*vacana*) related to religious merit (*dharma*) and material benefit (*artha*) is the authority. If one shall not endorse these authorities as authority, then who shall testify his/her speech as authority? (2)

4   If you accept that 'brāhmaṇa varṇa' is superior amongst all varṇas,' then we ask, who is a 'brāhmaṇa'? Is it (= the ground of brahmaṇa-hood) the soul, the birth, the body, knowledge, behaviour, deed or the Vedic scripture?

5   Now, the soul is not a brāhmaṇa, because *Veda* is authoritative (in this case), *Veda* states,

> the Sun was an animal, Soma was an animal, Indra was an animal, gods are animals. In the beginning and at the end, the same persons become animals and gods (through rebirth). Even those who eat (literally, cook) dog's flesh (the lowest in the varṇa framework) are also gods.

6   Therefore, due to the authority of the *Veda*s we consider that one does not become a 'brāhmaṇa' just because he is a soul. The *Mahābhārata* also bears testimony to this. It is said in the *Mahābhārata*:
    "The seven hunters from Daśārṇa country, deer in the Kālañjara mountain, *cakravāka* birds in the Śarat island and swans in the Mānasa lake were born as brāhmaṇas endowed with the highest knowledge of the *Veda*s in the Kurukṣetra region" (3).

7   Therefore, with the testimony of the *Mahābhārata*, owing to the possibility of the observation with regard to hunters, deer, swans and *cakravāka* birds, we consider that soul is not a brāhmaṇa. This is also endorsed by the testimony of the Manu's Book of Law, where it has been stated: "A brāhmaṇa, who having studied the four *Veda*s along with its ancillary and sub ancillary texts keeping in view its essential elements, accepts monetary benefits in return from a *śūdra*, becomes a donkey". Further Manu has said: "He becomes a donkey for 12 births, hog for 60 births and dog for 70 births" (4–5).

8   One does not become a brāhmaṇa on the basis of birth. How is it so? As testified by *Smṛti*. *Smṛti* says:

"Acala was born from a female elephant, Keśapiṅgala was born from female owl, Agastya was born from the Agasti flower and Kauśika came into being from *kuśa* grass" (6).

   "Kapila was born from the tawny coloured cow and Gautama was born from the cluster of weeds, Ācārya Droṇa from a container/pot and Tittirī is the son of *Tittiri* (partridge) bird" (7).

"Reṇukā gave birth to Rāma (Paraśurāma) and a doe gave birth to Rśyaśṛṅga, a fisherwoman (Satyavatī) gave birth to Vyāsa and śūdra-woman gave birth to Kuśika" (8).

"Caṇḍālī gave birth to Viśvamitra and Urvaśī (the celestial nymph) gave birth to Vasiṣṭha, thus their mothers were not brāhmaṇa but they were regarded as brāhmaṇas in the public (conventional) practice" (9).

Thus by the testimony of the *Smṛti*s we hold that one does not become a brāhmaṇa on account of birth.

9 Supposedly if you say, one's mother may not be brāhmaṇa but his[6] father were brāhmaṇa and from that one becomes a brāhmaṇa, then sons of female slaves, born from brāhmaṇas would be *brāhmaṇa*s, but this is not acceptable to you.

10 Moreover, if the son of a brāhmaṇa is a brāhmaṇa, then one has to accept the non-existence of a brāhmaṇa, because there is uncertainty regarding the brāhmaṇa-gotra of the fathers of the present brāhmaṇas. This is because it is seen that female brāhmaṇas are in conjugal contact with the śūdras. Therefore brāhmaṇa is not determined on the basis of birth. This is also as per the testimony of the *Dharmaśāstra* propounded by Manu. The laws of Manu state that:

"The *brāhmaṇa* attains downfall if he trades meat, lac and salt. A brāhmaṇa selling milk becomes a *śūdra* in three days" (10).

"Brāhmaṇas travelling through air face downfall if they consume meat. Therefore after having observed the downfall of the brāhmaṇas one should avoid consuming of meat" (11).

11 Therefore, by the testimony of the law book of Manu, one does not become a brāhmaṇa by birth, if yes then how can he face downfall and become a śūdra? Can a faulty horse ever become a pig? Thus, one cannot become a brāhmaṇa by birth.

12 Body frame is not (the mark of) a brāhmaṇa. How is it so? If body frame is a brāhmaṇa then fire (which burns the dead body of a brāhmaṇa) will be (called) the one who kills a brāhmaṇa; relatives who cremate the mortal body would be accused of killing a brāhmaṇa. Moreover, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra who have emerged from the body of brāhmaṇa (or those kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra offspring of brāhmaṇas from the women of these castes) would have been designated as brāhmaṇa, but this is not seen. If mere body frame was a brāhmaṇa, then the fruit originating from the actions viz; sacrificing, officiating a sacrifice, learning, teaching, undertaking charity and accepting charity which have accrued from the body of a brāhmaṇa would have been destroyed due to the death of the brāhmaṇa-body;

but this is not desirable. Therefore, we think that (mere) body frame is not a brāhmaṇa.

13 Knowledge is not (the mark of) a brāhmaṇa. How is it so? The reason being excess of knowledge. Those śūdras who are knowledgeable will also become brāhmaṇas. Śūdras, though rarely, are seen to have knowledge of *Veda*, Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, Jaina,[7] Ājīvaka[8] and all other knowledge systems. They would not be brāhmaṇas. Therefore, we consider that (one who possesses) knowledge is not a brāhmaṇa.

14 Conduct (that is, a person who possesses good conduct) also is not a brāhmaṇa. If (one who possesses) conduct is a brāhmaṇa, then the *śūdra*s endowed with (good) conduct would become brāhmaṇa. It is observed that actors, soldiers, fishermen, theatre persons etc. undertake variety of great actions but they do not become brāhmaṇas. Therefore, conduct is not (the mark of) a brāhmaṇa.

15 Actions (that is, occupation[9]) are also not (the mark of) a brāhmaṇa. How is it so? It is seen that kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras perform variety of actions viz; sacrificing, officiating a sacrifice, learning, teaching, undertaking charity and accepting charity. But you do not accept them (all) as brāhmaṇas. Therefore actions are also not (the mark of) a brāhmaṇa.

16 One does not become brāhmaṇa by *Veda*. How is it so? There was a *rākṣasa* named Rāvaṇa. He had studied the four *Veda*s viz; *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Practices pertaining to the *Veda*s are prevalent in the homes of *rākṣasa*s also,[10] but (by that) they do not become brāhmaṇas. Therefore, we think that one does not become a brāhmaṇa by (learning) the *Veda*s.

17 How does brāhmaṇa-hood come into existence? It is said:

"Brāhmaṇa-hood does not come into existence by scriptures, by purificatory rites, by birth, by lineage, by Vedas or by actions" (12).

18   "Brāhmaṇa-hood, which means eradication of all sins is white (pure) like *kunda* flowers and Moon."

19 It is said that (brāhmaṇa-hood is achieved) because of vows, penance, rules, fasting, charity, control, restraint and conduct.[11] It is said in the *Veda*s:

"Gods consider that person as a brāhmaṇa, (who is) selfless, devoid of ego, without attachment, without acquisition, free from passion and envy" (13).
    It is said in all scriptures:
    "Truthfulness is Brahman, penance is Brahman and control of senses is Brahman, compassion towards all living beings is Brahman; these are the characteristics of a brāhmaṇa."

"Lack of truth (truthfulness), lack of penance, lack of control of senses, absence of compassion towards all living beings are the characteristics of a cāṇḍāla."

"Those who do not indulge in sex (sexual pleasures) with gods, men, women and animals, they are highly wise and brāhmaṇas" (14–16).

Śukra has also said: "Birth is not taken into consideration, virtues are beneficial. Even if a cāṇḍāla is established there (that is, in virtues), gods consider such a person as brāhmaṇa" (17).

20 Therefore (it is said that) neither birth, nor soul, nor body frame, nor knowledge, nor actions, nor livelihood, nor knowledge of the *Veda*s makes one a brāhmaṇa.

21 Moreover, you have said, "Śūdras are not supposed to go for renunciation (*pravrajyā*), their duty is servitude of the brāhmaṇas. They are the lowest as the word śūdra is uttered as the last among four varṇas."

22 If this is so, then Indra would have been the lowest. The Paninian sutra viz; "the 'va' in *śvan*, *yuvan* and *maghavan* is vocalized when there is an affix other than *taddhita* affixes" enlists *śvā* i.e. dog, *yuvā* i.e. young man and then *maghavā* i.e., Indra, the king of gods. Hence Indra should have been the lowest in comparison to a dog and a young man. But this is not seen. Besides, does fault arise because of (the order of) utterance alone? Similarly the compounds such as *umāma-heśvarau* ("Umā and Maheśvara," that is "Goddess Pārvatī and the Lord Śiva") and *dantauṣṭham* ("teeth and lips") are used amongst people. This does not mean that teeth and Umā were born earlier. Only a compound of *varṇa*s has been made namely *brāhmaṇa-kṣatra-viṭ-śūdrāḥ* ("brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras"). Thus, your claim that only the servitude of brāhmaṇas is their duty does not hold any grounds.

23 Moreover, the case of brāhmaṇa-hood is not determinate. It is said in the Manu's Book of Law:

'That brāhmaṇa, who has sucked lip-moisture of a śūdra woman (at the time of copulation), enjoyed her breath and has procreated from her, does not get relief (from the sin)" (18).

"One (a brāhmaṇa) who consumes food from the hands of a śūdra woman continuously for a month, becomes a śūdra while alive (in this very life) and is born as dog after death" (19).

"A brāhmaṇa, surrounded with śūdra women, whose wife is a śūdra, loses any sanctification from his forefathers and gods and attains Raurava hell (one among permanent hells)" (20).

24 Following the testimony of the above statements the case of brāhmaṇa-hood is uncertain.

25 Moreover, a śūdra can become a brāhmaṇa. What is the reason? It is mentioned in the Manu's Book of Law:

"The great sage, Kaṭha by name, who was born from the sacrificial fire sticks became a brāhmaṇa by penance, therefore birth is not the reason (for being a brāhmaṇa)" (21).

"The great sage, Vyāsa by name, who was born from the womb of a fisherwoman became a brāhmaṇa by penance; therefore, birth is not the reason (for becoming a brāhmaṇa)" (22).

"The great sage Vasiṣṭha also, who was born from the womb of Urvaśī (a celestial nymph) became a brāhmaṇa by penance; therefore, birth is not the reason (for being a brāhmaṇa)" (23).

"Rśyaśṛṅga, the great sage who was born from the womb of a doe, became a brāhmaṇa by penance; therefore, birth is not the reason (for being a *brāhmaṇa*)" (24).

"Viśvāmitra the great sage, who was born from the womb of a Cāṇḍālī, became a brāhmaṇa by penance; therefore, birth is not the reason (for being a brāhmaṇa)" (25).

"Nārada, the great sage was born from the womb of a Tāṇḍalī (an outcaste woman), became a brāhmaṇa by penance; therefore birth is not the reason (for being a brāhmaṇa)" (26).

"One who has won over oneself, who has no rival, who has control over five senses, he becomes a brāhmaṇa by penance. Brāhmaṇa is one who leads the life of *Brahmacarya* (*Śramaṇacaryā*)" (27).

"They were not sons of brāhmaṇa women but were considered as brāhmaṇas in the world. Brāhmaṇa-hood is based on conduct and purity, thus family lineage is not the reason (to be a brāhmaṇa" (28).

"Conduct is prime and not family lineage, for there is no use of being born in a high-varṇa family but devoid of good conduct. Many learned people were born in low-varṇa families but they attained heaven by good conduct" (29).

26 "Who were Kaṭha, Vyāsa, Vasiṣṭha, Rśyaśṛṅga, Visvāmitra and other *brahmarṣi*s (brāhmaṇa sages)? They were born in low families, but were brāhmaṇas for the world. Thus, by accepting this statement as a testimonial (towards brāhmaṇa-hood), the case of a brāhmaṇa is not determinate, for (a person born in a) śūdra family can also become a brāhmaṇa."

27 What else? In your opinion:

"Brāhmaṇa is born from the mouth, kṣatriya from the arms, vaiśya is born from the thighs and śūdra (is born) from the feet" (30).

28 Here we state that there are many brāhmaṇas and we do not know who all emerged from the mouth. (On the contrary) there are brāhmaṇas

from fisherman, washerman as well as cāṇḍāla families. Purificatory rites like tonsure, Muñjā-grass thread ceremony are being done for them, they are also designated as brāhmaṇa. Therefore, kṣatriyas and others also are like brāhmaṇas. Hence we see that there is only one varna. There are no four varnas.

29 Besides, if they (varṇas) have originated from one man (puruṣa), how can there be four (different) varṇas? Here someone called Devadatta procreates four sons from one woman, there is not differentiation based on varṇa as this one is brāhmaṇa, this one is kṣatriya, this one is vaiśya and this one is śūdra. How is this so? Because they have one father. In that case, how can brāhmaṇas and others constitute four varṇas?

30 Here, we see different footprints of bull, elephant, horse, lion, tiger etc. as this is the hoof mark of a bull, this is the footprint of an elephant, this is the hoof mark of a horse, this is the hoof mark of a deer, this is the pugmark of a lion and this is the pug mark of a tiger. But we cannot identify the foot-print of a brāhmaṇa, the foot-print of a kṣatriya, the foot-print of a vaiśya and the foot-print of a śūdra. Thus, as there is no differentiating factor in the foot-prints, there is one varna and not four varnas.

31 Here, in the case of (animals) like bull, buffalo, horse, elephant, donkey, monkey, goat and ram, we find the difference between their genital organs, colour, body constitution, stool, urine, odour, sound and so on, same is not seen in the case of brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas etc, therefore, owing to no differentiating factor there is only one *varṇa*.

32 And also, just as swan, pigeon, parrot, cuckoo, peacock and others are identified with differentiating factors like form, colour, hair, and face, this is not the case with brāhmaṇas and others, therefore as there is not differentiating factor there is only one varna.

33 Just as trees like banyan, *bakula*, *palāsa*, *aśoka*, *tamāla*, *nāgakesara*, *sirīṣa* and *campaka* have a differentiating factor be it stem, leaf, flower, fruit, bark, seed, juice or odour, similar differentiating factors are not evident in the case of brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras and there is no difference in skin, flesh, blood, bone, semen, excrement, complexion, body constitution and also in the case of delivering a child. Therefore, because of absence of differentiating factors, there is only one varna.

34 Moreover, O brāhmaṇa, there is no differentiating factor in the case of brāhmaṇas and others pertaining to happiness, grief, survival, intellect, behaviour, death, birth, fear and sexual behaviour.

35 You may take into cognizance the following. Just as fruits grown on one tree such as *udumbara* or jack fruit do not have varṇa-difference as fruits. Fruits of *udumbara* and jack fruit whether they grow on branches, stem, lower part of the stem and roots are identified as one and not as 'this is a brāhmaṇa fruit,' 'this is a kṣatriya fruit,' 'this is a vaiśya fruit' (and) 'this is a śūdra fruit.' That is because they grow on

one tree. In the same way there is no differentiation amongst human beings as they are born from one *puruṣa* (that is, a human male).

36 Besides, there is one more flaw. If a brāhmaṇa (male) is born from the mouth (of the great cosmic *puruṣa*), then from where has a brāhmaṇa female come into existence? If she has come into existence through the mouth then, alas! there is the problem of her being sister (of a *brāhmaṇa* male). It is not appropriate (for a brāhmaṇa) to have sexual relationship with her. It is against the norms of the society. Therefore, Brāhmaṇa-hood is indeterminate.

37 The system of four varṇas is indeed based on specific actions. When Yudhiṣṭhira asked Vaiśampāyana, he explained that the system of four varṇas is based on specific actions.

The renowned son of Pāṇḍu named Yudhiṣṭhira having approached Vaiśampāyana respectfully asked (him) (31).

"Who are brāhmaṇas and what are the characteristics of brāhmaṇas? As I am desirous of knowing this, you may please explain" (32).

Vaiśampāyana said:

The first characteristic of a brāhmaṇa (is as follows): A brāhmaṇa is endowed with the virtues like forbearance. He is the one who gives up use of weapons; he follows the practice of meatless diet and does not injure or kill living beings (33).

The second characteristic of a brāhmaṇa (is as follows): A brāhmaṇa does not accept wealth belonging to someone else, neither in full (nor in part) whether fallen in the street or in someone's home if it is not given (or offered) (34).

The third characteristic of a brāhmaṇa (is as follows): A brāhmaṇa has given up cruel nature, is devoid of possessiveness, who does not receive anything (without being given), who is liberated and who wanders regularly (freely) (35).

The fourth characteristic of a brāhmaṇa (is as follows): A brāhmaṇa has permanently given up sexual acts with gods, men, women, birds and animals (36).

The fifth characteristic of a brāhmaṇa (is as follows): Truth is purity, compassion is purity, controlling sense organs is purity, kindness towards all living beings is purity and penance is purity (37).

O Yudhiṣṭhira, I regard such a person endowed with these five characteristics as a brāhmaṇa, the remaining others are termed as śūdras (38).

A person does not become a brāhmaṇa by family lineage nor by birth; (he becomes a brāhmaṇa) by actions[12] (good conduct), for O Yudhiṣṭhira, even a cāṇḍāla who has a good conduct is a brāhmaṇa (39).

Vaiśampāyana further added:

> O Yudhiṣṭhira, earlier there was only one varṇa in this world. Four varṇas were established because of expertise in deeds and actions (40).
>
> All mortals are born through the womb, all release urine and excrement, all have similar sensory organs and (cognize similar) sensory objects, therefore they become brāhmaṇas (literally twice-born ones) on account of good conduct and virtues (41).
>
> Even a śūdra endowed with good conduct and virtues becomes a brāhmaṇa and even a brāhmaṇa devoid of good conduct becomes lower than a śūdra (42).

These are the statements of Vaiśampāyana:

> O Yudhiṣṭhira, if a śūdra has crossed the abysmal ocean of five sensory organs (successfully), then limitless charity needs to be offered to him (43).
>
> O king, one does not look for birth as virtues cause well-being. Gods consider such a person as brāhmaṇa, who has dedicated his life for righteousness, (for the well-being) of others and exerts day in and day out with forbearance (44).
>
> O Yudhiṣṭhira, the Son of Kuntī, those who after having renounced household life, become desirous of attaining liberation and who are detached from desires are called brāhmaṇas (45).
>
> Non-violence, non-possessiveness, abstaining from miraculous actions, withdrawal from attachment and envy are the characteristics of a brāhmaṇa (46).
>
> Forgiveness, sympathy, subjugation (of passion), (generosity) in charity, truth, purity, mindfulness,[13] disgust,[14] learnedness, specific knowledge[15] and belief (in life after death) are the characteristics of a brāhmaṇa (47).
>
> A brāhmaṇa, who knows the *Gāyatrī mantra* only and is well controlled (in senses) is far better than a brāhmaṇa who has knowledge of the four Vedas, but is uncontrolled (in senses), and consumes everything and sells everything (48).
>
> O Yudhiṣṭhira, one does not attain the (high) position (after death) even by performing thousand sacrifices, which one attains by practicing *brahmacarya* (that is, the life of a *Śramaṇa*) just for one night (49).
>
> He is known as a brāhmaṇa, who has full knowledge of all the Vedas, who has performed consecration at all sacred places and who being liberated practices righteousness (50).
>
> One, who does not perform dreadful sins towards all living beings through body, mind and speech, attains Brahman (51).

We have said this to remove confusion amongst brāhmaṇas who have lost thinking power. May the virtuous people accept it if it is reasonable (if they agree with it) and leave it if it is unreasonable (if they disagree with it) (52).

This work is by the revered and accomplished Aśvaghoṣa.

Notes

1 This is an English translation by Madhavi Narsale of the Hindi article written by Sanghasen Singh published in *Buddhist Studies* (the journal of the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi), Late Professor Dharmananda Kosambi Commemoration Volume, May 1977, pp. 45–69.
2 Vide Mukhopadhyaya, 1950: xii.
3 VS, verse no. (2).
4 Vide Mukhopadhyaya, 1950: xvii.
5 The numbers in parentheses refer to the numbers of the verses in the text.
6 The word used in the original text is '*teṣām*' (meaning, 'their') which should have been '*tasya*' (meaning, 'his'). It is translated accordingly.
7 The original text uses the word *nagna* (meaning naked) which probably refers to the system of the Jainas. The reference to Nigaṇṭha Nāthaputta. The historians have identified him with Mahāvīra. The two sects of Jainism must have been available at the time of the composition of this text. It appears that the author has designated both the sects by the common term, 'nagna.'
8 This probably refers to Makkhali-Gosāla.
9 Here the term *karma* (literally, action) may better be interpreted as occupation. The word *kamma* (karma, action) has a different connotation in the well-known verse from *Suttanipāta*, "*na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo|kammunā vasalo hoti, kammunā hoti brāhmaṇo||*," (One does not become a śūdra by birth; one does not become a brāhmaṇa by birth. One becomes a śūdra by *kamma* (action); one becomes a brāmaṇa by *kamma*).
10 This is not consistent with the Brahmanical tradition. One does not know on what basis the author has said this.
11 This is quite an odd definition of Brahmin-hood. Compare, *Dhammapada*, "*Brāhmaṇavagga*."
12 "*kriyābhir brāhmaṇo bhavet.*" Unless the statement is interpreted differently (as 'good conduct'), it will not be consistent with earlier statement. Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyay translates, "A man is not brāhmaṇa .....by ceremonies," which is wrong (See Mukhopadhyay, 1950: 21).
13 The word '*smṛti*' seems to be used here in the Buddhist connotation, namely, 'Mindfulness.'
14 '*ghṛṇā*' (disgust). Probably this refers to disgust towards sins.
15 '*vijñāna*' (specific knowledge). Is the word used according to Buddhist terminology?

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VS: *Vajrasūcī* as included in Mukhopadhyay (1950).

Appendix II

VAJRASŪCI AND ITS REVERBERATIONS[1]

R. C. Dhere

History has seen a great number of rational men and women, known and unknown, who have raised their voices against determining a person's social status based on his birth. One such rational person, who is unknown to history, wrote a great book by the name *Vajrasūci* or *Vajrasūcikopaniṣad*. In it, the author has severely criticized Brāhmaṇa-hood determined by birth.

Although this Upaniṣad falls into the category of the New Upaniṣads, it dates back beyond the 9th century of the Christian Era and there is simply no way to firmly identify its author. A copy of the manuscript of this book came to the notice of B. H. Hudson in Nepal, in the year 1829. According to the information gathered by Hudson from the legends, the creator of this treatise is one Aśvaghoṣa. Later on, another copy of this manuscript made by someone in the year circa 1710, was found in Nashik, Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, however, the Upaniṣad is credited to Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.

In circa 973–981 A. D., the Upaniṣad was translated into Chinese. The Chinese consider the original author of the book to be a Buddhist scholar by the name Dharmakīrti. Some other sources even offer the names of Mañjughoṣācārya, a disciple of Aśvaghoṣa and someone by the name Mṛtyuñjayācārya.[2]

This is a very small Upaniṣad (contained in a single crown-size sheet) and is included in the collections of Upaniṣads published by various publications like Nirnaysagar (Mumbai), Khemraj Shrikrishnadas (Mumbai), Sarvahitaishi Company (Varanasi) *et al*. A detailed, annotated edition of the Upaniṣad is also available. The manuscript in the possession of this author clearly states that Aśvaghoṣa is its creator.[3]

A synopsis of *Vajrasūci*

True to the term *Vajra* in its name, meaning a very strong and indestructible club-like weapon or thunderbolt, *Vajrasūci* consists of hard-hitting thoughts. It affirms very logically that Brāhmaṇa-hood does not get established or proved by birth, body, caste, knowledge, deeds or religiousness.

The Upaniṣad strongly adheres to the ideal definition of Brāhmaṇa as 'He, who has understood *Brahma* is a Brahmin' (*Brahma jānātīti brāhmaṇaḥ*).

The rational-minded author of *Vajrasūci* says, 'Let me teach you the enlightening set of universal principles (*śāstra*) called *Vajrasūci*, which is the pride of the knowledgeable and the curse of the ignorant. There are four varṇas or classes, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra. The *śrutis* and the *smṛtis* tell us that among them, the Brāhmaṇa-varṇa is the highest or the most superior. This obviously leads one to think, who exactly is a Brāhmaṇa? What is it, among birth, body, caste, knowledge, deeds (*karma*) and religiousness that proves the Brāhmaṇa-hood of an individual?

Saying this, the author of *Vajrasūci* avers that none of these six factors determine Brāhmaṇa-hood. He further states that only a person, who rids himself of the six faults, achieves restraint of the senses and experiences selfless, detached existence—is a Brāhmaṇa.

An understanding of this manifest meaning of the *Vajrasūci* will enable us to realize the greatness of the rational thoughts it puts forward. Its author regards his laconic work to be 'the curse of the ignorant' and 'the pride of the knowledgeable'. Saint Jñāneśvara says: "Knowledge is the eye of deed and it ought to be impeccable" and his contemporaries or the saints that followed him, belong to this same tradition.

Bhaviṣyapurāṇa and *Vajrasūci*

While the *purāṇas* have sung paeans for the Brāhmaṇas on one hand, on the other hand they have also set forth the ideals of Brāhmaṇa-hood and have severely condemned those Brāhmaṇas who are found wanting against those ideals.

The Bhaviṣyapurāṇa in particular has practically uprooted the concept of Brāhmaṇa-hood by birth in an elaborate manner, just like the *Vajrasūci*.[4] This Purāṇa says,

> śūdra-brāhmaṇayor bhedo mṛgymāṇo'pi yatnataḥ|
> nekṣyate sarvadharmeṣu saṁhatais tridaśair api||

(Even all the gods, if they come together and search diligently, they will not be able to discriminate between a Śūdra and a Brāhmaṇa.)

Like *Vajrasūci*, the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa too, says: "there is no rule whatsoever that a Brāhmaṇa's colour is white, that of a Kṣatriya is yellow and that of a Śūdra is black." This call for equality among the humans by the Bhaviṣyapurāṇa is a great and laudable attempt to revive the legacy of *Vajrasūci*.

Vajrasūci and the Mahānubhāva sect

The process of researching the tenets of the Mahānubhāva Sect with the object of pure pursuit of knowledge in an objective and unbiased manner

is yet to begin in Maharashtra. Unless that happens, several enigmas of the cultural history of this state over the past seven centuries will remain unresolved. There is a room to believe that the Sect accorded importance to *Vajrasūci*. It is quite natural that the followers of Cakradharasvāmī, who has condemned Brāhmaṇa-hood in such terms as '*Sarvādhamatva Brāhmaṇatva*' (Brāhmaṇa-hood is the vilest) or '*Ācārya-naraka*' (hell of the teachers), should have a particular affinity towards *Vajrasūci*, which is a scathing criticism on Brāhmaṇa-hood by birth. Frankly, I have not been able to follow the ancient literature of the Mahānubhāvas in this respect. However, the list of Mahānubhāva literature given on the back page of a book published by Mahant Dattaraj in Peshawar (now in Pakistan) in the year 1908 mentions '*Vajrasūcikopaniṣad*'. Similarly, a modern publication of this Sect, 'Viṭṭhala-Darśana arthāt Satyaśaṅkā Prakāśa' (authored by Shindewadikar),[5] though it does not cite *Vajrasūci* manifestly, puts forth the Marathi translation of thoughts in it in the form of Marathi ślokas.

Vajrasūci and the Warkari saints

The saints belonging to the Bhāgavata Sampradāya who, setting forth the criteria of a high caste, says: "*Uttama tyā jāti, deva śaraṇa ananyagati*" (Those castes, who surrender to God are the high castes), were the proponents of the rational thought of equality of all humans, not unlike the author of *Vajrasūci*.

However, the similarity found between the thought promoted by *Vajrasūci* and that of the saints does not establish a direct relationship between them. Yet, there is person among the hallowed list of Marathi saints, in the nurturing of whose thoughts *Vajrasūci* has actually played a role and that person is Saint Bahiṇābāī, an influential disciple of Saint Tukārām.

In her life there was an extraordinary situation developed at the time when she was in search of her guru. While she was staying at Kolhapur (Maharashtra), she had an opportunity to listen to Saint Tukārām's verses (*abhaṅga*s) in a devotional sermon (*kīrtana*) by Jairamsvāmī Wadgaonkar and she yearned for more of the saint's thoughts. She also saw in a dream that Saint Tukārām himself enlightened her. However, her orthodox husband refuted the idea as he could not imagine a Brāhmaṇa lady making a lower caste person, her guru. Bahiṇābāī was born in a Brahmin family whereas Saint Tukārām belonged to the Kuṇabī caste by birth. Bahiṇābāī's husband did not just oppose her; he even tortured her.

It was during that period of oppression that Bahiṇābāī began thinking about who a Brahmin is. In this contemplative phase of her life, *Vajrasūci* gave her the ideological support. Perhaps she received a copy of the Upaniṣad from Jayarāmasvāmī. Thereafter, she wrote a poetic (*abhaṅga*) commentary on *Vajrasūci*.[6] In a small set of mere 18 *abhaṅga*s, she presented a detailed,

lucid explanation of the thoughts of *Vajrasūci* and affirmed that, 'He, who has realized Brahma, is a Brahmin.' She said,

> *Bahiṇī mhaṇe, brahmī nānde to brāhmaṇa /*
> *yātiśī pramāṇa, nase tethe //*

(Bahiṇā says, he, who dwells in the realm of Brahma is a Brahmin. Caste has nothing to do with it.)

This couplet is the concluding part of the eighteenth and final *abhaṅga* of Bahiṇābāī, contained in her poetic commentary on *Vajrasūci*. The commentary no doubt has a special place in her spiritual life, but one must say that it is an expression of the rational outlook of the Maharashtrian saint tradition. The literature of the Marathi saint-poets is a literature replete with the ideology of equality. While in the traditional Indian society, Brahmins have been regarded as the most superior by birth, most saints have tried from time to time, to make the Brahmins whose behaviour was not exactly in keeping with their high position in the society aware of the standards or ideals of Brāhmaṇa-hood. They have also sternly refuted the principle of social superiority or inferiority based on one's birth.

They reviled the pseudo *guru*s. They accorded a great importance to the institution of Gurus, yet they stood up against the corrupt and imposter *guru*s and declared unequivocally that any virtuous devotee, irrespective of his caste can be initiated into spirituality by a *guru*. *Vajrasūci* appears to have been influenced by the thought-movement that assumed the expression of Gautama Buddha's view of equality, which said, "No one is a Brāhmaṇa or a Cāṇḍāla based on his birth; his Brāhmaṇa or his Cāṇḍāla status is determined by his karma or deeds that he does." And the speech and actions of the Marathi saints seem to reverberate the core of the thoughts contained in *Vajrasūci*, indirectly if not directly. Bahiṇābai's commentary on the Upaniṣad provides a strong evidence of it.

Poetic translation by Shyamraj

When looked at from the social point of view, the acceptance of *Vajrasūci* by the saint tradition is quite significant. Besides Bahiṇābāī, Saint Gopālanāth and his younger brother as well as disciple Śyāmarāj alias Nānā Mahārāj have also translated *Vajrasūci* in the form of *abhaṅga*s.[7] Both these saints were born at a place that had enormous influence of Bahiṇābāī's thoughts and belonged to the liberal tradition of Saint Ekanāth. Fellow disciples of Shri Śyāmarāj belonged to various castes. Even a Muslim by the name Shaikh Sultan was among them. The *guru* of Shri Śyāmarāj's *guru* belonged to the caste of goldsmiths (Sonar). The biographer of Gopalnath has explained this phenomenon of a Brahmin accepting a Sonar as a guru

in the language of *Vajrasūci*. "A person is not a Brahmin if he has no knowledge of Brahma and a person who has realized Brahma is a great Brahmin, whatever may be his caste."

Even more obvious proof of *Vajrasūci*'s influence than this indirect evidence is the translation of *Vajrasūci* done by Shri Śyāmarāj in just seven *abhaṅga*s.[8] Shri Śyāmarāj has taken a review of the entire saint tradition in these seven *abhaṅga*s and has suggested in the eighth *abhaṅga* that the reader should look at the Marathi saint tradition in light of the earlier seven because the saints are from all castes and they are Brahma in themselves because they have experienced the Brahma.

Nāthalīlāmṛta of Ādinātha-Bhairava

Ādinātha-Bhairava was a saint-poet from the Nātha sect in the first half of the 19th century. He wrote a book named '*Nāthalīlāmṛta*' in 1836 that consisted of the legends of the accomplished men in the Nātha tradition.[9]

The book is a testimony to Ādinātha's erudition. Evidently, *Vajrasūcikopaniṣad* was very much in the range of his knowledge. While narrating the life of Śaṅkarācārya, in the 27th chapter of the book, he has included a translation of *Vajrasūcikopaniṣad*. Ādinātha has described a meeting between Śaṅkarācārya and Bhairava, the guardian spirit (Kṣetrapāla) of Kashi (Varanasi). At that time, Bhairava had assumed the persona of a Cāṇḍāla and unaware of his true identity, Śaṅkarācārya had refused to talk to him. At that time, Bhairava preached him not to be proud of the greatness of being a Brahmin. This entire discourse is nothing but a translation of the core message of *Vajrasūci*.

Vajrasūci and some social reformers of the 19th and 20th century

The beginning of the 19th century marked a period of rapid development in hard self-evaluation and cultural analysis in Maharashtra, under the early British Raj. The thinkers and social reformers of that era were of the opinion that outdated and rubbish concepts ought to be discarded resolutely; however, while establishing new thoughts in their place, it would be great if they can get some justification from the tradition.

Accordingly, the ancient piece of literature that offered a strong support to reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy in their endeavours to eradicate social disparity was none other than *Vajrasūci*. The principle 'The high or low status of a person does not depend on the caste in which he is born but on his individual qualities or lack of them' was pursued by him with the help of *Vajrasūci*. Raja Rammohan Roy wrote a commentary on *Vajrasūci* in Bengali language and began publishing it in the form of a series of articles. Unfortunately, he could not complete it.[10]

In Maharashtra, the various movements for social reforms have been associated with *Vajrasūci* right since the beginning. A person going by the name Subaji Bapu had published *Vajrasūci* along with its English and Marathi translations in the year 1839. 'Jātibheda -vivekasāra' an article written by Tukaramtatya Padwal under the name 'One Hindu' was from the same school of thought. Its second edition was published by Mahatma Phule.

The wellspring from which the famous Prārthanā Samāj movement originated was Paramahamsa Sabhā and its chief protagonist Dadoba Pandurang had written a book 'Dharma Vivecana' for his brainchild. The book was published in 1868 and the sixth chapter in it is titled 'All humans belong to one caste.' This chapter is in fact, an excellent commentary on *Vajrasūci*. This fact becomes clearly evident if one undertakes a comparative study of the two books.[11]

Another reformist leader of the masses in Maharashtra, who was greatly influenced by *Vajrasūci* was Svatantrya Veer V. D. Savarkar. Savarkar had published an elaborate article introducing *Vajrasūci* and celebrating the rational thoughts in it, in the monthly magazine *Kirloskar*.[12] It is quite unfortunate that his thoughts were neglected in the movement for social equality. However, Savarkar has described *Vajrasūci* as 'A book discussing pros and cons of casteism in stark words.' He has also very clearly advocated the book.

Notes

1 Editor's note: This is a summary of the chapter, "*vajrasūcīce āghāta*" (pp. 92–121) of the Marathi work authored by the late R. C. Dhere (1930–2016): *Santasāhitya āṇi Lokasāhitya: Kāhī Anubandha,* 1st edn (Pune: Shrividya Prakashan, 1978); the chapter has been summarized by Aruna Dhere in Marathi and the summary is translated into English by Prashant Talnikar. The works titled *Vajrasūcī* and *Vajrasūcikopaniṣad*, though similar in content, are two different works, not composed by one and the same author. The *Vajrasūcī* is ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa, although he may not be the same as the well-known author of the *Buddhacarita*. The other work, *Vajrasūcikopaniṣad*, probably modelled after the first one, is listed among late Upaniṣads. R. C. Dhere in this article is talking about both the works without distinguishing between them. Dhere here deals with the influence of *Vajrasūcī/ Vajrasūcikopaniṣad* on the saints and social reformers/thinkers.
2 See Mukhopadhyaya (1960).
3 Two manuscripts in the personal collection of R. C. Dhere.
4 *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa, Brahmaparva*, Chapters 41–42.
5 Editor's note: Reference to the book (Shindewadikar, Mahant-Govind-Charudatta-Teerthankar-Sadhu, Viṭṭhala-Darśana arthāt Satyaśaṅkā Prakāśa, Mahatma Govind Pathurkar, Solapur) is found in Dhere's original chapter without mention of the year of publication.
6 Dere (1976, 93–121) Appendix, pp. 190–203.
7 See Dhere (1973).
8 See Dhere (1973).
9 See Dhere (1972).

10 Keskar (1915, 74).
11 Priyolkar (1966, 63–122) (Reprint of '*Dharmavivechan*' written by Dadoba Pandurang at the end of this book) (First print of the book, 1868, record of coming to Mumbai).
12 Savarkar (1993, 130).

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Note: **P**age numbers followed by "n" denote endnotes.

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100 years of Logical Atomism

Russell special

Guest Editor : Amitabha Dasgupta

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Contents

Russell's Critique of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* Some Reflections

Ramesh Chandra Pradhan

Abstract:

In this paper I would like to focus on Russell's critique of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, especially in the "Introduction" to the book which Russell wrote in order to make Wittgenstein's philosophical views known to the wider world. Wittgenstein, while writing the *Tractatus*, was in constant touch with Russell who was his mentor in the early years at Cambridge. Though Wittgenstein was never satisfied with Russell's "Introduction", he thought it important as a critical piece of writing of his mentor on his work the publication of which Russell considered "an event in the philosophical world". It is therefore interesting to revisit Russell's response to the *Tractatus* which is claimed to be one of the greatest classics in the twentieth century philosophy. I will attempt in this essay to delineate some aspects of the *Tractatus* in which Russell and Wittgenstein agreed and in which they differed. Both of them were philosophers of divergent temperaments and both developed their philosophical outlooks with divergent presuppositions. I will try to analyze these differences in presuppositions which had an impact on Russell's interpretation of the *Tractatus*.

Keywords: Logical Form, Logical Pictures, Logical Atomism, Holism, The Mystical.

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1. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus:* Problems and Presuppositions

Before we understand Russell's response to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (*TLP*), let us briefly review some of the presuppositions to which Wittgenstein was committed in logic and metaphysics. The *Tractatus* is a text on logic and metaphysics, it being singularly concerned with the ramifications of logic with regard to the metaphysics of the world (*TLP* 1-1.21). The text can be divided into two sets of problems, namely those which are concerned with logic and language, on the one hand, and those concerning the nature of the world, its meaning and constitution, on the other, in so far as the latter can be studied through the logical method. But the problems of the second sort give rise to the problem of the self and the limits of language and the world (see *TLP* 4.114-4.115 for understanding the limits of thought and language). Thus arose Wittgenstein's now well recognized problem of the distinction between what can be said and what cannot be said, i.e. of the mystical (6.44-6.45; 6.522).

The *Tractatus* is not only a treatise on logic, language and the world but also of what is beyond language and the world, because it was Wittgenstein's fervent wish to bring to a close all the problems that beset the minds of the philosophers as they arise because of a misunderstanding of the logic of language. Wittgenstein's method of solving all problems of philosophy was certainly not empiricistic or naturalistic (4.111-4.112; Wittgenstein, in fact, steers clear of empiricism and naturalism as a philosophical method) because he had no inclination of engaging in another set of solutions of the problems quite familiar to the empiricists like Russell and Moore with whom he closely worked early in his life. He had an altogether different take on the problems of logic, language and the world which differed from that taken by his contemporaries like Russell and Moore. He made his philosophy address those questions which were bypassed by other philosophers of logic and language, namely those concerning what cannot be said in language and yet is very important for understanding life and the world. This he expressed quite uncharacteristically in a letter to his friend Ludwig Ficker (see Pears, *Wittgenstein* 88) where he says that the book, the *Tractatus*, has two parts, namely that which has been written and that which has not been written, the latter being the most important. Wittgenstein's emphasis on that which has not been written and which cannot be written and expressed shows his unusual style of philosophizing.

Wittgenstein's method of philosophizing can be called transcendental keeping in mind his intention to set limits to language and the world (see Wittgenstein's "Preface" to *TLP* 3) thus keeping aside the problems which are of an intractable nature such as the meaning and value of the world and life, the supernatural character of values, the metaphysical essence of the world, the metaphysical self and ultimately the relation between self and the world. Such problems do not belong to the realm of the philosophy of logic and language and cannot be solved by the existing methods of philosophizing. Therefore, for him,

these problems are of the transcendental nature and are to be relegated to the realm of the mystical, not to dismiss them out of hand as unimportant (6.54), but to treat them with utmost reverence. Such was his attitude towards the problems of metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics and religion which sets him apart from all his contemporaries.

2. Russell's Critique: The Clash of Two Perspectives

Russell admired and mentored the unconventional genius of Wittgenstein, though he disagreed with him on almost all of the latter's convictions and philosophical beliefs. It is a matter of great coincidence that Wittgenstein came under the influence of Russell in his early life before he could carve out his own place in philosophy with his original thinking in all departments of philosophy including logic which attracted him most to Russell. Both Frege and Russell influenced Wittgenstein's thinking on logic which he has profusely acknowledged in the preface to the *Tractatus*. But he goes on to chalk out his own path in establishing the transcendental philosophy of logic, language and the world.

Russell's philosophical perspective is markedly different from Wittgenstein's because while Russell makes effort to impose his empiricist leanings on the problems of reality, knowledge and language, Wittgenstein takes a different stand on these issues. This is evident from Russell's interpretation of the *Tractatus* on the empiricist lines when he claims that Wittgenstein is a logical atomist ("The Philosophy" 178) in his theory of reality. Russell gives credit to Wittgenstein as the inspiration for his philosophy of logical atomism.

Wittgenstein had claimed that the objects "contain the possibility of all states of affairs" (2.014). Thus, for him, objects constitute the substance of the world (2.021) and are the simple constituents of the states of affairs. Russell takes this to be the foundation of logical atomism. However, for Wittgenstein, objects do not constitute the world *per se,* but are the things which constitute the facts. Thus the world is the "totality of facts, not of things" (1.1). If this argument is correct, then it is *prima facie* not an argument for atomism in Russell's sense.

Russell's logical atomism is a part of his empiricist epistemology and so cannot be derived from Wittgenstein's theory of the objects which are logical and non-empirical in nature. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is not designed to be a text on atomistic metaphysics as Russell claims.

Both in metaphysics and epistemology Russell cannot accept Wittgenstein's logical and transcendental approach which brings into effect a theory of the world that is *a priori* and transcendental which makes the world subject to a logical scaffolding (*TLP* 6.124) rather than an empirical construction out of the atomic facts. For Russell, the world is a matter of how we empirically make the world out of the given atomic facts. For Wittgenstein, logic is transcendental (6.13) because it is logic which gives us the "mirror-image" of the world (6.13). Russell leaves no such role for logic in philosophy.

3. The Picture Theory of Language

Central to Russell's critique of the *Tractatus* is his emphasis on Wittgenstein's theory of language as a picture of the world. Russell accepts the fact that language can be a logical picture of the facts as it is evident from his theory of logical atomism (Russell, "The Philosophy"; Lycan, "Logical Atomism"). There can be no doubt that Russell is influenced by the Tractarian principle that language has a logical structure because of which the propositions can be pictures of facts. The atomic propositions like "a is F" where "a" stands for an object and "F" stands for one-place predicate can act like the picture of the corresponding fact "a is F". Both Russell and Wittgenstein accepted that language consists of atomic propositions and their truth-functions, while the world is "the totality of facts, not of things" (*TLP* 1.1). The logical matching of propositions with facts is ensured for the very possibility of the logical symbolism.

Wittgenstein, however, came to the idea of propositions and facts not because he had empirical evidence for it, but because he was guided by logic to hit upon this theory. For him, the application of logic to language and the world would necessarily result in the propositions and facts. Thus he has a transcendental argument for his theory of propositions and facts. His picture theory of language is an extension of that argument.

Russell missed Wittgenstein's transcendental argument altogether because he could not appreciate the idea that logic can apply to the world and determine its logical form. According to Wittgenstein, logical form is common to language and the word (*TLP* 2.15). Besides, Wittgenstein held that the logical form which is common to both language and reality (*TLP* 4.12) cannot be expressed in language and so must be shown (*TLP* 4.12). This Russell calls a kind of logical mysticism (*My Philosophical* 114) which he thinks is unwarranted and can be removed by the theory of hierarchy of languages. This is a gross misrepresentation of Wittgenstein's idea of the inexpressibility of the logical form. Wittgenstein was compelled by his own theory of language to keep the logical form outside language. Here is what he says:

> To be able to represent the logical from, we should have to be able to put ourselves with the propositions outside logic, that is outside the world. (*TLP* 4.12)

This shows Wittgenstein's compulsion to make language limited to what it can picture and say in terms of the propositions. Logical form of language and the world remains beyond pictorial representation in language.

4. The Principle of Atomicity

Russell emphasizes the principle of atomicity as central to the *Tractatus* keeping in view Wittgenstein's theory of simples underlying his metaphysics of the world. The simples are the objects which constitute the states of affairs or the atomic facts. Russell, as we have discussed earlier, developed his philosophy of logical atomism

based on Wittgenstein's theory of the simple objects. However, Wittgenstein in no way was a logical atomist in the avowed doctrines of the *Tractatus*. His aim was to describe the world as it is such that "the world is all that is the case" (*TLP* 1). In view of this he could be called a holist rather than an atomist because he did not mean to construct the world as an assemblage of facts or of things. The world is "the totality of facts" (*TLP* 1.1). This idea of totality is a metaphysical notion that indicates the organic nature of the totality and not of its compositionality. Wittgenstein had the metaphysical urge to represent the world as a whole through language. On the world as a whole, Wittgenstein had to say the following:

> To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a whole – a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole – it is this that is mystical. (*TLP* 6.45)

This reveals Wittgenstein's intention to bring out the idea of the world as a limited whole such that it could be represented in language. But the "feeling" of the world as a "limited whole" is itself beyond language, and so it is mystical. The idea of totality or whole is not a concept that can have a role to play in language.

Russell never accepted Wittgenstein's idea that the concept of totality cannot be expressed in language. Russell rejected the very idea of "showing" (*TLP* 4.121-4.1212) which is so central to Wittgenstein's thought. On the nature of the world as a whole, Russell has to say the following:

> According to this view we could only say things about the world as a whole if we could go outside the world, if, that is to say, it ceased to be for us the whole world. (Introduction xviii)

Russell suggests further that for a superior being the world appears as a whole and as bounded or limited. But for us the world does not have a boundary, since there is nothing outside the world (Introduction xviii).

Russell failed to understand Wittgenstein's idea of the world as bounded because he did not take note of the concept of *sub specie aeterni* (under the aspect of eternity) which Wittgenstein had introduced. The world could be viewed as a limited whole only under the aspect of eternity and not otherwise. That is why he called this idea inexpressible in language. Wittgenstein's idea of the world is holistic, while Russell looks at the world as an atomist such that the world for him is built out of the facts and not given as a whole. The principle of atomicity is therefore not central to Wittgenstein's metaphysics of the world contrary to Russell's contention.

5. Logic and Mysticism

Russell has rejected the mysticism that Wittgenstein has introduced into logic. Wittgenstein holds that the central concept of logic, i.e., logical form cannot be said but must be shown. This is because the logical form itself is the very basis of a proposition and cannot be expressed by the proposition itself; it is shown in the proposition. Wittgenstein writes:

> Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.
> What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What
> expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language.
> Propositions *show* the logical form of reality. They display it. (*TLP*
> 4.121)

Russell finds mysticism in this passage because he thinks anything that is not
expressible in language is mystical. The concept of showing that is introduced in
the above passage is central to Wittgenstein's concept of logical form. His
argument is that since logical form is the basis of all saying, it cannot itself be said.
Therefore he says: "What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said" (*TLP* 4.1212).
Wittgenstein thinks that by making the saying-showing distinction he is making
language free from nonsensical statements because if we say what can only be
shown, then we will make nonsensical statements.

There are many statements in logic which are meaningless because these
statements say the unsayable such as "There are objects", "There are 100 objects",
etc. (*TLP* 4.1272). These statements say what is shown and thus try to express the
inexpressible. Wittgenstein adds: "And it is nonsensical to speak of the *total number
of objects*" (*TLP* 4.1272). The idea of totality itself is not a proper concept and so
cannot be expressed in language. All these add to what Wittgenstein calls the
nonsensical propositions because they violate the rules of syntax of the language
concerned.

Russell thinks Wittgenstein has gone wrong in introducing the concept of
showing into logic because every logical concept can be expressed in language and
that language is capable of expressing every concept including the so-called formal
concepts like "object", "fact", "number", etc. Russell alleges that Wittgenstein
talks about these concepts in his *Tractatus* at different places by expressing them in
language and therefore he violates his own rule in doing so. Russell writes:

> Mr. Wittgenstein manages to say a good deal about what cannot be said,
> thus suggesting to the sceptical reader that possibly there may be some
> loophole through a hierarch of languages, or by some other exit.
> (Introduction xxi)

Russell hopes that this problem of mysticism can be resolved by invoking the
hierarchy of languages (*My Philosophical* 114) but he did not realize that the same
problem can crop up even for the higher-order languages. Logical form is
common to all languages and therefore there is no way we can stop the infinite
regress which will be given rise to by the hierarchical languages.

6. The Realm of the Mystical

Wittgenstein's commitment to the mystical is deeply laid in the *Tractatus*
because there lies the significance of his whole philosophy. He came to this idea
out of his conviction that there are things which cannot be expressed in language,
because they are logically unsayable. The following passage makes this explicit:

> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical. (*TLP* 6.522)

Here an uncompromising commitment is made to the mystical, not because language is not developed so as to be able to express the inexpressible, but because language is logically incapable of expressing it. Therefore the mystical is inexpressible in language at any cost. At another place Wittgenstein is constrained to introduce the mystical for the above reasons:

> It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists …
> Feeling the world as a limited whole – it is this that is mystical. (*TLP* 6.44-6.45)

Here there is no way Wittgenstein could have escaped the mystical given his understanding of the language and its limits. Therefore Russell's idea of a possible exit from the mystical cannot work as the idea of higher-order languages itself is not acceptable to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein places ethics, religion, aesthetics and the question of the meaning of life in the realm of the mystical. There is no way any significant discourse can be established about them. For example, when he says, "And so it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics. Propositions can express nothing that is higher" (*TLP* 6.42), he means to suggest that ethical values cannot be expressed in words and that the so-called ethical language is impossible. Here Wittgenstein is under logical compulsion to admit the mystical as a possible solution of the problem.

Russell was astonished to see Wittgenstein keeping the vital aspects of life under the mystical while yet talking about them. He writes:

> The whole subject of ethics, for example, is placed by Mr. Wittgenstein in the mystical, inexpressible region. Nevertheless he is capable of conveying his ethical opinions. His defence would be that what he calls mystical can be shown, although it cannot be said. (Introduction xxi)

This shows Russell's "intellectual discomfort" with Wittgenstein's attitude towards ethics, but it can be due to his idea that language has always a place for ethics, religion and aesthetics. Wittgenstein differs from Russell on this because of his own concept of ethics. For him, ethics is transcendental. He writes:

> It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental.
> (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same). (*TLP* 6.421)

This reveals Wittgenstein's attitudes towards ethics. Wittgenstein's concept of ethics clashes with Russell's concept of ethics, so there is lack of appreciation of the concept of mystical on the part of Russell. Here is not the occasion for deciding who is right and who is wrong, but only to show that Russell had no high opinion about Wittgenstein's approach to ethics in the *Tractatus*.

7. **Wittgenstein and Russell: Agreements and Disagreements**

That Russell's philosophy was impacted by Wittgenstein is evident from how Russell accepted some of the views of the *Tractatus* especially on logic and epistemology. Russell's philosophy of logical atomism owes a lot to Wittgenstein, especially on the nature of propositions as logical pictures of facts. Russell applied Wittgenstein's propositional calculus and truth-functional logic to the understanding of the metaphysics of the world. He arrived at an atomistic metaphysics of the world in terms of the atomic facts and the constituents of the facts, namely the objects. However, Russell developed his own concept of facts and objects in order to give a metaphysical description of the world ("The Philosophy").

Russell's logical atomism owed much to Wittgenstein, though, as already discussed, Wittgenstein cannot be called a logical atomist in the real sense of the term. Russell grounded his metaphysics in his empiricist epistemology deriving his notion of the world from the empiricist tradition to which he originally belonged. Wittgenstein kept away from empiricism in his theory of language and the world. Thus Russell and Wittgenstein never agreed on the fundamentals of their respective metaphysical theories.

On the nature of language itself though Russell admired Wittgenstein's theory of a logical symbolism, especially the logical syntax, he missed the fact that Wittgenstein wanted it to be applied to ordinary language itself (*TLP* 4.002) since he thought that ordinary language itself has all the logical structures underlying it. Russell could not have accepted such a position since he was in favour of an ideal language. Thus one cannot accept Russell's interpretation of Wittgenstein's position on the nature of an ideal language:

> Mr. Wittgenstein is concerned with the conditions of a logically perfect language – not that any language is logically perfect, or that we believe ourselves capable, here and now, of constructing a logically perfect language, but that the whole function of language is to have meaning, and it can fulfill this function in proportion as it approaches to the ideal language which we postulate. (Introduction x)

One is not sure if Wittgenstein would have accepted this interpretation of his position on the nature of a logically perfect language (see Ramsey).

Wittgenstein differed from Russell on many issues regarding the nature identity, theory of types, the problem of generality and the nature of logic itself. As Russell himself has admitted, Wittgenstein has rejected identity as a logical constant and opted for a symbolic notation in which the identity sign does not occur. As Russell says, "Mr. Wittgenstein accordingly banishes identity and adopts the convention that different letters are to mean different things" (Introduction xvii). Wittgenstein did so to keep logic free from any extra-logical entities in the world. For him, logical syntax alone can take care of identity. According to him,

"Logic must look after itself" (*TLP* 5.473) because "in logic nothing is accidental" (*TLP* 2.011). Further he writes:

> Self-evidence, which Russell talked so much, can become dispensable in logic, only because language itself prevents every logical mistake … What makes logic *a priori* is the *impossibility* of illogical thought. (*TLP* 5.4731)

This suggests that logic must be free from all accidental features of the world so that it can remain pure and *a priori*.

Wittgenstein kept the purity of logic by eliminating the accidental generalities from logic and by making general validity of the logical truths essential and necessary. That is why he characterized the logical truths as tautologies (*TLP* 6.1-6.11). Wittgenstein writes:

> The general validity of logic might be called essential, in contrast with the accidental general validity of such propositions as 'All men are mortal'. Propositions like Russell's 'axiom of reducibility' are not logical propositions, and this explains our feeling that, even if they were true, their truth could only be the result of a fortunate accident. (*TLP* 6.1232)

This explains how Wittgenstein differed from Russell even on the concept of logic and logical truths.

8. Concluding Remarks

Russell's response to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was a mixed one keeping in view Russell's appreciation as well as rejection of some of Wittgenstein's doctrines in logic and metaphysics. Though Russell admired Wittgenstein's logical insights (see Blackwell), he disagreed on the vital aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy, namely the mystical. Wittgenstein's main focus was not logic but what he thought is beyond logic and language. Russell summarily dismissed Wittgenstein's main metaphysical issues regarding the self, will, freedom, meaning of life, values, etc. which mattered most to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein was unhappy with Russell's "Introduction" to the *Tractatus* because it did not give importance to the core issues in the *Tractatus*.

To sum up, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* remained in Russell's eyes a path-breaking work in logic but it has nothing to offer in other areas, whereas the truth is that Wittgenstein excelled in breaking new grounds in metaphysics, ethics and philosophy of life.

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In Search of Atomicity

Manidipa Sanyal

Abstract:

In the present paper Russell's philosophy of logical atomism has been discussed in respect of his seminal work *Principia Mathematica*. It refers to both the first and second versions of the theory of logical atomism. According to Russell it is not metaphysics but logic which is fundamental to philosophy. Russell's approach to study a correspondence between language and reality is presupposing a match between complete analysis of words and that of things. He accepted the empirical approach of logical analysis and argued in Humean manner that the discovery of genuine logical atoms can be ascertained by analysis of words. Pertinent objections have been raised against Russell's identification of the property of an object with its essence. Transitions of thought in respect of various issues have also been recorded. Attempt has been made to capture the consistent spirit of his philosophical thinking through his continuous process of self-evaluation and reconstruction.

Keywords: Logical atomism, Atomic Fact, Simplicity of Atoms, Internal Relation, Reducibility of Facts.

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Foreword:

> I believe the underlying purpose behind all Russell's work was an almost religious passion for some truth that was more than human, independent of the minds of men, and even of the existence of men. (Wood 192)

These words of Alan Wood trigger a question: What kind of truth is it – metaphysical, logical, physical or any other type? The probable answer may be a counter attack to the question: Does the nature of truth vary in different contexts? This approach is pertinent especially for a thinker who believes "the only difference between science and philosophy is that science is what you more or less know and philosophy is what you do not know" (Russell, *The Philosophy* 124). It is generally accepted that Russell has introduced his philosophy as a philosophy of logical atomism, though there is temporal gap between two versions of this theory. In this present paper I shall concentrate upon his philosophy of logical atomism in connection with his seminal work *Principia Mathematica*.

I

"Knowledge is a process of piling up of facts; wisdom lies in their simplification"–

Martin H. Fischer (qtd. in Horgan 136)

A common understanding of the philosophy of Logical Atomism (LA) includes both metaphysical and methodological perspectives. It is the methodological usage that helps to explain the metaphysical commitment about the world. Methodology here means a method of analysis. It is often argued that the name 'analytic philosophy', found popular in 20th century, is a reflection of the method of analysis adopted by Russell. In ordinary sense, logical atomism as a methodology is an endeavour to identify the basic concepts in a field of enquiry so that the other derived truths of the domain can be derived from those basic concepts. From metaphysical perspective LA speaks of the world consisting of plurality of independent entities. A fact is a complex which is ultimately traceable to atomic fact. Before entering into this discussion in the context of *Principia Mathematica* it is essential to refer to the background of Russell's metaphysical commitment. It is the rejection of neo-Hegelian Idealism of F. H. Bradley and J.M.E. Mc Taggart that paved the way for Russell and G. E. Moore to develop a robust realism. Moore's argument started by rejecting Bradley's understanding of symbols and symbolised. It is Moore's interpretation of 'concept' that it is the meaning of a symbol. What attracted Russell to explore the relation between proposition and reality is Moore's interpretation of true propositions understood as complexes of concept. Russell was against the idealist tradition and denied the theory that "every relation is grounded in the natures of the related terms" ("The Monistic" 139). Simultaneously with his attempt to show that *a*'s bearing relation

R to *b* is not always reducible to properties held by *a* and *b* individually, Russell also started to work on the foundations of arithmetic ("An Analysis").

The series of lectures given in the winter of 1917-18 have given birth to the first formulation of LA which deals with the relation between language and metaphysics. Everything experienced by people can be analyzed into logical atoms. The first truism in his theory is that the world contains facts. He also admitted that beliefs have reference to facts. It is to be noted that a belief is either true or false with reference to those facts. Now, this fact may be of different types. A sentence "it is raining" is true under certain condition of the weather. This is a physical fact. There are also physiological, astronomical (to use his example, gravitation varies inversely as the square of the distance), arithmetical facts etc. There are also particular and general facts. He spoke about negative facts also. Corresponding to the proposition "Aristotle is alive", there is in the real world the fact that Aristotle is not alive. He does not make any positive assertion that there are negative facts, but does not also rule out the possibility of it (*The Philosophy* 42).

Now 'atomic fact' is the simplest kind. It is one in which no particulars enter into an *n*-adic relation. An atomic proposition is that which contains a predicate for an *n*-place relation with *n* proper names for particulars such as P(a), R(a,b). The particulars are illustrated as little patches of colour, little sounds, any momentary thing. The atoms are treated as logical because they are found by logical analysis and not by physical analysis. An atomic proposition is true when it corresponds to a positive atomic fact. When 'R(a,b)' is false, then there is such fact as a's not bearing relation to b. Molecular propositions are compounded using truth-function operators. The truth-value of a molecular proposition is entirely derivable from the truth-values of its constituents (*The Philosophy* 209). Russell pursued a method of analysis. Analysis is the way to learn the meaning of something under consideration. In the final stage, we must be acquainted with the thing that is the meaning of that word. It is to be noted that acquaintance, according to Russell, is a direct experience. Russell's 'principle of acquaintance' can be understood when we consider his comment, "All our knowledge, both knowledge of things and knowledge of truths, rests upon acquaintance as its foundation" (*The Problems* 26). In his opinion every proposition within the range of our understanding must be composed totally of constituents with which we are acquainted. Sense data and their properties and relations are the items with which we are directly acquainted.

II

"[I]f it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be; but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic"–
Lewis Carroll (68; ch.4)

Let us come back to the context of *Principia Mathematica* (PM). PM contains construction of a deductive system. It gradually discusses the vocabulary,

elementary functions, general propositions of limited scope, the importance of symbolism. It also elucidates definitions to provide a perfect logical method for the deduction of derived truths from the primitive ones. The use of logical symbols is the same as followed by Frege or Schröder and chiefly by Peano who introduced symbolic logic as free from the notion of ordinary algebra. Surprisingly Russell did not use the phrase 'logical atomism' in the Introduction to PM, but the fact is, PM represents his theory of logical atomism. He advocates a perfect isomorphism between the structure of a proposition and the structure of the fact which makes it true. The system begins with 'atomic propositions' that definitely bring the notion of 'atomic facts'. Simple fact or complex consists of

    i) a single individual, or

    ii) particular bearing quality, or

    iii) number of individuals bearing relation to one another.

Complexes take the form of n individuals entering into an n-adic relation. A proposition is just a symbol. It is a complex symbol meaning thereby that it has parts which are also symbols. Now negatively, atomic propositions are identified as propositions having no constituent parts and having no mark of quantity. Constructively they are mainly the following two kinds:

    A. a thing and its quality:

        i) $R_1(x)$, meaning "x has the predicate R_1"

    B. two or more things and their mutual relation:

        ii) $R_2(x,y)$ [or xR_2y], meaning "x has the relation R_2 (in intension) to y"

        iii) $R_3(x,y,z)$ meaning "x,y,z have the triadic relation R_3 (in intension)";

        iv) $R_4(x,y,z,w)$ meaning "x,y,z,w have the tetradic relation R_4 (in intension)" (Whitehead and Russell xv).

The importance of true atomic propositions is that they yield every other true proposition by logical method. Russell also admitted molecular propositions. A molecular proposition is that which contains other propositions which may be called its atoms. To cite his example, we may refer to the following proposition as molecular one: "Either today is Tuesday, or we have all made a mistake in being here" (*The Philosophy* 37).

It exemplifies that molecular propositions are built up by using words we ordinarily call 'constants', i.e., 'or', 'if', 'and' etc. Atomic and molecular propositions are 'elementary propositions'. An elementary proposition having a single predicate where there is a single predicate, i.e., a n-place relation with n names of individuals is true if there is such a complex. Now it is the issue of symbolism that rouses the necessity of defining descriptions. As distinct from 'a so-and-so' which is named by Russell as ambiguous description, the important description is definite in nature. The latter is illustrated by the form 'the so-and-so'. A definite description indicates that some propositional function $øx$ is satisfied by one specific value of

x and by no other values (*The Problems* 28-29). Description therefore is also a symbol. A definite description is used to designate a certain particular. It has also an extended sense in which it may designate an object which is not a particular, but it is, for the time being, treated as if it were particular. Russell also introduced the theory of logical types to solve different kinds of contradictions which however are not so important for further discussion in the present context (*Principia* 37).

A distinction is made between 'incomplete symbol' and proper name (*Principia* 66). The former is said to have definition in use, i.e., it does not have any meaning in isolation. It is often illustrated in the following way: by the ordinary rule of grammar the grammatical subject of the statement "the round square does not exist" does refer to the existence of things which are round square in shape, and it makes the whole statement meaningless. In order to save the sentence from being meaningless, this grammatical subject cannot be treated as proper name. Such 'apparent grammatical subject' is known as 'incomplete symbol'. It is incorrect to attempt to define description "(ɿx)(Φx)", rather it is proper to define the 'uses' of this symbol (*The Philosophy* 91).

The concept of 'incomplete symbol' is better illustrated with the help of Russell's famous example of a proposition involving a definite description: The present King of France is bald. A deep analysis of this statement also helps to solve another problem of epistemology. Analysis of the apparent grammatical subject in this example paves elegantly the way to account for the meaningful falsity of this proposition:

(∃x) (x is a king of France) & (y)(y is a king of France) ⊃ (x = y) & x is bald.

The definite description in this statement here, i.e., 'the king of France' is an incomplete symbol ("On Denoting" 44-56), though Russell extends the range of the general notion of 'incomplete symbol' to the apprehension of classes also.

According to Russell a class used as part of a meaningful sentence, is in a sense an incomplete symbol as it does not represent a single entity in that proposition. It can be said that claim regarding any truth about a class can be reduced to a claim about some or all of its members. He considered classes as basically 'logical constructions', which speak about all or some of the entities satisfying some propositional function. It is important to note that class, as an extension of propositional function, contains ambiguity because of several paradoxes, especially Russell-Zermilo paradox and Cantor's paradox. Let me say a few words on these two paradoxes.

A. Russell-Zermelo Paradox:

For any formula Φ(x) when x is a free variable, there exists the set {x: Φ(x)}. Objects that satisfy Φ(x) will be the members of that set. If the formula stands for "~(x=x)", then {x: (Φx)} will be an empty set. From this assumption a contradiction follows. If we suppose that 'xεx' is a formula and also suppose that

R is a set such that R={x: Φ(x)}, then R is a set whose members are exactly those objects that are not members of themselves.

Now, if R is a member of itself, then it must satisfy the condition of not being a member of itself, and so it is not a member of itself. If it is not a member, then it must not satisfy the condition of not being a member of itself, and so it must be a member of itself. According to classical logic the sentence "either R is a member of itself or it is not" is a tautology. Present case yields a contradiction "R is a member of itself and R is not a member of itself" which is a negation of the said tautology.[1]

B. Cantor's Paradox:

Cantor's paradox is a consequence of Georg Cantor's own theorem and an assertion. The assertion is that the class of all classes exists. According to his theorem, the cardinal numbers have no maximum. But it is in contradiction with the standard thinking that the class of all classes cannot be exceeded in cardinality, because it contains all classes (Clark 34-41).

Russell referred to Urmson regarding ultimate reducibility of complex facts to simple facts. Russell opined that it is perfectly possible to suppose that complex things are capable of analysis ad infinitum, though he himself did not think that it is true (*My Philosophical* 164). That logical atomism is initially an outcome of Russell's belief is expressed when he writes, "[T]he philosophy I espouse is *analytic* because it claims that one must discover the simple elements of which complexes are composed, and that complexes presuppose simples, whereas simples do not presuppose complexes" ("Analytic Realism" 94).

One thing is important to note. According to Russell, application of analysis is expected to yield knowledge from logical premises. But he gave stress on the pre-analyzed beliefs. A pre-analyzed belief, e.g., a belief that "2+2=4" is considered as fundamental. Its primacy is guaranteed by the evident truth of its consequences (*Theory of* 158-59).

In order to understand Russell's fundamental doctrine of realism it is essential to understand his rejection of the doctrine of 'internal relation'. In the example '*a*R*b*', if the relation belongs to the nature of its relata ('*a*' and '*b*'), as demanded by 'internal relation theory', then both '*a*' and '*b*' must have complex nature which includes their relatedness to each other. Now every entity in this universe bears some relation to one or any other. It implies that every entity possesses a complexity which is more or less similar to the complexity of the universe. Moreover, as the same '*a*' may bear different relations to different entities, '*a*' in the relation '*a*R*b*' is not the same '*a*' in another relation '*a*R*c*'. Hence it becomes very difficult to consider all of *a*'s relations to other entities. In addition to it, there is the possibility that there is change of relations between the same relata at different times. The whole thing boils down to the fact that grasping '*a*' in one relation may falsify the whole of what '*a*' is.

Russell therefore established the doctrine of 'external relation' which may be summed up in the following way:

1) Relatedness is distinct from the complexity in the relata,

2) One entity may feature as a relata in different contexts. It results inevitably in promoting pluralism.

The philosophy of logical atomism developed by Russell in 1918 focuses upon certain ideas for which Russell expressed his indebtedness to his friend and pupil Ludwig Wittgenstein (*The Philosophy* 126). The basic doctrine in the philosophy of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is this – a proposition is a picture of the fact which it asserts. There is the analogy of a map where there is a similarity of structure between the map and the region it represents. According to Wittgenstein, the linguistic assertion of a fact also can be explained in the same way. The symbol *a*R*b* represents the fact that '*a'* has the relation R to '*b'*. Russell praised the importance of structure, but he was doubtful about the reproduction of the structure of the facts by a true proposition (*My Philosophical* 84). He however did not give great importance to this fundamental theory of early Wittgenstein. Russell deviated from Wittgenstein's line of thinking in explaining the logical form of proposition.

In *Principia Mathematica* Russell spoke of the definition of the totality of things as the class of all those x's such that $x = x$. We are able to assign a number to this class though we do not know what is the right number to assign. But Wittgenstein never accepted this. He would never permit any statement about all the things in the world.

That Russell's theory of atomicity is different from that of Wittgenstein may be made clear if we consider Wittgenstein's definition of the principle of atomicity as provided in the *Tractatus:* "Every statement about complexes can be analysed into a statement about their constituent parts, and into those propositions which completely describe the complexes" (2.0201). Wittgenstein did not believe that the world consists of a number of simples with various properties and relations. Had he believed this, he would have said that if one knows all atomic facts and also knows that they were all, then one would be in a position to infer all other true propositions by logic alone. But it is not the case.

III

"No one has mastery

Before he is at the end

Of his art and his life"–

Michelangelo (Gilbert 173; poem 323)

Russell was vocal in admitting that his thought about the philosophy of mathematics was forced upon him while advocating the philosophy of logical

atomism. A regressive method of analysis reveals that at the outset he was not much aware of the connection between the two. In *The Principles of Mathematics* attempt was made to find out the logical base of mathematics. Russell opined that the venture results in developing a logical doctrine which is a strong support to establish a kind of metaphysics which is logical atomism (*The Philosophy* 2).

It is widely held that logical atomism as a metaphysical theory is not actually proved, it is rather held as a metaphysical assertion. Why should we believe that there is a point where words and things are found as not further analyzable? In the opinion of Alan Wood, Russellean analysis is fully justified as a method, but it may prove itself to be misleading from the perspective of metaphysics (Wood 201).

Russell's empiricistic approach needs to be supported by his own theory of meaning. It is expressed by a comment by David Pears, "Russell's rehabilitation of empiricism relied on very close cooperation between his semantics and his theory of knowledge" (xxxiii). Question may arise regarding the understanding of a word. Some may not accept the Russellean interpretation that a word has a specific meaning by itself. Instead a word may very well be thought of as playing the role of a knot in a net. Just as a knot is defined by its position in the net, so also the meaning of a word may be known by the position of an entity – it is supposed to designate – in respect of reality. Russell's attempt to identify meaning of a word with an exact object it designates paves the way to identify the property of the object with its essence. But pertinent objection against this issue has been raised by Putnam ("Dreaming and"). Putnam remarks that the symptoms of the same disease may vary at different times, because symptom is not the essence of the disease. So it is not the clinical symptom, but the bacteria or the virus which helps to recognize or identify the disease.

Moreover, there is difficulty with Russell's concept of analyzable and unanalyzable proper names as complex expressions. In order to understand this we need to be acquainted with the meaning of simplicity of an atom. Simplicity is equivalent to lack of structure. But this understanding is not applied to ordinary proper name. A clear distinction between essential and accidental properties of a thing is to be maintained for the sake of his logical atomism. But such clear criterion has been lacking in the discussion. Discussion of proper names definitely reminds us of Kripke's analysis of 'rigid designator'. But as the *Principia Mathematica* is the primary context of the present discussion, further epistemological issues may be set aside.

Russell considered logic to be the essence of philosophy. According to him, it is not metaphysics, but logic which is fundamental in philosophy. Logic provides the foundation of thought process, and the result, in his opinion, is expressed in language. Empirical science represents reality with reference to physical causes. Russell took recourse to the lane of logic. So far as the inherent

philosophy is concerned, it reminds us of the Davidsonian two-level theory of connecting thought with language and thereafter connecting language with reality.

It is worth noting that Aristotle also describes the structure of the world with the help of logic. Though in his syllogism primary importance was given to form than to matter, in his Categories he treated concrete individual things to be the primary substances. Russell's approach to study a correspondence between language and reality is presupposing a perfect match between complete analysis of words and that of things. Pears referred to two approaches – empiricist and rationalist approaches. While the rationalist perspective tries to establish the theory of logical atomism as self evidently true, the empiricist approach prefers an actual logical analysis to do the same. Unlike Wittgenstein, Russell accepted the empirical argument and argued in Humean manner that the discovery of genuine logical atoms can be ascertained by the impossibility of further analysis of words.

Russell's book *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903) contains his new found realism. Things are entities like Socrates, the moon etc. which occur as terms. Concept includes relations and universals. Propositions are complexes of entities. Grammar is treated as useful in understanding the structure of a proposition. Propositions that contain denoting concepts do not talk about the concept. They rather talk about the other entities to which the denoting concepts bear a relation. But this last notion has been abandoned in his later theory of definite description. There are evidences of change of opinion in other allied areas also in his later writing. Gregory Landini argues that at the time of *Principia Mathematica* Russell held that there are atomic facts which are independent (*Russell's Hidden* 25). He referred to general facts and negative facts in his metaphysics. But they are not to be understood as the truth-makers for general propositions. According to Landini a thorough-going naturalism and empiricism has been adopted by Russell (25). Not only that, Russell's theory even favoured a naturalistic understanding of logic. But in the book *Human Knowledge* Russell admitted limits to absolute naturalism due to problem of induction.

After 1918 Russell changed his interpretation of quantified propositions. Previously he believed that the truth of a general proposition can be reduced to the facts which make its instances true. Later on he admitted general facts that account for the truth of quantified propositions, though he admitted uncertainty regarding their nature. Similarly he admitted existence facts which are responsible for the truth of existentially quantified propositions such as "(∃x)R(x,b)". Russell also proceeded to enquire about the possibility of a fact in connection with statements of belief or any other 'propositional attitude'.

In the early period of his speculative journey Russell believed that there are simple entities. But he did not say that the number of entities are finite. Pears considered Russell's theory of logical atomism as an assertion, and not as supported by a cogent argument. According to David Pears, however, this

assertion is persuasive probably "only because it is a maxim useful for guiding our thoughts rather than a truth about the nature of things" (ix).

Regarding infinity of atoms Russell himself was aware of the possibility, and that is why at the end of his Lecture two on logical atomism he commented, "I think it is perfectly possible to suppose that complex things are capable of analysis ad infinitum, and that you never reach the simple" (*The Philosophy* 30-31). In fact Russell never admitted the logical atoms as object of experience, but as something simply reached inferentially at the end of analysis. Is this "no terminus" theory, as named by Pears (xiii) is a hint that Russell should have no other way but to withdraw his theory of logical atomism? Possibility of any affirmative answer to this question is simply ruled out by Russell's own remark, "I do not think it is true, but it is a thing that one might argue, certainly" (*The Philosophy* 31). May be due to this set of mind that Russell remarked in his "Logical Atomism" (1924) that the presupposition of ultimate simple entities may be avoided. It is also evident from his 1918 lectures on logical atomism when he said that "the things I am going to say … are mainly my own personal opinions and I do not claim that they are more than that" (*The Philosophy* 2). It is the excellence of a philosopher to provide a scope of further dialogue and at the same time to throw a hidden intellectual challenge.

In spite of all the negative reactions thinkers view Russell's transition of thought with more seriousness. Russell was less interested to establish that there are definitely simple entities in the final stage of enquiry. He was rather keen to counter the claim that there is one simple independent entity in the world. As a supporter of external relation theory he favoured a world of simple entities.

Afterword:

It is now easy to see why it is not absolute simplicity which is important for his philosophical thinking. He believed in gradual advancement of analysis. It is apt to quote him in this context,

> ["S]imple" must not be taken in an absolute sense; "simpler" would be a better word. Of course, I should be glad to reach the absolutely simple, but I do not believe that that is within human capacity. What I do maintain is that, whenever anything is complex, our knowledge is advanced by discovering constituents of it, even if these constituents themselves are still complex. ("Dr. Schiller's" 40)

So it is unnecessary to drag the issue of ultimate atoms. Through his speculative transition Russell proved himself to be a committed thinker who is more interested in philosophical analysis in order to dismantle the claim of the monists. He escaped the charge of being unsuccessful in establishing metaphysical atoms as he made it clear from the very beginning that it is the theory of logical atoms where the simples are reached not by physical, but by logical analysis.

Russell's theory has significant influence on logical positivism of different thinkers such as Ayer, Hempel, Carnap etc. Carnap's 'protocol sentence' is framed just in the way of Russell's atomic proposition. History of philosophy repeatedly witnessed the merit of analysing even the abstruse sentences in terms of observables, thereby coming close to common sense philosophy. There are evidences of many philosophical theories which are born as reactions to Russell's theory of logical atomism. It is markedly evident in the later writings of Wittgenstein especially in the context of controversy regarding ideal language. As a philosophical methodology, the notion of analysis still influences majority of thinkers though 'analysis' has been viewed from different dimensions.

The consistency of Russell's thought can be apprehended from one comment of Alan Wood. In *Principia Mathematica* Russell started from results and arrived at the premises. Wood remarked that Russell did the same over forty years later, in *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (Wood 196). So his work on epistemology and his work on mathematical philosophy were conducted in the same manner. He adopted this method because he expected to arrive at premises which are absolutely certain. The purpose of his analysis was to increase knowledge. It reminds us of the role of Descartes as the father of modern philosophy, whose first move was to arrive at self-evident knowledge. Un-reachability of certainty was never his motto. Russell himself praised Descartes highly for searching out the undeniable in his work of analysis:

> [A]nd I think on the whole that the sort of method adopted by Descartes is right: that you should set to work to doubt things and retain only what you cannot doubt because of its clearness and distinctness, not because you are sure not to be induced into error, for there does not exist a method which will safeguard you against the possibility of error. (*The Philosophy* 6)

It is worth noting that even when Russell admitted the possibility of 'so called atoms' being complex in nature and further analyzable, he dared to announce that vagueness is a feature of language, and not of the world.

Philosophising is a journey. One can at best identify an idea with a time after which there remains scope for further reflections to be conducted upon it. It allows a healthy development of thought carried through a process of considering and reconsidering the idea as many times as needed.

Note

1. Russell-Zermelo paradox, also known as Russell's Paradox is a famous logical paradox. A variety of paradoxes is discussed in the second chapter of the Introduction to *Principia Mathematica*, see Whitehead and Russell 60-65.

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Priority Monism and Logical Atomism

Nilanjan Bhowmick

Abstract:

The world can be taken to be a heap, like a mound of sand, or an interconnected whole, like the human body. Pluralists, like Russell, usually take the world to be a heap whereas monists take the world to be an interconnected whole. Monism has enjoyed a bad reputation, thanks to the criticisms of Moore and Russell. Russell, in his lectures *Philosophy of Logical Atomism,* clearly goes against the monistic picture of the universe. But recent work by Schaffer has suggested that there are rather good arguments for monism; and that pluralism was wrong in any case as it denied the wrong kind of monism. Russell denied existence monism but what he should have denied was priority monism. Schaffer maintains that priority monism has much to recommend it. This paper attempts to look at three arguments of Schaffer against any pluralistic view. These arguments arise from quantum entanglement; the fact that a fundamental law applies to a fundamental entity; and the alleged incompatibility between atomless gunk and pluralism. The paper argues that the arguments given by Schaffer, powerful as they are, are still inconclusive. But the seemingly impregnable fort of pluralism is under siege. Pluralists – followers of Hume and Russell – have some work to do now and cannot take their position for granted.

Keywords: Bertrand Russell, Jonathan Schaffer, Priority Monism, Logical Atomism, Quantum Entanglement.

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1. Introduction

What is reality like? Is it a heap of things, like a mound of sand, where each grain of sand is distinct from the other and does not depend for its existence on the heap, or is it a distinguished, "integrated" whole, just like an organic body, the nature of whose parts cannot be understood without reference to the body itself?

The former view, the view that the world, reality, the cosmos, consists of, in Hume's words, in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, "loose and separate" (Hume54) objects, or in Jonathan Schaffer's terms, that it is like a "scattering of dust" ("The Internal" 348, 369), is called pluralism. If these objects are all basic in nature, atoms so to speak, with humans, horses, and hair-dye as derivative, then such pluralism can be called *atomistic pluralism*. Such a view was advocated by Russell in his 1918 lectures, *Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (henceforth, *PLA*).[1]

The latter view, the view in which reality is a whole, with proper parts, with these proper parts being dependent, in some sense, on the whole of reality, is what Schaffer calls *Priority Monism* ("From Nihilism" 190, "Monism" 1, "Monism: The Priority" 66 and "The Internal" 342). The word "priority" is used to ensure that we understand what kind of monism this is: priority monism does *not* say that only one (concrete) object is there, and the rest is reducible to it or is really the same as it is. There really aren't two objects at all. *This* view – the one that priority monism is not – is called Existence Monism.

Priority monism takes there to be a cosmos and there to be proper parts to it. There is a cosmos and there are humans, horses and hair-dye in it. Priority monism is not a denial of the sheer variety of the universe. It instead maintains that the universe is *basic*, that the objects in the universe are dependent on the universe. The cosmos is basic in the sense of being fundamental. It, by itself, depends on nothing else. It is the ground of the existence of everything else. The parts of the universe are as real as the universe. It is just that they are not basic or fundamental. The whole is prior – or more basic or fundamental – than the parts.

Schaffer ("Monism: The Priority" 46) maintains that many philosophers – including Russell – take monism to mean *existence* monism. But Schaffer thinks this is a mistake. Historically, he says, there is good reason to believe that what idealists/monists really believed was what can be described as Priority Monism. Schaffer ("Monism: The Priority"67) quotes Proclus and Joachim in his support. Proclus thinks that the monad stands prior to whatever plurality is there, and Joachim also maintains that the whole determines the nature of the parts. Schaffer also cites Plato, Plotinus, and Hegel in support of the view that the whole is like an organic unity, embracing all the different objects in it. The whole and the parts form an interacting system.

So, the birth of analytic philosophy in the early years of the twentieth century, led by Russell and Moore, was based on the mistake of thinking that the idealistic monism they opposed was Existence Monism. It wasn't. It was actually something akin to Priority Monism. So what was denied was incorrect to start with. Of course, the pluralism that was defended by Russell may be right in any case, but since no one really thinks that Existence Monism is correct, there may well be a chance that the right kind of monism, which was overlooked, has a trace of truth in it. Schaffer thinks there is more than a trace of truth in it. Schaffer thinks that Priority Monism is the right metaphysical view of the world, and that Russellian pluralism is on the wrong track, both empirically and metaphysically.

The plan of this paper is to first present what the task of metaphysics might be. This will give us a handle on the debate between monism and pluralism. Second, Russell's views regarding the nature of reality will be discussed. These will be Russell's views as discussed in *PLA*. Third, three of Schaffer's arguments regarding the acceptability of monism will be discussed. These are the *argument from quantum entanglement, the argument from atomless gunk, and the argument from the application of laws.* Schaffer ("The Internal" 46, 57) does have other arguments to present. Given a battery of arguments, Schaffer draws the conclusion that the cosmos is basic/fundamental/the ground of all its proper parts because of the evident interdependence of its parts. This argument has been found wanting by Zimmerman not because of a lack of interdependence but because interdependence does not establish that the cosmos is *the* basic entity. Absorbing as these arguments are, I will not enter them here. Let us start first with what the task of metaphysics might be.

2. What Metaphysics Might Be

Metaphysics has enjoyed a bad reputation, not least because of the powerful attack of the logical positivists in the earlier decades of the twentieth century. The endless disputes amongst the metaphysicians regarding the nature of the world, coupled with the abstruseness of its debates, have not helped it much. But metaphysical debates are much in vogue now and there is much recent work, drawing on Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* regarding the way the subject is structured.

Metaphysics was usually seen, under the influence of Quine, as asking what there is, and answering the question by translating the sentences of our scientific theories into first order logic and then finding out what the quantifiers ranged over. To be was to be the value of a variable. This idea is contained in Russell's *PLA* as well, where Russell takes existence to be a property of propositional functions. Russell writes, "When you take any propositional function and assert of it that it is possible, that it is sometimes true, that gives you the fundamental meaning of 'existence'" (232). One cannot say, "Socrates existed" or "Socrates exists," but it makes more sense to

say "x is a man" exists. This means that for some value of x, the propositional function is true. Existence and the values of variables are more safely conjoined than existence and the names of the objects. The values of the variables tell us what exists.

There are two objections to such a view of metaphysics. One, this produces a list of objects. We come to know that there are atoms and apples, electrons and elephants. But this is not enough. What we wanted was something very different. What we wanted, in Schaffer's ("On What" 350) terms, was to know what *grounds* what. The question of metaphysics is not what is there. The real question of metaphysics is what is prior to what. We want to know what ontologically depends on what. This is the same as Aristotle's idea that "being" has many senses and we need to decide which is the primary sense and which is the secondary and which is the tertiary and so on. When we say that "Simmias is tall" we want to know whether tallness is somehow dependent on Simmias or whether Simmias is dependent on tallness. Is Simmias the fundamental entity here or tallness? That Simmias is tall is evident enough. What we want to know is the ontological order of this fact.

The second objection is voiced by Kit Fine (158-159) and it is related to the first one. Fine argues that saying that to be is to be the value of a variable is trivial, for it tells us whatever science tells us, and secondly it is the wrong view of existence because the quantificational view is orthogonal to the task of metaphysics. The quantificational view tells us that there are electrons, but a philosopher may still take an anti-realist position towards electrons. This shows that the philosophical concern with metaphysics is autonomous from the scientific concern and answers to different norms than the scientist's.

If a philosopher insists that the Quinean view of taking science as first philosophy is right, then Schaffer ("On What" 367) would say that this is just to assume that the Aristotelian view of metaphysics is right. We think science is first philosophy, because we think that the task of metaphysics is the discovery of what is prior and what not. Even if you want to retain the idea that existence is correctly ascribed to propositional functions, this view is small comfort to philosophers like Quine or Russell, for the scientific view they adopt is not very distant from the Aristotelian view they want to reject. It is built into it. Fine's point is different from Schaffer's. Fine's point is that metaphysics is autonomous; the Russell-Quine view of existence is just wrong. Existence is a predicate, at least for metaphysicians. Metaphysics is not a list of that which exists, but how the members of the list are connected to each other.[2]

It might of course be objected that if we go back to Aristotle then we are taking the subject-predicate analysis of the propositions seriously again. Surely, that is a mistake. This would be like re-drawing every single lesson we have learnt from a hundred years of linguistically oriented philosophy. This

argument has its merits, but it need not touch the point that Schaffer or Fine are making. They can maintain that one can have what analysis one likes of propositions but that does not touch the metaphysical inquiry since what we are inquiring into – priority in nature – is orthogonal to how language speaks about the world. Even if the correct analysis of a proposition tells us what there is, it does not tell us what is prior to what.

What is prior to what is answered by what grounds what, by what is fundamental and what is derivative. Illustrations of fundamentality and priority can be taken from Schaffer's ("On What" 375) discussion of them. Going back to Plato's *Republic,* the Good is prior to all that there is, for it gives being to all and our knowledge of what there is. The Good is both the ultimate explanation of what there is and how we come to know what there is. In Plato's *Euthyphro* the question of priority is raised when it is asked whether what is holy is so because the Gods approve it or do the Gods approve it because it is holy. If the Gods approve it because it is holy, then the approval of the Gods is *grounded* in holiness whereas holiness is not grounded in God's approval. In the same vein, let us say that if Socrates exists, so does the singleton set containing Socrates. But surely, Socrates' existence does not depend in any way upon the singleton set. It is the singleton set that can be said to be grounded in Socrates' existence and not the other way around.

Here are some definitions Schaffer ("On What" 373-4) offers regarding these notions:

Fundamental: x is fundamental $=_{df}$ Nothing grounds x

Derivative: x is derivate $=_{df}$ something grounds x

Integrated Whole: x is an integrated whole $=_{df}$ x grounds each of its proper parts

Mere Aggregate: x is an aggregate $=_{df}$ Each of x's proper parts grounds x.

What exists is either fundamental or derived. Now that we have a certain picture of what metaphysics is about, we can turn to Russell's Logical Atomism to see what picture of the universe Russell had.

3. Logical Atomism

It is clear enough from the *PLA* that Russell took reality to consist of particulars and facts. Particulars are simple; facts are complex. The particulars are constituents of atomic facts. Russell gives the impression that the particulars can exist *apart* from the facts. Such an impression can be gathered from what Russell says at the end of Lecture II:

> Particulars have this peculiarity, among the sort of objects that you have to take account of in an inventory of the world, that each of them stands entirely alone and is completely self-subsistent…. That is to say, each particular that there is in the world does not in any way logically depend upon any other particular. Each one might

> happen to be the universe; it is merely an empirical fact that this is
> not the case. (201-2)

The impression may be hurried though. It is not necessarily true that when we take an inventory of the world, what we count need exist *apart* from the facts that do exist. When Russell says that a particular could have been the whole universe, he might mean that we comprehend that "This is what the universe is" is true and is made true by that fact of which the particular is a constituent. So, the particular need not exist independent of the fact.

The facts can be either atomic or general. If one takes all the facts in the universe and then says, "These are all the facts that there are", such a statement would report an actual general fact about the world, existing quite independently of our cognition. Facts depend on the existence – or more correctly expressed, the subsistence – of particulars. Hence, keeping Schaffer's terms in mind, facts have a derived existence. They exist in virtue of the fact that the particulars that make them up exist.

Particulars *ground* the facts. Particulars are basic or fundamental, for without them nothing would exist. No fact is basic or fundamental. All facts are complex entities. Russell is quite permissive about the existence of facts but clearly not permissive about particulars. Thus, "Socrates is dead" is a fact, but there is no particular answering to Socrates. The proposition *Mumbai is a city* does report a fact, even an atomic fact, but words like "Mumbai" or "city" do not stand for particulars. These are logical fictions and these logical fictions are simply classes of classes of particulars. Or, more simply, lots and lots of particulars have to be put together to make up the city of Mumbai. One might think that particulars are the same as the atoms or electrons of the physicists. Not so. Atoms and electrons are as much logical fictions as are apples and elephants, for Russell. The particulars are thus simples, but not necessarily *physical* simples. It should not be thought that they are mental simples either.[3]

If particulars do not exist on their own, that is, they exist only as part of facts, then these facts, all of them complex, make up the entire fabric of the cosmos. The cosmos is through and through complex. There is a sense in which the ground of reality is not part of reality. The particulars are part of the parts of reality for Russell. From this it might be a mistake to conclude that the ground cannot be spoken of, for only facts can be reported by propositions and all propositions and facts are complex. Nothing simple can really be spoken of unless you are simply relegated to the language of demonstratives, using, in bursts, words like "this" or "that". But one can say "Particulars make up facts". That would be a general fact, a report of a grounding fact of the world. So, we can speak of the ground of the facts of the world, though the ground in itself consists of simples and the general facts that represent the grounding facts in themselves are complex.[4]

Particulars can be experienced, for Russell thinks they are the meanings of simple symbols. Whether all particulars can be experienced is not clear. The fact that a particular is a simple entity does not mean that they are all amenable to experience. Simplicity here is a metaphysical and logical property possessed by the particular, not a property necessarily to be captured in experience. It is irrelevant to the existence of a particular whether it is experienced, though it is relevant to knowing the *meaning* of the simple symbol which stands for that specific particular.

Russell appears to think that the world is a heap of facts, and if you think that particulars can exist on their own without being parts of facts, then a heap of particulars and facts. The general fact that "These are all the facts that there are" is also a fact to be added to the heap. For some this stops the threatening "regress" of facts. For there should be another fact that says "These are all the facts that there are" referring to the earlier fact and all the particular facts that that general fact was about. But it seems that the world has a mind of its own and is able to see that even though the general fact is a fact of the world, somehow a regress does not result. Or, even if there is a regress, the regress is ontologically weightless.

Russell was often so tentative in his lectures that it is difficult to settle for a definitive opinion that he held. Did he hold that all the facts were entirely independent of each other, as Wittgenstein did in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*? I am not sure. We have seen evidence above that the *particulars* are independent of each other. They are objective too, just as facts are.

What are we to say of Russell's views regarding the cosmos? Is it pluralistic or monistic? Russell, in a famous statement, right at the beginning of his lectures, says,

> The logic which I advocate is atomistic, as opposed to the monistic logic of the people who more or less follow Hegel. When I say that my logic is atomistic, I mean that I share the common-sense belief that there are many separate things; I do not regard the apparent multiplicity of the world as consisting merely in phrases and unreal divisions of a single indivisible Reality. (178)

The key word here is "separate". Russell wants to convey the idea that the particulars – and possibly facts too – that make up the world are not dependent on each other for their existence and do not suffer any change when the other particulars change and they do not depend on the existence of the cosmos in any way. To borrow terms from Zimmerman, they are existentially independent of each other and also intrinsically independent of each other. If x and y are *Russellian* particulars, then the non-existence of y does not affect x in any way and vice versa. And any intrinsic change in y does not cause any intrinsic change in x and vice versa. Reality is a multiplicity. This would still be so even if all the facts are connected to each other in one way or

another, for the particulars would still be independent of each other. Now, common sense does not believe in *Russellian* particulars or in the notion of independence, existential or intrinsic, these being quasi-technical notions. But common sense does believe that the fact "this is an apple" and "that is a mango" are different and separate facts, and it does not immediately occur to it why they should be "unreal divisions of a single indivisible Reality." It would be more correct to say that such a thought does not occur to our common sense at all.

Unfortunately, the issue between pluralism and monism cannot be settled by common sense. It has to be settled, if at all, by bringing in experience and reason from other domains of inquiry. Russell's argument is that whatever domain of inquiry one accesses to address the issue cannot really go against the verdict of common sense. It can only support it, possibly in a more arcane and technical manner. A theory that said that the world was monistic, in Russell's sense of monism, would be far removed from common sense. Schaffer ("Monism: The Priority" 47) has quietly noted that common sense is itself divided on the issue. Common sense clearly sees a distinction between a heap and a whole. A garbage bin is a heap, but the human body is a whole and if it is suggested to common sense that the universe could be a whole like the human body, with proper parts to it, then common sense would not react with hostility to such an idea.

Schaffer writes,

> Analytic philosophy – for all its many virtues – was born in sin. Russell misinterpreted monism. *Monism* is not the doctrine that exactly one thing exists but rather the doctrine that the one whole is fundamental … both the monistic and pluralistic views under discussion accept the existence of the one whole and its many parts. ("Monism: The Priority" 46)

The kind of monism that Schaffer is advocating – and he thinks this is the monism that was standardly advocated by philosophers – is not against the plurality of parts, but against thinking that the parts are prior to the whole. For Schaffer, everyone has to accept a plurality. The only issue is one of priority.

4. The Arguments for Monism

A consideration of Schaffer's arguments cannot deal with *all* his arguments, as he has many, and many considerations reverberate through each of the arguments. I will concentrate on just three of his arguments, one of which is directly empirical, the other two being more metaphysical in nature. The empirical argument is from quantum entanglement, and the metaphysical ones are those from a consideration of laws of nature and one related to the possibility of atomless gunk.

4.1 The Argument from Quantum Entanglement

Schaffer ("From Nihilism", "Monism" and "Monism: The Priority") thinks that there is some basis to believe that contemporary physics provides evidence that the cosmos is a fundamental whole precisely because it is in an entangled state. Being in an entangled state, in non-technical terms, means that the properties of the whole are emergent, in the sense that they cannot be read from the properties of the parts, and that the properties of the parts *can* be read from the whole. Schaffer observes:

> The singlet state seen in ψ_{EPR} is entangled and as such is not derivable from the state vectors of its two electrons. A pure spin state can be attributed to neither electron individually. A pure spin state can be attributed to the electron pairs only collectively, as a system. ("Monism: The Priority" 51-2)

Schaffer argues that this means that at least there is some evidence to believe that the cosmos is a fundamental whole with proper parts where the cosmos is prior. If you duplicate the parts, you will not get the properties of the whole. The whole is not mereologically supervenient on the parts. So the whole is sui generis, so to speak. Even if we agree with this assessment, there are two problems that have been noticed, apart from the problems that Schaffer discusses.[5] One problem is the simple idea that Monism is not metaphysically necessary (or even physically necessary).[6] Not every universe has to be in an entangled state. So, other universes can be pluralistic in the sense that even if they are entangled, the cosmos would not possess emergent properties not derivable from a summing up of the properties of the parts. Calosi argues, keeping quantum mechanics in mind, that we can imagine such a scenario where the properties of the whole are derivable from the properties of the parts.

> The argument points to the fact that the duplication of this *supervenience basis* does not fix all the relevant facts about the composite system. A natural way to resist it is simply to enrich the supervenience basis in such a way that duplicating this augmented basis will fix all of those facts. This *new enriched supervenience basis* should include particular relations that hold among the sub-systems S_1 and S_2. ("Quantum Mechanics" 923; italics original)

Calosi says that some philosophers think this is chief lesson of Quantum Mechanics, that the entangled states should be part of the sub-systems. This means that our own universe could be such a system. This is still a kind of holism but a holism of the parts and not the whole cosmos. We do not have to admit that even this universe is monistic in nature.[7]

Be that as it may, even if we do admit Schaffer's argument, the second problem that emerges is that not all properties of the fundamental particles are affected by the entangled system. Some properties like spin are. What

about the charge of an electron? Or the fact that electrons repel each other when brought close to each other? Or that protons and electrons can attract each other at certain distances? Or, how forces interact within an atom or outside it? Surely, there is much in the universe that appears to be not settled by the entangled state.[8] If that were so, we would have heard about it by now. A corollary of the second problem is this. The cosmos, according to Schaffer, is a fundamental whole because it is in an entangled state. This entanglement explains certain fundamental properties of the fundamental particles. But if some properties are not affected by this entangled state, then we have a peculiar disconnect between the proper parts of the cosmos and the cosmos, even at the fundamental level, let alone humans and hogs, who are far down the chain of being. How is the rest of the universe connected to the universe' entangled state? Some connection is there of course, since the proper parts are parts of the cosmos. But the connection is not obvious. It appears that outside the quantum mechanical entanglement, one gets the pluralistic heap.

Another point suggests itself from what has just been said. The priority that Schaffer speaks of does not appear to be full priority. Assuming what he says is true, and keeping aside Calosi's argument, for now, given the fact that it does not follow that all the properties of fundamental particles are determined by the cosmos, then, if we accept the priority of the cosmos, the priority cannot be described as *fully* determining the nature of the fundamental particles. At best we have got partial priority monism and not full priority monism. The picture does not look bright for priority monism on the basis of the empirical argument alone.

4.2 The Argument from Fundamental Laws

Schaffer ("The Action") picks up on a Leibnizian idea to run the following argument: Only a substance evolves by fundamental laws. The cosmos is the only candidate to run by fundamental laws. Therefore, the cosmos is the only substance. Since there are no other substances, though the cosmos can have proper parts, monism follows automatically.

Schaffer's point is that we can recognize what is a substance when we can find out whether it is a locus of the application of fundamental laws. The idea is that when you plug in the time and the state that the substance is in, and then apply the fundamental laws, we can find out with the greatest accuracy what the state of the substance would be at a later time. Fundamental things evolve by fundamental laws. To this Schaffer adds:

> To evolve by the fundamental laws is to act in an integrated way, forming an internally comprehensible and self-contained system....
> The natural unity of a thing is displayed in its dynamics. In a slogan: *to be one is to act as one*. ("The Action" 72; italics original)

Schaffer also points out that there is the *Russellian* conception of laws according to which fundamental laws are applicable more to the whole than to the parts of the system:

> One cannot correctly specify independent evolutions of distinct sub-systems first, and then patch together the dynamics of the whole. We can only specify evolutions in the context of the whole system. The evolutions of sub-systems are thus to be understood as derivative abstractions from the fundamental evolution of the whole system. ("The Action" 75)

The reason for such a view is the following. Fundamental laws are strict. But local sub-systems have much disruption and laws do not apply to them strictly. Ceteris paribus clauses are bound to come in. Also, in fact, local systems are constantly disrupted. Witness how many times an experiment has to be repeated even in controlled settings. Additionally, conservation laws apply to the whole. No local system needs to observe them if other systems are compensating. The conservation laws and the principles of relativity apply to the whole world and not to some sub-part of it. If fundamental laws apply strictly to the cosmos, and only ceteris paribus to the parts of the cosmos, then there is some plausibility to the claim that there is a fundamental whole to which fundamental laws apply. If so, and if Leibniz is right, then the cosmos is the only substance.

Suppose we accept all this. Why does this show that priority monism is right? What we have come to know from the argument is that the cosmos is the one substance there is. What about other objects in the universe? Are chairs and cheetahs not substances? If it were the case that the only object in the universe was a single and lonely chair, shuttling around in empty space, then all the laws would apply to it as much as to the cosmos. There would be no ceteris paribus clauses to apply to any of the laws as there just would not be any conditions that would disturb the applications of the laws to the chair. In splendid isolation, the chair and the cosmos would come to be the same, or, if you do not like that, there would be two substances, one the chair, the other the cosmos. The latter conclusion would make trouble for Priority Monism as it would be hard to tell on what basis the cosmos was prior to the chair or the chair prior to the cosmos.

In case it is argued that it is rather far-fetched to think of a chair as being the only object in the universe, then a more realistic example can be presented. As the universe keeps expanding, islands of matter will be isolated from each other. So much so, that it may just be possible that the rest of the universe would become invisible to a specific pocket of matter. This specific pocket of matter may be small enough and quiet enough that it may develop according to the fundamental laws with no ceteris paribus clauses. It would be a cosmos in its own right. These scenarios do not show that monism as

envisaged by this argument is not right – the argument only requires a certain unity to act in a way consonant with laws; rather, it shows that the sense of priority we want has gone missing. For the cosmos can contain pockets of dust that act as per the fundamental laws. The cosmos would not be the only substance. It could contain other substances.

It may even be the case that the validity of the argument suggests a kind of local monism that the cosmos enjoys. For the cosmos may not be alone. There may be other cosmoi. If they interact with each other, then the fundamental laws would apply to our cosmos ceteris paribus, which means that monism is lost. So the cosmos would not be a substance. If they do not interact, then the cosmos would be one amongst many substances. It is quite possible that the cosmoi are proper parts of a bigger system, and *that* bigger system would be the object that has the right to be called a substance.

The argument given by Schaffer has a certain danger lurking in it. For Schaffer's main target was that we can accept a kind of monism that did not mean that its parts were unreal or lacked "substantiality." The world is plural; it is just that the cosmos is prior to its parts in that it is the ground of the parts. But the parts are real enough, though they may be derivative in nature. The danger in the argument from fundamental laws is that while it shows that the cosmos is the only substance there is, the status of the rest is unclear. Exactly how the rest relate to the cosmos remains in darkness. This brings back Russell's statement that monism is the doctrine that there is a single indivisible reality and the rest are shades and unreal stages of it. If you carve at the joints through laws, you get the cosmos as fundamental, but you lose what is there *in* the cosmos, for the laws apply with difficulty to the rest. That is a result we do not want.

The argument from fundamental laws may establish monism, but it does not show that the cosmos is basic or fundamental or prior or that it grounds any of its proper parts. The preceding arguments show that even monism may be difficult to establish.

4.3 The Argument from Atomless Gunk

This is a straightforwardly metaphysical argument, though Schaffer ("From Nihilism", "Monism" and "Monism: The Priority") does say that there is some scientific support for it. The argument goes like this: Atomless gunk is possible. This is a world with proper parts which each have proper parts and those parts have other parts and so on ad infinitum. There are no basic parts. A priority monist has no problems with such a world. For it accepts only one thing as basic, which is the cosmos. If the rest is atomless gunk, so be it. But a pluralist, like the Russell of *PLA*, cannot accept this. For surely, the pluralists have to accept that there must be a foundation somewhere. If the pluralists say that there is some foundation in the middle somewhere or at stages, then clearly they accept a kind of priority. Since atomless gunk is possible and even

actual for our universe if some quantum physicists are right, then pluralism must be wrong. That is Schaffer's argument, in brief.

A pluralist, I think, has two commitments: one, to plurality, and two, to foundations. But if she has to give up one of them, she has to give up foundations. The foundations for a pluralist don't come for free; they are there to keep the plurality going. If it is indeed true that the universe is a bottomless pit of gunk, then that is how it is. It is one way of having plurality. Not all pluralities come with a base. Russell did say, while answering a question, at the end of Lecture II of *PLA* that "It is perfectly possible to suppose that complex things are capable of analysis *ad infinitum*, and that you never reach the simple" (202).

Russell could have meant this for linguistic analysis but it is to be noted that he was answering a question about facts. Moreover, since linguistic analysis tracks reality and there is a one-to-one correspondence between what one gets from analysis and the constituents of facts, it follows that even if Russell was speaking of linguistic analysis, it was meant to apply to facts as well. So, a pluralist can accept a foundationless universe. Furthermore, Schaffer's idea that monism is fine with atomless gunk is strange. As always, the question arises, what is the relation between the cosmos, the fundamental entity, and atomless gunk? How can something that is a substance, a foundation in itself, something that needs no further ground, give rise to atomless gunk, which is by definition groundless? Such questions are bound to arise, and they have arisen in history too. How the One relates to the Many is an old question, and its potency can be seen anew in the renewed debate between pluralists and monists.

5. Conclusion

We started with the question whether the cosmos was a heap or an organic unity. We have seen that pluralists are usually thought to believe that the cosmos is a heap. Monists think that the cosmos is more like a body with proper parts. Schaffer has reminded us that early analytic philosophers like Moore or Russell confused existence monism with priority monism. This may well be historically true. Schaffer has given good evidence for it.

Monists need not deny plurality. They want priority with fundamentality. Fundamentality gives the entity the substantiality and unity it needs and priority gives it the claim of being the ground. Schaffer's arguments are initially powerful enough to sway one towards the unity and substantiality of the cosmos, but the cosmos does not become the ground automatically. The argument from quantum entanglement is not about all the properties of fundamental particles and there are other ways to get the entanglement of the cosmos without attributing it to the cosmos. The argument from fundamental laws could generate cosmoi within the cosmos, or else make the cosmos one amongst other substances or could even reduce the status of the cosmos since

the laws that would apply to it might turn out to have ceteris paribus clauses as other cosmoi might interact with it. Moreover, the argument from fundamental laws is reminiscent of Russell's problem with monism: that one thing is real and the rest unreal divisions of it. The argument from atomless gunk can be absorbed by the pluralist by accepting a foundationless universe. A monist need not be happy with atomless gunk as previously supposed.

Russell's *PLA* came as an exhilarating release from the prevailing themes of idealistic monism. Russell's project was not negative. Russell also created an entirely different world. The world of facts, propositions, analysis, structured beliefs, logical forms, logical constants, definite descriptions, incomplete symbols, classes of particulars, classes of classes of particulars, and logical fictions have been an in-eliminable part of philosophy since. We have learnt through the years that each of these can live a separate life from the others, to a great extent. They can all be studied on their own. Schaffer has taught us that each of these can be taken seriously without taking pluralism seriously. That too is an exhilarating move. In this paper, I have tried to suggest that Schaffer's arguments are inconclusive. But pluralism must fight its own battles now, on its own grounds.

Notes

1. All references to PLA are to R.C. Marsh's edited volume of Russell's writings, see Russell.

2. Schaffer need not believe that existence is a predicate. Nothing that follows hangs on this. Schaffer's ("On What" 347) view is that we can be as permissive as we want about what exists – answering to the values of the variables, if one can put it that way – but that we should not be permissive about the bases. Occam's Razor applies here.

3. Russell considers neutral monism in his lectures in PLA but does not think it viable because of the nature of demonstrative thought. Russell's exact line of reasoning, though fascinating, is not clear to me.

4. It is difficult to understand what a general fact is made of. Particulars are constituents of atomic facts. So, what are the constituents of general facts? I think it is tricky to say general facts have no constituents for then they would not be complex and not be facts. One feels like agreeing with Wittgenstein's view that there are no general facts.

5. Schaffer ("Monism: The Priority" 54) raises the problem of fields being fundamental and not particles and also the problem of the unity of properties being lost. Schaffer thinks that he can conclude, after a consideration of these problems, that "entangled systems are fundamental wholes".

6. The contingency of monism and pluralism is raised by Trogdon (7). Trogdon thinks that what is crucial is the idea of fundamentality, which can be brought out by both monistic and pluralistic worlds. Schaffer ("From Nihilism" 183) maintains that existence monism – a type of mereological nihilism – is a contingent thesis.

7. Ismael and Schaffer (25) argue that the idea of a local entanglement is just ad hoc. But the chief worry with such a response of theirs is that it may not be an interpretation-independent response, as their general stance is supposed to be. There are other interpretations brought out by Calosi ("On the Possibility" 503 and "Quantum Monism" 6, 10) that suggest local entanglements, or that suggest that the parts have fundamental properties or that existence monism may be a better option instead of priority monism.

8. Schaffer ("From Nihilism" 187, Footnote 30) thinks that this is an issue regarding the possibility of submergent properties. Can particles in an entangled whole have properties that are not fixed by that whole? Schaffer thinks not. He offers an analogy as a reason. He says that if X's leg is bent then the whole body has the property that a part of the body is bent. So, the part of the body has no property not also owned up by the whole. But here it is not a question of the entangled whole possessing the property "Such and such is the charge of electrons." The point is how the part came to have this property. We are no wiser regarding the answer with the electron or the entangled whole. Entangled wholes do explain a lot, but whether they explain everything is the issue. How the analogy of the leg and body are applicable to the cosmos-particles case is also rather unclear. Moreover Calosi ("On the Possibility" 506 and "Quantum Monism" 6, 10) has argued that Schaffer's discussion is based on the false assumption that different interpretations of Quantum Mechanics don't matter to the substance of the argument made. Calosi ("On the Possibility" 503) thinks that we can make a case for submergent properties on other interpretations, like a modal interpretation of Quantum Mechanics.

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Understanding Kaṇāda's *Padārtha*s
In the Light of Russell's Logical Atomism: An Attempt

Shubhra Jyoti Das

Abstract:

Kaṇāda is perhaps one of those rarest *ṛṣi*s who attempted to explain the existence of this universe by means of certain *padārtha*s without taking anything supernatural into account. The theism tagged with the *Vaiśeṣika* Philosophy is more a handiwork of later commentators. In the same way, Bertrand Russell had come up with an explanation of the world in terms of logical atoms, without entertaining any divine intervention, as many of his predecessors did, in the modern Western philosophy. But there are many classical and contemporary criticisms against the narrative of Kaṇāda, as given in his *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras*, leading to many doubts in understanding the exposition. The paper claims that, due to many striking similarities between Kaṇāda and Russell, one would find it very easy to appreciate the spirit of Kaṇāda's philosophy if it is explained in the light of Logical Atomism. The root fallacy is identified as limiting the number of *padārtha*s which goes against the spirit of scientific analysis, something that perhaps Kaṇāda did, based on common-sense and reason, in the classical Indian philosophy. Further it attempts to respond to some of the objections in the light of Russell's exposition which is not only metaphysics but also a methodology of doing philosophy.

Keywords: *Padārtha*, Logical Atom, Reason, Metaphysics, Method.

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1. Introduction

Though the *Vaiśeṣika* system has been tagged with theism, as a matter of fact, Kaṇāda's position on God is not clearly known. He refers vividly only to the authority of the Vedas and to the presence of *adṛṣṭa* i.e. the cosmic order that ensures the law of *karma*. The *Vaiśeṣika* sūtra *'tadvacanād āmnāyasya prāmāṇyam'* (Shastri 151; 1.1.3) points to the authority of the Vedas for being 'His' or 'their' (both being applicable in this case) testimony. Therefore, the expression *tadvacana* can, in this context, be interpreted both as the words of God and that of the seers i.e. the *ṛṣis*. The presence of open theism is found in the later commentators of *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* schools like Praśastapāda, Srīdhara and Udayana. In fact Udayana gave classical arguments in his *Nyāyakusumānjali* in order to prove the existence of God. Therefore at least Kaṇāda, if not the entire *Vaiśeṣika* school, might very well be treated as one who perhaps attempted to explain the genesis and the existence of this universe without taking God into account.

This possible interpretation is the *prime* reason why Kaṇāda's philosophy is comparable to Bertrand Russell's exposition. The latter, just like the former, attempted to interpret the existence of this world, without taking help of anything supernatural, as many of his preceding thinkers did, just by means of certain basic entities termed as 'logical atoms'. Russell, rejecting all monistic explanations of the existence, just like Kaṇāda who stressed on plurality as the essence of the cosmos, went onto claim that the world consists of a plurality of independently existing things exhibiting qualities and, in many cases, standing in relations. They both opted for other 'units' to describe the world in addition to the discourse of physical atoms available during their times. Therefore this paper attempts at sorting some of the issues pertaining to Kaṇāda's enumeration of the *padārtha*s – the metaphysical classification of all knowable objects or of all that is real, in the light of Russell's philosophy, what he himself describes as a kind of 'logical atomism'.

2. Mapping the Issue

Kaṇāda attempted to explain the universe by means of six *padārtha*s. A seventh *padārtha* known as *abhāva*, though he does not mention it as a separate category, was added later to the catalogue. But many criticisms have been levied on this exposition found in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*s. One of the primary objections against Kaṇāda is that he simply mentioned the categories and did not try to synthesize them in order to produce a holistic view. It is opined that atomistic pluralism is a kind of intermediary position and can't be treated as a final answer to the metaphysical question.

Among the classical thinkers, Śaṁkara has raised few important points of doubt. According to him, even while maintaining that the *padārtha*s are absolutely independent of each other, it is still asserted that *guṇa* and *karma* depends on *dravya* for their being. If for the sake of convenience, it is stated

that *dravya* and *guṇa* are *ayutasiddha* i.e. connected inseparably, then three alternatives are found for consideration. They should be inseparable a) in space, or b) in time or c) in themselves. But for Śaṁkara, none of these options are tenable. If we say that they are inseparable spatially, then we will have to abandon the general *Vaiśeṣika* position that substances are produced from other substance and qualities from other qualities (Shastri 151; *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* 1.1.10). If we consider them inseparable temporally, then the two cow-horns would have inseparable connectivity. And finally, if the third option is considered, the distinction between *dravya* and *guṇa* would vanish (Gambhirananda 396-397).

Again, Kaṇāda's position that the *ātman* is actually unintelligent and that it turns into an intelligent entity by dint of its contact with the mind is summarily rejected by Śaṁkara. He claims that the very idea of the indeterminate *ātman*, coming in contact with some other entity and thereby becoming intelligent is a complete absurd. To accept this position is to entertain the possibility of a) reducing the *ātman* to fleeting experiences like pleasure, pain etc. resulting in its impermanence or b) raising the levels of those qualities to the level of *ātman* and thereby making them permanent. According to Śaṁkara, none of these alternatives can be justified with even the farthest stretch of reasoning. It is just impossible to even imagine that *ātman* can be a subject of pleasure, pain etc. or that it could change from time to time due to changes in the constituent parts (Madhavananda 76-97). Moreover, the concept of the liberated soul that would be bereft of all the *guṇa*s and that it could be devoid of consciousness is not acceptable at all. For him, self would be nothing if consciousness is not its *svarūpa lakṣana*.

Śaṁkara criticises the concept of *sāmānya – nityam ekam anekānugatam sāmānyam* as whimsical. For him, we do not perceive any universal cow in any particular cow. We, of course, perceive some general characteristics of a cow. But perhaps it won't be appropriate to elevate it to the level of an eternal *padārtha*. "If the 'universal cow' as a 'whole' is present in each cow, then even the horns or tails of a cow should yield milk" (Gambhirananda 339-345).

In modern times too, we find many contemporary Indian thinkers critiquing the exposition of Kaṇāda's *padārtha*s. According to Prof. Daya Krishna, It is difficult to treat *sāmānya*, *samavāya* and *viśeṣa*, being essentially categories of thought, as *padārtha*. In his essay "Myth of the *Puruṣārtha*s", he writes,

> But the so called *padārtha*s, which have been dealt with most thoroughly in the *Vaiśeṣika* system of thought, themselves suffer from a basic ambiguity. It is not clear from the way things are stated in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*s, or in the commentaries thereon, whether the enumerated *padārtha*s are categories of language or thought or being. The term *pada* in the *padārtha* would tend to incline one to the first alternative, but, as there is some talk of some of them being

(*buddhyapeksa*) one is inclined to the second alternative, at least as far as they are concerned. The third alternative is suggested by the way the first three *padārtha*s, that is *dravya*, *guṇa* and *karma* are treated in the text. The situation becomes further confused if we take *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* 8.2.3 into account which restrict *artha* to the first three *padārtha*s only. But then what happens to the last there *padārtha*s, that is *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa* and *samavāya*? Are they *padārtha*s or not? The usual way out is to treat them as *padārtha*s in a *gauṇa* or secondary sense. (195)

Therefore one needs to be very careful while elucidating these *padārtha*s in Kaṇāda's system of Metaphysics. The definition and classification of *dravya*s also raises many questions in the recent discussions on the *padārtha*s. Chandradhar Sharma writes,

Non-existence is evidently relative, being related to existence and so cannot be treated as absolute. The only fundamental category, therefore, is that of substance. This substance too cannot be known in the absence of qualities and relations and reduces itself to a mere 'I-know-not-what', a mere nothing. Again this substance is divided into nine eternal kinds. Of these, ether is imagined only to provide medium for the combination of atoms and to act as a substratum for the quality of sound, while space and time are intuitional and mind is only an internal atomic organ. So there remain only the atoms of earth, water, fire and air, and the souls. It is absurd to maintain qualitative differences in the atoms. Hence the real metaphysical division of the reals should have been the physical atoms and the spiritual souls. (187)

Moreover, according to Śaṃkara, the *padārtha*s of Kaṇāda are just assumptions and therefore we can imagine not just six or seven but hundreds and thousands of such categories for explaining the existence (Gambhirananda 396-403). Hence, it follows that there are many discrepancies in the discourse on the *padārtha*s as enumerated in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* of Kaṇāda. They give rise to many hurdles in the path of a clear comprehension of the metaphysics. Thus, perhaps a different paradigm might help us to have a better understanding of the whole discourse.

3. *Padārtha*s in the Light of Russell's Atomism

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) tried to explain the existence of this world by means of certain entities known as, in his terminology, 'logical atoms'. His philosophy, what he himself calls as 'logical atomism', is both a methodology and metaphysics. As metaphysics it claims that 'atomic facts' are the basis of all kinds of truths. Both simple particulars, exhibiting a quality, and multiple simple particulars, standing in relation, could be constituents of atomic facts. As a method, it aimed at analysing and reaching to the simpler concepts of a domain in order to recast the complex ones in terms of the findings. Kaṇāda

too attempted almost the same thing, while reconstructing the world by means of few *padartha*s, those which he concluded to be the most basic building blocks of the universe.

The logical atoms of Russell, as the name itself suggests, ideally should be devoid of any complexity. Thus the particulars, the qualities and the relations i.e. the constituents of the atomic facts must be the most fundamental of the building blocks. Russell says,

> [T]he philosophy I espouse is analytic, because it claims that one must discover the simple elements of which complexes are composed and that complexes presuppose simples, whereas simples do not presuppose complexes…. I believe that there are simple beings in the universe, and that these beings have relations in virtue of which complex beings are composed. Any time *a* bears the relation *R* to *b* there is a complex '*a* in relation *R* to *b*' … you will note that this philosophy is the philosophy of logical atomism. Every simple entity is an atom. (*Russell on* 94)

To this point he adds, "You can get down in theory, if not in practice, to ultimate simples, out of which the world is built, and that those simples have a kind of reality not belonging to anything else" (*Logic and* 270). But this theoretical possibility can be challenged with an equally strong speculative argument. One can claim that it might not be possible to find the simplest logical atom of the universe since the process of analysis can go on endlessly and all the results found in the process might happen to be complexes only. Though in 1924 Russell wrote, "I confess it seems obvious to me (as it did Leibniz) that what is complex must be composed of simples, though the number of constituents might be infinite" (*Logic and* 337), and defined a 'logical atom' as "the limit of analysis" (*Logic and* 337), yet even during the heydays of logical atomism, he went onto admit that the analysis might go on 'ad infinitum' (*Logic and* 202) and concluded that *"nothing can ever be known to be simple"* (*My Philosophical* 123).Therefore at another place, we find Russell stating,

> As for 'abstract analysis in search of the *simple* and elemental', that is a more important matter. To begin with, 'simple' must not be taken in an absolute sense; simpler would be a better word. Of course I should be glad to reach the absolute simple, but I don't believe that is within human capacity. What I do maintain is that, whenever anything is complex, our knowledge is advanced by discovering constituents of it, even if these constituents themselves are still complex. (*Essays on* 40)

In spite of this limitation, Russell continued to use the phrase 'logical atomism' for his expounded metaphysics throughout his career. He argued that though at no point we would be able to reach the ultimate simples, no one can conclude that 'logical atomism' as a method of analysis is not valid. At a given point of time, in the process of analysis, we might have some 'atomic

propositions' which do not correspond to the simplest of the atoms, yet the available set of propositions definitely point to the progress of the analysis. Therefore Russell concludes:

> If the world is composed of simples – i.e. of things, qualities and relations that are devoid of structure – then not only our knowledge but all that of Omniscience could be expressed by means of words denoting these simples. We could distinguish in the world a stuff (to use William James's words) and a structure. The stuff would consist of all the simples denoted by the name, while the structure would depend on relations and qualities for which our minimum vocabulary would have words. This conception can be applied without assuming that there is anything absolutely simple. We can define as 'relatively simple' whatever we do not know to be complex. Results obtained using the concept of 'relative simplicity' will still be true if complexity is afterwards found, provided we have abstained from asserting absolute simplicity. (*Human Knowledge* 259)

In this paradigm, we can try to respond to some of the objections raised in the previous section. Śaṁkarain *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya* 2.2.13 (Gambhirananda 390-92) has raised a problem with the *ayutasiddha*. The subtler dimension of the objection is that the *ayutasiddha*, according to Kaṇāda, is a *samavāya* i.e. inherence and the very category of *samavāya* is not logically sustainable. If E_1 and E_2 are two entities which are related by a relation of inherence R_1, following are the possibilities –

a) If R_1 inheres in E_1, it can't be related to E_2.

b) If R_1 inheres in E_2, it can't be related to E_1.

c) R_1 can't inhere in both of them together.

d) If R_1 is completely different from both of them, then R_1 itself becomes another entity that has to be connected to either of them by means of another inherence R_2.

e) Then we need further R_3, R_4, R_5 etc., eventually leading to infinite regress.

Śaṁkara doesn't have any problem if *samavāya* is replaced by *saṁyoga*, in describing the relation of *dravya* and *guṇa*. But the trouble is that, in Kaṇāda's scheme of *padārtha*s, *dravya* is defined as the substratum (*adhāra*) of *guṇa* and karma, and it can't be known without them (It has been already mentioned that Russell too maintains that nothing can be ever known to be simple). Though metaphysically Kaṇāda has not ruled out the possibility of the existence of *dravya* as such, its relation with *guṇa* and karma can't be treated simply as a *saṁyoga* due to the epistemological necessity.

Thus, the 'inseparability' of *dravya* and *guṇa* or *dravya* and *karma* can be understood as an 'atomic fact' where one simple particular (*dravya*) is connected to a quality (*guṇa*) or to another attribute (*karma*) by means of a

relation. But what is the nature of that relation? In the discourse of the atomic facts we find dyadic (between two), triadic (among three) and monadic (where one relatum is a quality) relations forming the complexes. We can perhaps call it a monadic complex since, in such complexes, the term relation is used in the broader sense to connect a simple particular to a quality or to another attribute by that particular relation. But the problem here is that monadic relation would suffer from the same fallacy of infinite regress as was pointed out by Śaṁkara.

Therefore, this view was abandoned by Russell in 1918 when he declared that, "whenever a proposition apparently involves a relation or a quality occurring as logical subject, it is capable of being analyzed into a form in which the relation or quality occurs predicatively. For example 'priority implies diversity' might be analyzed as (x) (y) (x is prior to y) ⊃ (x is not y)" (*Logic and* 205-206). This kind of predication eliminates both the fallacy of infinite regress and the trouble arising out of calling '*ādhāra-ādheya*' simply a *saṁyoga* relation. Therefore we can use this model to explain Kaṇāda's pairs of *dravya-guṇa* and *dravya-karma*.

Under the influence of Wittgenstein (*Tractatus* 89, 109), Russell at times seemed to insist that atomic propositions should be logically independent of each other. This would necessitate the corresponding logical independence of the atomic facts. Does it disturb this condition when it is said that both *guṇa* and *karma* are associated with *dravya*? While speaking about the constituents of an atomic fact, Russell remarks, "Each particular has its being independently of any other and does not depend upon anything else for the logical possibility of its existence" (*Logic and* 203). One of the possible interpretations could be that two atomic facts should be logically independent so long as they involve distinct set of simple particulars, even if the qualities and relations involved are same. If we follow that logic, since in both the Kaṇāda's pairs we get the *dravya* as the particular, the doubt turns redundant.

Śaṁkara's criticism of *sāmānya* definitely deserves attention. But perhaps no one can deny the concept of generality used as the basis of class nouns; and we can definitely apply Russell's stand on human incapability of *knowing* anything as simple to explain the situation. Moreover, initially Russell believed that the truth of a molecular proposition, the propositions formed by connecting atomic propositions by means of truth-function operators, are dependent on the truth values of the constituents. But later he went onto proclaim that truth of a general proposition (a) R (a, y) could not be confirmed only on the basis of atomic facts as x bears R to y, y bears R to y, z bears R to y and so on. It also necessitates that there is no other atomic fact of the relevant form. Thereby he went onto conclude that there is a special kind of fact, known as 'general fact' that accounts for the truth of quantified propositions. Of course he admitted a degree of uncertainty to their precise

nature (*Logic and* 234-37). Such an acceptance at least opens the possibility of a comparison between the metaphysics of Kaṇāda's *sāmānya* and that of Russell's general facts.

Sharma's first observation that since non-existence is necessarily relative, it should not have been elevated to the level of *padārtha* is perhaps considerable. But it must be noted that there is a striking similarity between Russell and Kaṇāda in this regard. At one point of time Russell held that the truth of an atomic proposition lies in its correspondence to a positive atomic fact. But simply a lack of such correspondence would not mean complete falsity. He argued for something called negative facts. If 'R (x, y)' is not the case i.e. if x and y are not in a relation R, the negation of the same i.e. not-R (x, y) is true. This concept of negative fact appears to be close to the category of *abhāva* propounded in *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy.

The second observation, the real metaphysical division of the 'reals' should have been the physical atoms and the spiritual souls, too points to another correspondence. While drawing on the empirical arguments for the existence of the simple entities, which are to be reached at the end of analysis, Russell refers to 'principle of acquaintance' that demands acquaintance with every simple symbol that constitutes a proposition in order to understand the proposition as a whole (*Mysticism and* 159). In the process, he suggested that perhaps our sense-data, their properties and relations, and our own selves are the most immediately acquainted with all of us (*Mysticism and* 154). They perhaps signified the terminus of analysis for him. These two immediate domains can be associated with the physical and the spiritual atoms. Of course he admits that sense-data can invariably be complex in their structure.

Daya Krishna's objections seem to be a little too harsh on Kaṇāda (Krishna 195). If we consider Kaṇāda's exposition as a methodology, with analysis as a tool, in addition to metaphysics, in the way we describe Russell's logical atomism, then we must admit that such a variety of categories encompassing thoughts, things and beings are bound to surface in the process of explaining our kind of a multifaceted universe. Of course some of the categories might be major and some minor. Russell himself wondered if special kinds of facts are required corresponding to the propositions which report belief, desire and such kinds of 'propositional attitudes'. At times he left the question open for enquiry and at some places he maintained that if X believes that there is a relation R between y and z, then there exists a multiple relation between X, y, R and z, all being relata in that case (*Philosophical Essays* 155-56). At other times he considered more complicated analysis in which beliefs are described as psychological states bearing causal or other relationship to the objects they are about, or the tendencies of the believers to believe in a certain way. Though this does not tell us certainly if any such logical form is at all required, we can understand the complications that one

confronts while trying reach the simplest of the units of the universe. (*An Inquiry* 182-83).

Saṁkara's critique of Kaṇāda's definition of *ātman* is nothing but perhaps an example of idealistic bias. There is no logical fallacy in remodelling consciousness as the *taṭastha lakṣaṇa* of *ātman*. Saṁkara's own position is based on the *śruti* texts which can arguably be placed as sources of sheer dogmatism. Kaṇāda did not mention about God directly, whereas others of the same tradition like Praśatapāda, Srīdhara, Udayana etc. minimised the role of God in their metaphysics. In fact innumerable atoms and souls are co-eternal with him. He is just like a supervisor of the universe. Though God is said to be the efficient cause of the Universe, He is not even that. He himself can't give motion to atoms without *adṛṣṭa*. The unseen power is the actual efficient cause. Therefore perhaps not only Kaṇāda but the *Vaiśeṣika* system, as a whole, attempted minimising of the role of supernatural to the least.

While snapping his fingers at 'fact', in terms of truth and falsehood, Russell maintains,

> It will be seen that minds do not create truth or falsehood. They create beliefs, but whence once the beliefs are created, the mind cannot make them true or false, except in special cases where they concern future things which are within the power of the person believing, such as catching trains. What makes a belief true is a fact, and this fact does not (except in exceptional cases) in any way involve the mind of the person who has the belief. (*The Problems* 75)

He thereby rules out the possibility of coherence as a test for the truth and points to correspondence as its means. Coherence is rejected on the ground that two consistent set of propositions can separately exist making it virtually impossible to locate the truth value of a common proposition. Thus, '*fact*' in Russell's metaphysics is the concatenation of objects existing in the world.

In an almost similar fashion, Vaiśeṣikas have subscribed to the Naiyāika's theory of knowledge when it is defined as – *tadvati tatprakāraḥ anubhavaḥ yathārthaḥ* (Virupakshananda 70). This is very close to the correspondence theory of truth. According to *Nyāya*, knowledge has to be free from doubt, misapprehension and false assumption. This can be ensured only by comparing the import of the proposition with the state of affairs and not by looking for any intrinsic consistency. Thus it won't be wholly inaccurate to claim that there is hardly any difference between Russell's and Vaiśeṣika's definition of a '*fact*'.

It must be noted that the physical atoms of the sub-categories of *dravya*, like earth etc., are actually logical atoms only. Vaiśeṣikas themselves admit that neither *aṇu* i.e. atoms nor *dvyaṇuka* i.e. a combination of two atoms is perceptible. Perception is possible only when the *dvyaṇuka*s combine to produce further compounds. Similarly *manas*, *ākāśa* etc. expressed in terms of

aṇu, *vibhu parimāṇa* etc. have to be understood as logical categories only. Neither the list of the *karma*s nor that of the *guṇa*s is exhaustive. They have to be understood in terms of logical implications. Replying to the objection as to why the qualities like levity, softness, hardness etc. have not been included in the list, *Tarkasaṁgraha* reads, "They are not included because lightness is of the nature of the absence of heaviness, while softness and hardness are simply various degrees of density of contacts among the parts" (Virupakshananda 33). Therefore the number twenty four is not physically but logically exhaustive. Similarly both *samavāya* and *sāmānya* are also more logical than physical in nature.

It won't be a great logical fallacy to treat members of a particular kind of *padārtha*s as simple. As we have already seen, it is both logically and physically impossible to reach absolute simple. Physical simples won't be perceivable and logically nothing can be claimed to be so. In Logical Atomism, simple is a relative term and therefore it would be healthier and scientifically more appropriate to avoid a search for the absolute simple. At a given point of time during analysis, the *simplest available* units can be given a nomenclature of 'simple'.

4. Conclusion

In the conclusion we may perhaps say that primarily there are many similarities between Kaṇāda's discourse on the *padārtha*s and Russell's logical atomism. Former's enumeration turns more intelligible when it is seen in the light of the latter's philosophy. It would be very lucid to understand the spirit of Kaṇāda's philosophy if the members of the *padārtha*s are treated as counterparts of logical atoms. The root fallacy perhaps lies in limiting the number of categories. In the scientific analysis, logically, there can be no limit to the number of such atoms. Therefore Śaṁkara's criticism in this respect is perhaps no criticism at all. There is no problem in calling Kaṇāda's philosophy an intermediary position, if we can appreciate that the process of analysis can't yield the final truth all of a sudden. The method of analysis, as Russell puts, can give us a set of propositions which are not final. This does not invalidate the entire mediate outcome or the method as such.

While responding to the improbability of finding the smallest atom of the universe as simple i.e. devoid of any complexity, Russell had gone onto claim that there is no need to assume them as simple. This can be very well understood, when at the outset of his 1918 lectures on logical atomism Russell declared, "The things I am going to say in these lectures are mainly my own personal opinions and I do not claim that they are more than that" (*Logic and* 178). Therefore readers of Russell treat him more as one who revolted against the prevalent notions of idealism than one who was solely interested in finding the logical atoms as simples.

Similarly Kaṇāda too, as some people call him the father of Indian Physics, was perhaps more interested in giving multidimensional explanation of the Universe than portraying it as a deduction from a single all pervading principle borrowed from the scriptures. It also must be noted that the finer differences between him and Russell also emerges due to the fact that the former had to conform to the larger scheme of Indian Philosophy that aims at liberation and the final goal of existence which perhaps was not the case for the latter. Thus Kaṇāda perhaps marks the beginning of common-sense based rational, scientific and materialistic analysis in ancient Indian Philosophy in the same way as Bertrand Russell contributed to the modern Western Philosophy.

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What Russell Learnt and Didn't Learn From James

Geeta Ramana

Abstract:
Neutral monism was a philosophical alternative to many of the ontological dilemmas like the mind-body problem and the epistemological and semantic problem of truth in matters of belief and knowledge. I will bring out Russell's critique of William James, evaluate his own development of the thesis of neutral monism, and revisit radical empiricism to understand some of the nuances that Russell ignored. Russell's harshest criticism on the problem of squaring the causal relation within William James' neutral monism misses the point that it is *qua* events at the reflective level of abstraction that the causal talk becomes meaningful. James on the other hand, was able to argue for neutral monism as a viable theoretical possibility due to the philosophical attitude of looking at continuities and discontinuities, as part of the same mosaic of reality. Logical empiricism and radical empiricism seen as 'paradigm of neutral monism' remain two complex positions that attempts to integrate epistemology and metaphysics in different ways while addressing the same philosophical problems; one logically the other practically but both respecting and trying to put developments in the sciences into philosophical use.

Keyword: Russell, William James, Neutral Monism, Logical Empiricism, Radical Empiricism.

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1. Russell and James on Neutral Monism

Neutral monism was a philosophical alternative to many of the ontological dilemmas like the mind-body problem and the epistemological and semantic problem of truth in matters of belief and knowledge. William James, influenced by Ernst Mach, a physicist and a philosopher of science, applied the then current views of reality, particularly that of physics, to develop a form of monism at the most fundamental level, that could not be uniquely characterized. Ernst Mach rightly observed that we should not base our views on reality on the basis of supposed truth of atomic theory as theories can undergo "convenient reinterpretations" (qtd. in Pojman, sec. 5.3). Taking the example of colour, Mach shows how as a single neutral element it "gets to be both the physical color of a physical object and our mental perception/sensation of it" (Stubenberg, sec. 4.1). The (neutral) 'colour' which we label can be called "physical *qua* constituent of the one group, and mental (a sensation), a constituent of the other group … in different contexts" (Stubenberg, sec. 4.1). This functional analysis has significant utility and it was hoped could be fruitfully used by the philosopher who shared the same field of inquiry and investigation. James, known for his pragmatic views on truth, picked up this very forceful idea and developed an ontology arising out of what he called "pure experience" ("Does 'Consciousness'" 478). Its content was only identifiable through the context of relations that emerged, the most important one being that of the subject (knower) and the object (known). The basic idea being that continuities and discontinuities are *both* parts of the same flow of experience, which was largely ignored by the classical forms of empiricism.

Russell had been a severe critic of pragmatism due to its serious implications for the notion of the 'true' and rightly so. However ever since his 1918 article on logical atomism that largely defined his philosophical position and the related theory of descriptions, the problem of *intensionality* ascribed to belief 'propositions' had been logically problematic. The only way out seemed to be a kind of reductive physicalism with possibilities of an extensional description that would fit neatly with his broader philosophy of logical realism.

We know that Russell struggled to make consistent many of his philosophical positions that ranged from logical atomism and theory of descriptions to his theory of perceptions and the implications within a realist-causal framework. He defined knowledge (of things) by acquaintance in terms of that with which we are directly aware of "without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths" (*Problems of* 46). His principle of acquaintance, as it is called, states that "every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted" (*Problems of* 58). These are the 'particulars' that make up our world of objects and which Russell believes is compatible with the physical laws of

the world and which remained his basic framework. Logical empiricism thus largely defined his position right from his 1910 paper on "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description" to *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* in 1950. However, as he sharpened his epistemology in *The Analysis of Mind* (1921) and *The Analysis of Matter* (1927), and moved away from foundationalism, he dispensed with the distinction between sensation (awareness of the colour) and sense data (physical), arguing for the identity of the patch of colour *seen* with the patch of colour. The patch of colour *seen* is the patch of colour *in* the world (*Analysis of Mind* 143), thus interpreting physics in a manner that gives due place to perceptions (*Analysis of Matter* 257-258). Thus both Russell and James narrowed on making most of the philosophy of neutral monism.

I will bring out Russell's critique of James and evaluate his own development of the thesis of neutral monism and revisit radical empiricism to understand some of the nuances that Russell ignored.

2. Russell's Critique of James' Neutral Monism

Bertrand Russell, a keen observer of the sciences and arts around him, opined that the physics and psychology of his time were making radical shifts towards opposite philosophical positions. Psychology was "increasingly dependent on physiology and external observation … *considering* matter as something much more solid and indubitable than mind" (*Analysis of Mind* 5). Indeed classical behaviourism and its modern transformation into cognitive science combine some of the functionalist assumptions to bring out the causal network, classifying all psychological and physical states through the input and output framework. In contrast, the theories of physics too have pretty much confirmed a world that shows "matter less and less material" (*Analysis of Mind* 5). Events become the primary description that indicates something happening, 'matter' being a mere logical construction therein. We see in Einstein's theory of relativity the leap in redefining 'matter' as 'energy'. The radical aspect of this transforming equation had philosophical consequences for the mind-body problem hitherto classified as the debate between the primacy of *inert* physical body and the *active* conscious mind. Russell in his *Analysis of Mind*, seeks to harmonize these two 'tendencies', as he puts it, by adopting William James' thesis that both 'matter' and 'mind' emerge from a neutral stuff that is neither material nor mental but defined by their relations in different contexts and settings. For example, a book in the context of things on a table is also situated as a thought in the context of someone reading a book. It is through these inter relations that the nodes of a physical event or a mental event get fixed enough to take the respective description. There is in fact, therefore, no specific character distinguishing the 'mental' from the 'physical'.

In fact, earlier in 1914 Russell wrote a series of articles in the *Monist* in which he positions the basic notion of acquaintance against three rival theories,

one of them being the 'theory of Mach and James' ("On the Nature. II") where Russell argues that this theory also presumes a fundamental idealist position and is therefore erroneous. The idealist assumption being, "that anything that is immediately present to me … must be part of my mind" (Russell, "On the Nature. II" 171). Also we must note that James terms the neutral stuff misleadingly "pure experience'" ("Does 'Consciousness'" 478) as it is neither pure (but an undifferentiated complex) nor an experience until it gets into a relation with a subject as knower or the object as known.

Russell maintains, "I *cannot think* that the difference between my seeing the patch of red and the patch of red being there unseen consists in the presence or absence of relations between the patch of red and other objects of the same kind" (Russell, "On the Nature. II" 172; emphasis added). He points to the logical possibility of a "mind existing for only a fraction of a second, seeing the red, and ceasing to exist before having any other experience" ("On the Nature. II" 172), thus showing that the intersection cannot explain how my memory plays a significant role in accessing that particular experience or acquaintance which was part of a momentary experience. Experience on the line of the idealist mental strand continues, but in order to have a memory of something it needs to get out of the 'circle of ideas' (see Moore) and accommodate the veracity of ordinary memory of things and events, and so Russell is right in pointing out the difficulty in identifying the experience as playing a significant role in our knowledge claims. The object appearing 'twice over' in the intersection of the line of 'thoughts' and 'things' needs to somehow align itself to the basic causal story of objects and experience thereof. Influenced by the physicist and philosopher of science Ernst Mach, James' attempt was to use the basic idea behind theoretical physics to philosophical use. Mach spoke of 'shared sense data' as the common mode of evidence available to every observer and introduced the neutral word 'element' to help describe the discoveries of science neither objectively nor subjectively, but 'impersonally' (Cohen 135, 138). The attempt is not to create a monism but to create a model of reality such that "evidence for the material – things or events – is displayed before us by observation, and evidence for the mental likewise" (Cohen 136). We now describe the world as we experience it, where "the only really existent elements are sensational, experiential" (Cohen 146) without being subjective.

Another problem that Russell points in James' theory of neutral monism is to account for erroneous belief. The route to forming beliefs is not necessarily *via* sensations as Hume had philosophized. The logical character of sensations and beliefs are different and as Russell's instance shows, in my belief that 'today is Wednesday' there is no sensation or presentation that is comparable to the objective content of the belief. If today was not Wednesday but Tuesday, then my belief that 'today is Wednesday' is not a fact in the

world and therefore we need to account for this error in belief not in the world as follows from neutral monism. More so with abstract facts like 2+2=4 that cannot be said to exist or not exist in a temporal sense unlike one's believing of course that involves a 'temporal particular'. Erroneous beliefs, objects and events remembered in memory all share the same logical problem of not only accounting for the object of beliefs and memories but also distinguishing true from false ones and thus becoming part of a knowledge claim. James' pragmatic analysis to overcome this problem is by looking at the effects for any cognitively validating situation which is actually "a *description* in terms of images or other constituents of actual present experience" (Russell, "On the Nature. II" 180). According to Russell, therefore, there has been a major error in assimilating "belief to sensation and thereby obscuring the problem of error" and knowledge of object is really "knowledge of a proposition in which the object itself does not occur" ("On the Nature. II" 180). Russell rightly points that the cognitive relations do not meet with causal requirements of the world as "a thing is only mental in virtue of its external relations and correspondingly … difficult to define the respect in which the whole of my experience is different from the things that lie outside my experience" ("On the Nature. II" 185). Russell lastly points that given the background of radical empiricism where all relations are also part of the universe how can we know when we are on the mental line that another person has access to the same thing in the world and how do we distinguish the two points of view purely on the basis of this relational view of experience.

Russell felt that the distinction between knowledge of things and knowledge of truths was obscured in James as the object never plays a significant role in either the mental line or the physical line which seriously affects the causal trajectory of knowledge. Experiencing, to Russell, was a two-term relation signified by *acquaintance* or immediate experience that plays a primary role in knowledge claims. ("On the Nature. III" 453).

3. Russell's Own Neutral Monism

Russell too attempts to bridge the gap between physics and psychology of perception by arguing for a neutral stuff out of which both the data of what we call matter and mind are constructed (*Analysis of Mind* 287). Pure sensation itself is therefore not cognitive and is 'what is common to the mental and physical worlds'. In fact, Russell further says, "they may be defined as the intersection of mind and matter" (*Analysis of Mind* 144).

Russell retains the duality of laws governing the psychological and the physical worlds, and reserves neutrality only to the stuff out there before categorization. Towards the end of the *Analysis of Mind* he writes: "all our data, both in physics and psychology, are subject to psychological causal laws; but physical causal laws, at least in traditional physics, can only be stated in terms of matter, which is both inferred and constructed, never a datum. In

this sense, psychology is nearer to what actually exists" (308). Russell later develops the idea of neutral monism by showing compresence of percepts and physical events where "percepts fit into the same causal structure as physical events and are not known to have any intrinsic character which physical events cannot have…" (*Analysis of Matter* 384). Percepts are part of the physical world and play causal role by "being determined by the physical character of their stimuli" (*Analysis of Matter* 392), cognitively speaking (*versus* a phenomenal one). Russell would have endorsed the contemporary notion of *supervenience* that is expressed as follows: mental characteristics are in some sense dependent or superveneint on physical characteristics. Such *supervenience* might be taken to mean that there cannot be two events alike in all physical respects but differing in some mental respect, or that an object cannot alter in some mental respect without altering in some physical respect (Davidson 214).

Russell's notion of neutral monism was neutral only at the very basic pre-conceptual level but maintained the dualism of properties and laws at the level of explanation. With respect to the notion of an inner Self, Russell comparably adopted a Humean argument to establish that one can be aware of the experiencing without necessarily being by a Subject. This lends support to the neutral monist position that it is in the further description of the relational character of the experience that the 'subject' of the 'I' emerges as a construct. 'I' therefore is not something we are acquainted with but always stands for a description which helps in identifying the "selectiveness of experience" that the use of 'I' brings out and Russell claims is a development on James' theory of neutral monism ("On the Nature. III" 453). Russell felt that the relational character of experience must be stringed together in some sort of unity achievable through descriptions that can offer the uniqueness of identity typical of a 'self'. The indexical 'I' for example achieves this sense of unity for the experiences of a subject that he felt James couldn't account for in his conception of reality that is fundamentally neutral between matter and experience.

Russell had not ignored the peculiar character of the mental and therefore attempted to retain both the subjectivity of the mental and the objectivity of the physical. In fact he insightfully realizes with all realists that the mind requires the world for the veracity of its own contents anticipating Davidson's thesis of triangulation that it is the common world that endorses and provides objectivity to the content of one's mind. In earlier papers Donald Davidson addresses the peculiar ontological requirements of mental events by a similar response that is closer to James than Russell as seen in his 'anomalous monism', though with an open bias towards the physical when he says that ultimately all events are physical.

> The principle of the anomalism of the mental concerns events as described as mental, for events are mental only as described. The principle of the nomological character of causality … says … when events are related as cause and effect, they have descriptions that instantiate a law. (Davidson 215)

Here we may see events are mental or physical *qua* description akin to James' attempt in his thesis of neutral monism.

4. James' Neutral Monism Revisited

William James develops a very unusual but significant epistemological position called radical empiricism which is actually a relational account of experience and forms an integral part of understanding neutral monism. As he explains, "pure experience" is "the name which I gave to the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories" ("The Thing" 29). This account differs from that of the classical empiricists like Locke and Hume as well as Russell's logical empiricism.

A whole new way of looking at the world emerges where reality is an experience-continuum (meaning of truth) "of time, space and the self that envelops everything betwixt them, and flow together without interfering" (James, "The Thing" 30). James holds,

> Prepositions, copula and conjunctions, is, isn't, 'then', 'before', 'in', 'on', 'beside', 'between', 'next', 'like', 'unlike', 'as', 'but' flower out of the stream of pure experience, the stream of concretes or sensational stream, as naturally as nouns and adjectives do and they melt into it again as fluidly when we apply them to a new portion of the stream. ("The Thing" 30)

Thus James looks at reality as basically made up of neutral stuff called 'pure experience' where one of its terms becomes the subject or the knower and the other becomes the object known (James, "Does 'Consciousness'" 478). The "purity", he explains, "is only a relative term" ("The Thing" 30), indicating the 'unverbalized sensation' it still possesses and amenable to being nodes in further relational structures of experience that may include future possibilities and discoveries.

James is a realist and believes in a version of empiricism that is at the heart of his pragmatism. It is important to note what he says in the Preface to the *Meaning of Truth* that radical empiricism functions as a postulate, a statement of fact, and a generalized conclusion. James writes,

> The postulate is that the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience. The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves. The generalized conclusion is that therefore the

> parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations
> that are themselves parts of experience. (*The Meaning* xii)

James has reiterated many times that neither the world of 'real' objects are denied nor are the notions of 'truth' and falsehood'. Indeed the pragmatist idea that "truth happens to an idea…and is made true by events" (James, *Pragmatism* 201) is made even more appealing by the relational nature of experience that his epistemology brings out.

James was aware of the obvious responses of the realists like Russell and the idealists like Bradley. He steered away from any metaphysical or transcendental positions with the motivation of being rooted in an evidential empiricism (borrowed from Mach) where the notion of 'truth' can be meaningfully understood. Russell's harshest criticism on the problem of squaring the causal relation within James' neutral monism misses the point that it is *qua* events at the reflective level of abstraction that the causal talk becomes meaningful (James, "How Two"). James clarifies that "experiences come on an enormous scale … and we have abstract different groups of them, and handle these separately if we are to talk of them at all" ("How Two" 180). Thus the paradox of the same experience figuring in two consciousnesses is not a paradox at all. "To be "conscious" means not simply to be, but to be reported, known, to have awareness of one's being added to that being; and this is just what happens when the appropriate experience supervenes" ("How Two" 180). This surely *is* with the second experience required on the intersection for our awareness of it to occur ("How Two" 180).

Russell's own dilemmas regarding a causal theory of perception compatible with modern physics and the dualism of the mental and the physical used a combination of logical construction, a remnant of the theory of descriptions and his principle of acquaintance, to seek unsuccessfully, a way out. Russell's use of neutral monism, though attractive, sat uneasily with his larger philosophical commitment to logical empiricism, realism and phenomenalism to a certain extent, at least in his early period. He could not get out of his earlier philosophical commitments nor could he develop a completely new thesis. James on the other hand, was able to argue for neutral monism as a viable theoretical possibility due to the philosophical attitude of looking at continuities and discontinuities, as part of the same mosaic of reality. Indeed, studied carefully, James' version of neutral monism, which was in the process of being reworked against criticism before he passed away in 1910, and his commitment to empiricism have powerful ideas that can be fruitfully developed even today. Further, developments in physics which motivated physicists like Ernst Mach to influence deep philosophical theories can do so even more today with the motivation of looking for unities underlying physical theories remaining the same.

Logical empiricism and radical empiricism seen as a "paradigm of neutral monism" (Stubenberg, sec. 4.2) remain two complex positions that attempts to integrate epistemology and metaphysics in different ways while addressing the same philosophical problems; one logically the other practically but both respecting and trying to put developments in the sciences into philosophical use.

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Bertrand Russell's Philosophy of Logic

S. Shyamkishore Singh

Abstract:

The first nineteen years of Russell's career are quite important in his discursive studies and lucubrations on mathematics, philosophy of mathematics, and philosophy of logic. Russell and Whitehead in their monumental work *Principia Mathematica* undertook to establish 'the logistic thesis', stated first by Frege, that all the laws of the mathematics of number are derivable from, or can be reduced to logic alone, in more details. However, it was Russell who afterwards developed this philosophy of logic almost singlehandedly and tried his best to present it in a way so as to deal with various paradoxes. His 'theory of types' is such an effort. Besides, his earlier essay "On Denoting" handles in an ingenious way the Meinongian problem of denoting phrases. A philosopher convinced in the thesis that logic is the essence of philosophy he opted to describe his philosophy as "Logical Atomism".

Keywords: Logic, Philosophy of Mathematics, Logical Paradoxes, Theory of Types.

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The years 1901 to 1950 saw Russell's most productive works in logic, mathematics and theory of knowledge, along with his vast writings, intellectual and creative, in several fields. The first nineteen years of his career are quite important in his discursive studies and lucubrations on mathematics, philosophy of mathematics and philosophy of logic.

Russell's inquiry began with the question: what sort of knowledge will our knowledge of numbers be? Russell was a realist, and from the realist's point of view, the task of the mathematician may be compared to a voyage of discovery. As he puts it in one of his early writings:

> All knowledge must be recognition, on pain of being mere delusion; Arithmetic must be discovered in just the same sense in which Columbus discovered West Indies, and we no more create numbers than he created the Indians…. Whatever can be thought of has being, and its being is a precondition, not a result, of its being thought of. ("Is Position" 312)

1. The Logistic Thesis

The German mathematician Gottlob Frege, who was a forceful proponent of the realist viewpoint, maintained that our knowledge of number is essentially a matter of *apriori* rational insight, which we attain through use of 'the eye of Reason', seeing into the timeless structures of numerical reality. This knowledge is not analytic in the sense of understanding the verbal meaning of the term 'number'; but there is something more than this, because it involves our acquaintance with mathematical objects as the eyes of reason gazes into them. Russell fully agreed with Frege's viewpoint. Russell was careful, so that the word 'analytic' was not interpreted in the sense of being 'trivial' or redundant. Frege held that the laws of number are 'analytic' in the sense that they are 'reducible' to the laws of logic. By this, he meant that our knowledge of them basically depends upon rational insight; just as our knowledge of the laws of logic depends upon rational insight.

This doctrine that all the laws of the mathematics of number are derivable from, or can be reduced to logic alone as stated first by Frege in his *Grundlagen der Arithmetic* (*The Foundations of Arithmetic*) has come to be known as 'the logistic thesis'. After twenty years it was independently formulated by Russell and Whitehead in their monumental work *Principia Mathematica* (published in three volumes in between 1910-13). They undertook to establish the thesis in more details in these Volumes. According to them, the laws of arithmetic and the rest of the mathematics of number are related to those of logic in the same way as the theorems of geometry are related to its axioms. In the *Principia*, they launched an ambitious project to deduce the whole of mathematics from a few concepts and principles of logic. Russell in particular, undertook a laborious and painstaking task of deducing the complex theorems of mathematics from the basic postulates of logic by working for twelve hours a day for about three years. Thus, Whitehead

and Russell developed a system of logic out of which mathematics was to be generated.

This system of logic is extensional, in the sense that the replacement within it of one proposition by another which has the same truth-value always leaves the truth value of the proposition in which the replacement occurs unchanged. It starts with a *propositional calculus*, which contains four logical operators or *constants* viz. 'negation', 'conjunction', 'disjunction' and 'implication' – all of which are definable in terms of truth-values. Compound truth-functional expressions are formed by connecting the simple variable symbols by these constants. These constants are inter-definable, and this has made possible the derivation of one truth-functional expression from other truth-functions that have similar values. In the case of the *predicate calculus*, which is necessary for derivation of mathematics, these logical constants are supplemented by the introduction of the 'quantifiers', which is linked with the notion of a *propositional function*. In his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, Russell defines a propositional function as "an expression containing one or more undetermined constituents, such that, when values are assigned to these constituents, the expression becomes a proposition" (155-6). This definition sounds simple; however, as A.J. Ayer has maintained, it is misleading, because Russell treats propositions and propositional functions as symbols, whereas in fact, he commonly identifies them with what the symbols in question symbolize (45).

The *Principia Mathematica* is based on five primitive propositions (axioms). In simple language, these are:

(i)   If either p or p, then p;

(ii)   If q, then either p or q;

(iii) If p or q, then q or p

(iv)   If p or (q or r), then q or (p or r);

(v)   If (if q then r) then, (if (p or q) then, (p or r))

These primitive propositions are employed as the rules of inference. Along with them two non-formal rules are needed – one being the rule of consistent substitution, and the other, the rule that when 'p' and 'if p then q' have been established, 'q' is to be accepted. These are the simple foundations upon which propositional logic can be built. Regarding the status of the propositions of logic, Russell did not say much. Later on, he shared Wittgenstein's view that the truths of propositional calculus are *tautologies*, in the sense that they remain true whatever truth-value are assigned to their constituents. It is remarkable that Russell and Whitehead worked out a powerful system of logic, more powerful than the Aristotelian logic. It may be mentioned that the logistic thesis initiated by Frege and developed by Russell and Whitehead go together with the realist philosophy of number (Barker 81). Besides introducing the terms "set" and "ordered pair", and the laws governing sets and ordered pairs in their system of logic, Russell and

Whitehead introduced definitions of all the basic non-logical terms and symbols of number theory, which include "zero", "immediate successor", "natural number", and "t" and "x". They defined natural numbers as certain kinds of sets of sets. 'Zero' is defined as the set of all empty sets; 'One' as the set of all non-empty sets which is such that any things belonging to it are identical; 'Two' as the set of all sets each having a member distinct from some other member but each being such that any member is identical with one or the other of these, and so on. In this manner, numbers have been interpreted in terms of sets or classes. Thus, the set of natural numbers is a set to which belongs Zero, and to which belongs every immediate successor of something that belongs. And a natural number can be defined as anything belonging to every set to which Zero belongs and to which belongs the immediate successor of anything that belongs. Definitions of what can be added, and what can be multiplied are added to the above, and the laws of sets and ordered pairs, Peano's axioms and the other laws of number theory can be deduced. Russell and Whitehead considered the laws governing sets and ordered pairs (or their equivalents) as belonging to logic rather than to mathematics. However, realism about numbers becomes less attractive as they find some important technical developments in mathematical logic.

2. Logical paradoxes and the Theory of Types

The reduction of mathematics to logic, and the elimination of numbers in favour of classes which are treated extensionally, have led to some unexpected problems. For example, we have to deal with classes which have an infinite number of members. The problem is to accept the notion of an infinite conjunction. Further, it is not easy to treat the null-class as a conjunction. The main problem lies in the basic assumptions of set theory, when that theory is understood in the "naïve" manner. The German mathematician and founder of set theory Georg Cantor pointed out one important paradox in his theory of transfinite numbers. Cantor's theory assumes that every set has a cardinal number. But the question is: whether the entire set of cardinal numbers, finite and infinite, has a cardinal number or not? Since every set has a cardinal number, the answer is affirmative. But the answer cannot be affirmative, for the number of all the cardinals must be larger than any cardinal number (Cardinal numbers are to be defined in terms of the classes of classes). Thus, a contradiction is involved if we compare for size the set of all sets, and its own power sets. According to Cantor's theorem, the power set must be bigger because it contains more members. But it is itself a subset of the set of all sets, and so cannot be bigger. A paradox is involved. The collection of all sets cannot itself be a set theoretic object.

Russell was seized with the gravity of the issue whether the class of all classes is itself a member, for which the possible answer, either way, will land to paradoxes, especially such paradox that we face when we have a situation in which, by reasoning that seems perfectly sound, we can show both that something must be true and that it must be false. A famous example of the paradox of this kind,

known even in the Roman times, is the paradox of Epimenides. To quote from Russell: "Epimenides the Cretan said that all Cretans were liars, and all other statements made by Cretans were certainly lies. Was this a lie? The simplest form of this contradiction is afforded by the man who says 'I am lying'; if he is lying, he is speaking the truth, and *vice versa*" (*Logic and* 59). Russell explains this situation as follows:

> When a man says 'I am lying', we may interpret his statement as: 'There is a proposition which I am affirming and which is false'. All statements that 'there is' so-and-so may be regarded as denying that the opposite is always true; thus 'I am lying' becomes: 'It is not true of all propositions that either I am not affirming them or they are true'; in other words, 'It is not true for all propositions p that if I affirm p, p is true'. The paradox results from regarding this statement as affirming a proposition, which must therefore come within the scope of the statement. This, however, makes it evident that the notion of 'all propositions' is illegitimate, for otherwise, there must be propositions (such as the above) which are about all propositions, and yet cannot without contradiction, be included among the propositions they are about. (*Logic and* 61-2)

Russell presents six other instances of contradictions in the relationships in classes and sets, including 'Richard's paradox' and 'Burali-Forti's contradiction'. He maintains, "All our contradictions have in common the assumption of a totality such that, if it were legitimate, it would at once be enlarged by new members defined in terms of itself" (*Logic and* 63).

Russell's objective was to tide over these and similar other paradoxes and contradictions, which have posed a serious threat to the logic of set theory. Initially, he introduced a general rule that 'whatever involves *all* of a collection must not be one of the collection'; or conversely: "If, provided a certain collection had a total, it would have members only definable in terms of that total, then the said collection has no total" (*Logic and* 63). However, this principle is purely negative in scope. The problem lies in formulating a positive one, which again involves difficulties since we shall be still using such phrases as 'all propositions' or 'all properties' which themselves are problematic.

In *Principia Mathematica* Whitehead and Russell were not concerned with avoiding these specific paradoxes, and other paradoxes known to them. They restricted their axioms to the sets in such a manner that all kindred paradoxes would be avoided. Their objective was to do away with the vicious circle, and to formulate rigorous technical device for this purpose. They, therefore, introduced what they called "the theory of types". The basic idea of the theory of types is that all the entities referred to in set theory, including sets, set of sets, set of set of sets, and so on, are to be thought of as arranged in a hierarchy of levels, or types, each entity belonging to just one definite type. To the lowest type belong individuals – that is, all and only those entities that are not sets. To the next higher type belong

sets whose members are entities of the lowest type; to the third type belong sets whose members are entities of the second type; and in general, to the type n+1 belong sets of entities of the *n*-th type. Only entities that fit into the types of this hierarchy are to be recognised by set theory. However, the theory of types is more radical. What it denies is the very meaningfulness of sentences which try to speak about the membership of entities in sets other than those of the next higher type. According to the theory of types, sentences which attempt to do so are neither true nor false, but are logically ill-formed; they are nonsensical sentences. Whitehead and Russell maintained that some seemingly meaningful sentences are nonsense, and as such, they do not express statements at all. Thus, the important notion of nonsense had been introduced into logic. In the *Principia Mathematica*, by means of the theory of types Whitehead and Russell were able to avoid the paradoxes (Barker 86).

Although the theory of types cannot claim to solve all kinds of paradoxes (since it has not referred to the 'semantic paradoxes', which later writers bring out), it is an immensely important contribution to mathematical logic. Robert Charles Marsh has commented in *Logic and Knowledge:*

> The theory of types has played such an important role in modern philosophy that it is pointless to comment further on its significance, other than to say that this paper is one of Russell's finest and universally acknowledged to be a masterpiece of recent philosophic thought. (57)

This editor's comment is about Russell's essay entitled "Mathematical Logic as based on the Theory of Types" published in 1908.

3. Logic and Philosophy

Russell's commitment to the intimate relationship between philosophy and logic began as early as 1900 with the publication of *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz,* a serious work wherein he made an assessment of Leibniz's philosophy in the light of his contribution to logic. But Russell had not, by that time, developed his own philosophy. He was preoccupied with his researches in the foundations of mathematics and Mathematical Logic. The publications of *The Principles of Mathematics* in 1903, and *Principia Mathematica* in three volumes in 1910, 1912 and 1913 are the spectacular results of the great effort and labour to that direction. However, he prepared the ground for the development of his philosophy which was founded on the principles and techniques of the new system of logic which Whitehead and he developed. Among the early preparations of the ground for philosophizing, mention should be made of the publication in 1905 of his most famous paper "On Denoting". The objective is clarity in thinking and expression through the logical analysis of those linguistic expressions which are ambiguous. Clarity in meaning and parsimony in thought were the hallmarks. In this article, Russell was concerned with developing his discussion of

formal implication in *The Principles of Mathematics* into a systematic account of the propositions expressed by sentences involving what he now calls 'denoting phrases' such as "a man, some man, any man, every man, all men, the present king of England, the present king of France, the centre of mass of the solar system at the first instant of the twentieth century, the revolution of the earth round the sun" ("On Denoting" 41). To make his point clear, he writes:

> We may distinguish three cases: (1) A phrase may be denoting, and yet not denote anything; e.g., 'the present king of France.' (2) A phrase may denote one definite object; e.g., 'the present king of England' denotes a certain man. (3) A phrase may denote ambiguously; e.g., 'a man' denotes not many men, but an ambiguous man. The interpretation of such phrases is a matter of considerable difficulty; indeed, it is very hard to frame any theory not susceptible of formal refutation. All the difficulties with which I am acquainted are met, so far as I can discover, by the theory which I am about to explain. ("On Denoting" 41)

He maintains that "The subject of denoting is of very great importance, not only in logic and mathematics, but also in theory of knowledge" ("On Denoting" 41).

Russell distinguishes between *acquaintance* and *knowledge about*. In the case of the first the objects are presented to us, whereas in case of the second we are aware of the thing by means of denoting phrases. "In perception we have acquaintance with the objects of perception, and in thought we have acquaintance with objects of a more abstract logical character" ("On Denoting" 41). This was supplemented by his paper on "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description" published in 1910. Regarding the denoting phrases, Russell advocates that "denoting phrases never have any meaning in themselves, but that every proposition in whose verbal expression they occur has a meaning" ("On Denoting" 43).

The main problem is regarding the analysis of general terms and general propositions. Russell in effect sought to reduce general propositions to propositions that involve only disjunctions or conjunctions of singular propositions, for which the tension between the propositions as objects of thought and as truth makers is not so acute. He depended upon Peano's conception of "formal implication" as a universally quantified conditional as in "for all x, if x is a man then x is mortal". The concept of *variable* is important in this case, although problems are involved in respect of the *free* variables. Russell's symbolic apparatus of quantifiers in the interpretation of such sentences as "Everyone loves someone" has faced some limitations. It is pointed out that Russell's theory of denoting concepts is inadequate to the new logic of quantifiers and variables upon which the logicist project of *The Principles of Mathematics* is founded (Baldwin 28). Wittgenstein, however, recognised the seminal role that Russell's logical analysis played in the analysis of propositions. He wrote:

> All philosophy is a 'critique of language'…. It was Russell who performed the service of showing that the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one. (*Tractatus* 4.0031)

It may also be mentioned that Russell's theory of denoting has met with objection from a different quarters, viz., ordinary language philosophy. P.F. Strawson's "On Referring" is a famous challenge which has been directed against Russell's article "On Denoting" as well as the "Theory of Descriptions". The Theory of Description, however, remains unique in respect to its technique of logical analysis as the eminent Cambridge mathematician and philosopher F.P. Ramsey aptly called it "a paradigm of philosophy" (Ramsey 1). An early statement of the celebrated Theory of Description has been given in the article "On Denoting", which has further been developed in the later writings. In the early version of this theory, Russell starts with the Concept of a propositional function's being always true, that is to say, its being true for all the values of the variable (Ayer 55). Let us suppose that the function has the form fx. Then the sentence "Everything has the property f" is taken to mean just that 'fx' is always true. "Nothing has f" is taken to mean that it is false that 'fx', is false' is always true, and 'something has 'f' is taken to mean that it is false that 'fx' is false' is always true, a definition for which ''fx' is sometimes true' can be used as an abbreviation. An indefinite description, for example, "some human being has walked on the moon" is translated into the propositional function "x is human and has walked on the moon" is sometimes true, or in other words, true for at least one value of x. In the case of the translation of definite descriptions we have to stipulate that the function is true for only one value of the variable. For this, we have to add the rider that it is always true of any object y that if y satisfies the function in question, y is identical with x. So the translation of "Scott was the author of *Waverley*" is "It is sometimes true of x (that x wrote *Waverley*, that is always true of y that if y wrote *Waverley* is identical with x is identical with Scott)". The above translation is complicated and cumbersome. Russell's theory of Description is meant to show that expressions which are classifiable as definite or indefinite descriptions are not used as names, since it is not necessary for them to denote anything in order to have a meaning. Expressions of this kind have no meaning in isolation; instead they simply contribute to the meaning of the sentences in which they occur. Russell called such descriptive phrases "incomplete symbols" (*Logic and* 170).

In the *Principia Mathematica*, with the use of quantifiers the translation of the sentences involving descriptions becomes simplified. Instead of 'fx' is always true', we can say 'For all x, fx'; instead of '"fx is false' is always true" we can say 'For all x, not fx', and instead of ''fx" is sometimes true' we can say 'For some x, fx' or 'There is an x, such that fx'. The sentence "Scott was the author of *Waverley*" is, thus, translated as "There is an x such that x wrote *Waverley*; such that, for all y, if y wrote *Waverley*, y is identical with x, and such that x is identical with Scott". This translation is simpler than the earlier version of the theory which involves propositional functions (Ayer 56). The sentence referred to above expresses the following:

For some x, (i) x is an author of *Waverley* and,

(ii) for all y, if y is an author of *Waverley* then $y = x$,

(iii) x = Scott.

Regarding his conception of philosophy, Russell was somewhat conservative for an analytical philosopher in the contemporary times, since he maintained in the traditional fashion that philosophy is concerned with the description of the world and the criticism of knowledge. In 1912, he wrote:

> The essential characteristic of philosophy, which makes it a study distinct from science, is *criticism*. It examines critically the principles employed in science and in daily life; it searches out any inconsistencies there may be in these principles, and it only accepts them when, as the result of a critical inquiry, no reason for rejecting them has appeared. ("The Limits" 87)

In his 1918 lectures on "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", Russell was concerned with giving an account of the world from the point of view of logic. There he raised the question: what is there in the world, and what is it like? The concern for the nature of the world persisted even till 1959 when his last book on philosophy entitled *My Philosophical Development* was published. In chapter two of this book he wrote, "My present view of the world is a synthesis of physics, physiology, psychology and mathematical logic" (12).

Russell had given the highest premium to logic for philosophical thinking. He regarded logic as the "essence of philosophy" as his 1914 essay reveals. He went to the extent of identifying philosophy with logic. Russell's famous lectures of 1918 on "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", which are probably the best record of his development of the ideas which he had discussed with Wittgenstein in the period 1912-14, are the glaring evidences for the intimate relationship between logic and philosophy. When Russell was asked in 1924 to provide a personal statement of his philosophical position he chose to entitle it "Logical Atomism" ("Logical Atomism" 323). The rationale for emphasis on logic has been found in every page of the 1918 Lectures, whereas, his background in British Empiricism, scientific outlook, inclination towards realism, and influence of A.N. Whitehead have led him to support a new version of 'atomism'.

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The Intensional and the Extensional[1]

Ranjan Mukhopadhyay

Abstract:

This article attempts an explanation of the phenomenon of failure of substitutivity in the so-called intensional contexts. The discussion throws up the proposal that it is really the importance of the occurrence of a particular singular term in an intensional context that prevents substitution by any other co-referential term in that context. The role of a singular term in an intensional context is seen to be that of identifying an object in that context in a specific way. Substituting a (extensionally) co-referential term in that context robs off that specific way of identifying the object, and instead brings in a different way of specifying the object through the use of the new co-referential term. This deviation by substitution creates the so-called problems in intensional contexts. The article tries to clarify that failure of substitutivity in such a context is not a problem to be solved, but a phenomenon to be acknowledged especially with regard to the role of singular terms in intensional contexts.

Keywords: Substitution of Identicals, Preservation of Truth, Extensional Context, Intensional Context, Construal of a Singular Term.

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I

Bertrand Russell in his "On Denoting" presented three puzzles one of which he called the puzzle about the law of substitution of identicals. Russell posed the puzzle by wondering whether when George the IV wished to know whether the author of *Waverley* was Sir Walter Scott, he was really wishing to know whether Sir Walter Scott was Sir Walter Scott, since the author of *Waverley* happened, indeed, to be Sir Walter Scott. An interest into a logical statement like "a = a" was very unlikely of the king, Russell felt. But the question remained unsolved since the latter question was derived logically from the earlier by substituting the name 'Sir Walter Scott' in place of the definite description 'the author of *Waverley'* on the strength of a true identity statement, namely, "The author of *Waverley* = Sir Walter Scott". Frege ("On Sense and Reference") had an answer to the question in terms of his distinction between the sense and the referent of an expression and also the difference between an ordinary context and an indirect context. Russell was not in agreement with Frege's treatment of the trouble, and hence, came up with his own answer in terms of his theory of definite descriptions.

Both Frege and Russell noted that the context has got something to do with the puzzling results that are produced when substitution of identicals is attempted in such cases. Frege identified a distinction between the direct (ordinary) and the indirect context, while Russell identified the distinction within the context between the scope – the primary and the secondary – of an expression in relation to one other. The spoilsport expression which was affecting our chosen context for both is 'wished to know'. There can be, or indeed are, various other expressions leading to similar troubles. Let us call a context which allows logical substitution of identicals an extensional context and a context which does not an intensional context. This article will try, to the best of the abilities of its author, to clarify what goes into the context called intensional as opposed to the one called extensional.

Let us begin with an example. Consider the following sentences.

(a) Aizawl = the capital of Mizoram.

(b) The capital of Mizoram is a clean city.

(c) Aizawl is a clean city.

(d) R knows that the capital of Mizoram is a clean city.

(e) R knows that Aizawl is a clean city.

Given (a), (c) can be obtained from (b) by the rule for substitution on the strength of an identity statement, here (a). Can (e) be similarly obtained from (d)? It can be seen that there are two perspectives to look at while we answer this question. (I) If *one* is attributing knowledge of the truth of the sentence "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" to R (sentence (d)) from *her* own point of view, and for her own record, then the substitution is taken to be permissible. We can, in fact, weaken

this claim even more, hopefully acceptably, by saying that if this attribution of knowledge is made from a view from no-where, just for a record, then the substitution is fine. (II) But if this attribution is made from the view from no-where to R, *but strictly as R knows the case*, then the substitution is not permitted. R may not know that Aizawl is the capital of Mizoram, and as a consequence, may *not* be ready to concede that (e) is a true sentence, although (d) is; – not allowing the use of substitution of identicals.

So, (e) cannot be obtained from (d), even on the strength of the truth of (a), if the attribution has to be sensitive to the way R knows the case [for felicity of expression in contexts where the word 'as' does not help formulate what we want to focus on we shall use the expression "the way R knows the case" and its cognates instead of "as R knows the case", but at the same time reminding ourselves that we *mean* "as R knows the case"]. Substitution on the strength of an identity statement is not allowed in such a case for the pair of statements (d) and (e) – though allowed for the pair (b) and (c) – when we want to be sensitive to the knower's way of knowing a case.

Before continuing let us be clear about certain things regarding attributions of attitudes like knowing to persons/agents. Let us consider the so-called JTB thesis about knowledge. According to it an agent *s knows that p, if and only if, s believes that p and s has justifications to believe that p and p is true* [where 's' stands for the knowing agent, and 'p' stands for the proposition or the sentence known by s]. It is taken that when the conditions specified on the right side of the expression 'if and only if' is satisfied *s* can be said to know that p – *more specifically, knowledge of the truth of the relevant sentence can be attributed to the agent. Who* does this attribution? The answer is: *no one in particular*. In the typical scientific spirit of an inquiry, an agent, say R, can be said to be in the state of knowing the truth of a sentence when the specified conditions are fulfilled. So, it is not the case that some other person, say P, does such an attribution to R, on the basis of some perspective on the part of P. In fact, any one, every one, that is, no one in particular can do this attribution. In this clear sense do we say that the attribution of knowledge is made from a view from no-where. Still, another curiosity remains. For *whose* consumption is such an attribution made? Given the spirit of inquiry – the scientific one – the answer should be again: for *no one in particular*. The attribution is transparent enough to be accessible to anyone, everyone – that is, no one in particular, but to all. In this clear sense do we say that the attribution is *just for a record*. But now, since we are discussing attributions of knowledge to an *agent* we may also, for certain reasons, want to keep the *record* of the agent's state of knowledge in just the way the *agent* knows the case. Such an attribution to the agent would still be from the view from no-where but strictly in the way as the agent knows the case. With these clarifications regarding the above formulation we can now go back to the problem about substitution in the context of 'knows that'.

What is the reason for the deviation noted above regarding the permissibility of the use of substitution of identicals? It is held that pair (b)-(c) has an extensional context, and the pair (d)-(e) has an intensional context. An extensional context is usually taken to be one where substitution of identicals preserve truth through such a substitution, and an intensional context is one where substitution of identicals does not generally preserve truth through such a substitution. A more focussed answer to our question is that the rule for substitution of identicals is, by its very nature, restricted in its applicability to only cases where such substitutions preserve truth; so, the rule is, in fact, extensional in nature.

It seems then that applicability of the rule of substitution of identials characterizes the distinction between an extensional context and an intensional one quite well, but does not really help us understand what actually is there in the intensional – or, for that matter, in the extensional – which prevents such a substitution.

In our example the suspect was the use of the word(s) 'knows that' which brought in all the troubles. Such mischiefs are played by some other words as well: notably by 'believes that'. In case the thought now strikes that it is in cases where an agent, and her attitude towards the entertainability of a 'proposition' (a 'sentence' – to be least controversial) for a purpose are brought in, the context of that sentence which is embedded in the larger sentence using the attitude-verb(s) turns intensional, then we should note that there are a pair of words, namely 'necessary that' and 'possible that' which too play the same kind of mischief, yet are not agent-relative. Consider the following:

(f) The number of planets in our solar system = 8.

(g) It is necessary that 8 is greater than 6.

(h) It is necessary that the number of planets in our solar system is greater than 6.

Statements (f) through (h) display the same phenomenon of non-preservation of truth by substitution of identicals. But, notably here, there is no occasion for an attitude of an agent about a sentence. Attribution of necessity to a property of a number – the number's being greater than 6 – is made here from a view from no-where, and also is made for just a record. Yet the embedded sentence in this case ("8 is greater than 6") seems to get infected intensionally.

It seems then that it is not really an agent and her attitude about a sentence that makes the context of a sentence inensional. Let us then try to delve deeper in the next section by going back first to the case of 'knows that'.

II

Researches about the analysis of the logico-semantic structure of 's knows that p' [where 's' stands for some knowing agent, and 'p' stands for some sentence s is claimed to have known] tell us that for s, p is a sentence which is held true in

all alternative (possible) circumstances. The alternative (possible) circumstances, being alternative (possible) with respect to the given (the actual) circumstance, make under the alternative circumstances many sentences true for s, which are not true for s under the actual (given) circumstance, and many sentences false for s, which are not false for s under the actual (given) circumstance. The agent s, having the attitude, that of knowing, about a particular sentence p is not ready to let it go false in any such alternative circumstances. This precisely is taken to be the logico-semantic structure of what s's knowing the truth of a sentence is about: s knows that p if and only if p is true for s in all possible worlds (circumstances). To express within the same level of a given sentence p, a particular status of p in a cluster of (related) possible worlds (that it is true for s in all these worlds), the expression "s knows that…" is brought in, and the sentence p is embedded within this expression to form a larger sentence.

Similar is the situation when we try to analyse a case with respect to the words 'it is necessary that': it is necessary that p if and only if p is true in all possible worlds. The expression "it is necessary that…" is brought in to express within the same level of the given sentence p, a particular status of it in a cluster of (related) possible worlds (that it is true in all these worlds).

This is typical of a modal notion. Generally speaking, a notion is modal when it is understood in terms of another notion but only through how the latter is seen to be behaving in a cluster. 'Knows that' and 'necessary that' are both modal in this sense.

Let us get back to the case of 'knows that' to investigate further how it is infecting a context to be intensional. There are two readings that can be given to the sentence "R knows that the capital of Mizoram is a clean city", our (d).

(i) Of the capital of Mizoram R knows that it is a clean city.

(j) R knows of the capital of Mizoram that it is a clean city.
     Or,
(j') R knows that the capital of Mizoram is a clean city.

The two readings are following the well-known Russellian insight of distinguishing the relative scopes of two operators: the 'knows that' operator, and the constant operator (or, in Russellian terms, the definite descriptor operator). In (i) where the 'knows that' operator has a smaller scope (secondary occurrence) in relation to the constant operator ('the capital of Mizoram') substitution of identicals preserves truth. But in (j/j') where 'knows that' has a larger scope (primary occurrence), substitution of identicals does not preserve truth.

(k) Of Aizawl R knows that it is a clean city.

(l) R knows of Aizawl that it is a clean city.
     Or,
(l') R knows that Aizawl is a clean city.

On the strength of (a), (k) is obtainable from (i) by substitution. But (l/l') is not obtainable from (j/j') on the strength of (a), if, that is, we want to be sensitive to *the way R knows the case*. This shows that when 'knows that' functions in the capacity of having its primary occurrence, the embedded sentence gets trapped into a context which has been turned intensional. The secondary occurrences retain the extensional character of a context.

We need to take a small clarificatory detour at this point. We have equated the pair (l) and (l'), and also the pair (j) and (j') by taking the latter in each case to be an alternative expression of its former. But this may not be seen as legitimate. The English sentence (j), namely, 'R knows of the capital of Mizoram that it is a clean city' may be taken as saying the same thing as (i), that is, 'Of the capital of Mizoram R knows that it is a clean city', in which case, (j) may not be seen to be saying the same thing as (j'). The different positioning of the word 'of' in (i) and (j) seem *not* to have any effect in saying anything different from each other. If that be so, then the distinction between the secondary scope and the primary scope of the 'knows that' operator in the two consecutive sentences cannot be maintained. But we do indeed want to maintain this distinction to understand the non-permissibility of the application of the rule of substitution in the latter case. Use of the word 'of' in its usual sense, in both of the two cases is actually diffusing the possibility of retaining the distinction between scopes. That is why we are deliberately equating (j) with (j') by removing the occurrence of the word 'of' in (j) to obtain (j') by prepositioning the word 'that' in (j') to equate one with the other. This deliberate change finds its legitimacy in the wisdom that if a difference can be detected, even conceptually, then there *is* a difference *existing*. This wisdom is nothing but the non-controversial part of Leibniz's Law, namely, that of indiscernibility of identicals, which, when put conversely, gives us non-identity of discernibles – which precisely is the wisdom being appealed to here for making the deliberate change.

It was Donnellan ("Reference and Definite Descriptions") who pointed out that a use of a singular term may be read differently in contexts. In the instant case that we are discussing, the singular term 'the capital of Mizoram' as used in, even, (b) can be read following Donnellan as:

> (b') The city that *happens* to be referred to by the term 'The capital of Mizoram' is a clean city.
>
> Or, as,
>
> (b") The city, *being* the capital of Mizoram (because it is the capital of Mizoram), is a clean city.

Donnellan called the use of the term 'the capital of Mizoram' as in (b') a *purely referential* use, and the use of the same term as in (b") an *attributive* one.

The attributive use of a singular term is what we are trying to get hold of in the context where the 'knows that' operator has a primary occurrence and the use of the relevant singular term falls within this primary scope. That the primary occurrence of 'knows that' in a context turns the context intensional by making

the use of a singular term falling within its scope an *attributive* one is what makes us equate (j) with (j'). Removal of the word 'of' and prepositioning the word 'that' make this attributive use clearer. Similar remarks apply in the case of the pair (l) and (l'). Let us now return back to our original track.

Having ascertained that when 'knows that' has the primary scope in a sentence in relation to the constant operator, the embedded context gets intensional, we can now investigate what happens with respect to the modality involved in such a use of 'knows that'. According to the researches that we have referred to earlier – which was, in fact, at the level of what is called general modal propositional logic – "R knows that the capital of Mizoram is a clean city" has to be understood in the following way: the embedded sentence "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" is a true sentence for R in all possible worlds available to R. R is not ready to let it go false in any possible world alternative to the given actual world R is in. Now, how does truth (or falsity) play out in such possible worlds? To answer this question we have to leave the level of modal propositional logic to enter into the level of general first order quantified modal logic, for only at that level do we understand the truth or otherwise of even simple sentences like "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city". For this sentence to be true *for* R in any (possible) world, first of all, the city described as the capital of Mizoram has to be a member of the domain of objects taken for that world. Not only this, also, it has to be the case *for* R that the city so described has to be a clean one in that possible world.

Now, what exactly does this demand that the city so described has to be clean *for* R amount to? Does the *circumstance* of the truth of the sentence "*Aizawl* is a clean city" serve the purpose of the sentence "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city"'s also being true for R? This is a distinct possibility just because, so far as just the conditions for truth go [irrespective of truth for which knower], the truth conditions for both the sentences "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" and "Aizawl is a clean city" are the same, as the capital of Mizoram is indeed Aizawl. Even then, the *mere* truth condition for the sentence "Aizawl is a clean city" cannot serve the purpose of being the truth condition for "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" *for R*. It cannot, for, if it did then R would have had no problem in allowing "R knows that Aizawl is a clean city" to be derived from "R knows that the capital of Mizoram is a clean city" by substitution of identicals.

R can now be seen to be having a problem with the *choice* of the singular term that plays out in specifying the truth condition of the relevant sentence. If in the specification of the truth condition of "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" the name (singular term) 'Aizawl' is used, R is *not* ready to take it as a truth condition *for her*. But if, instead, in the required specification the name (singular term) 'the capital of Mizoram' itself is used, R is ready to take the specification as one *for her*. R's taking *only* this latter truth condition as the acceptable one in each possible world relative to the given actual world blocks substitution of identicals

in the larger context of "R knows that the capital of Mizoram is a clean city" to yield "R knows that Aizawl is a clean city".

So the demand that the specified truth condition has to be one which is *for* R, or relative to the agent, knower, R, in the context of knowing, boils down to a *choice* of a particular singular term rather than any other equivalent one. This same phenomenon can be witnessed in a different way. As we have noted that for R to know that the capital of Mizoram is a clean city is for R to hold the embedded sentence "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" true in each possible world accessible to him from the given actual world. Among these possible worlds there may well be a world – in fact, the actual world itself – where this other sentence "Aizawl is a clean city" occurs. For R, this latter sentence will be false – may be, at least truth-value less – in that world. This has to be. Otherwise non-preservation of truth by substitution of identicals would not happen. But we note that the difference between the two sentences lies only with respect to the occurrences of the respective singular terms in the subject position. In one case, the singular term in the subject position is 'the capital of Mizoram', and in the other it is 'Aizawl', not-withstanding the fact that the capital of Mizoram is indeed Aizawl, i.e., the two singular terms refer to the same city.[2]

When R is attributed knowledge of the truth of the sentence "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" from a view from no-where, but *strictly as R knows the case, the particular – and no other – choice of the singular term, namely, 'the capital of Mizoram' that R herself indicates plays a crucial role in blocking the substitution. R's indication of a choice of a particular singular term, rather than any other, is tied up intimately with the role the chosen singular term plays in R's way of knowing the case.* The substitution getting blocked in such a way – or, what is the same thing, making the context intensional in this way – can now be seen as the essence of what goes into an intensional context. A context – at least in this case and in similar such cases – becomes <u>*intensional*</u> *when fixity of the use of a particular singular term has to be adhered to in explaining why an application of the rule of substitution is not permissible.*

This observation gives rise to the possibility that if R also *knows* that the capital of Mizoram is Aizawl then the substitution will go through:

(m) R knows that the capital of Mizoram = Aizawl.

Given (m), (e) can be derived from (d), as truth of (m) will allow R to hold "The capital of Mizoram = Aizawl" true in each world possible relative to the given actual world of R. This being the case – that the two singular terms 'the capital of Mizoram' and 'Aizawl' refer to the same city for R, in the context of each possible world – the two sentences "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" and "Aizawl is a clean city" will be inter-derivable in all these worlds, making the sentence "Aizawl is a clean city" true for R in exactly the same worlds where "The capital of Mizoram is a clean city" is true for R – which incidentally gives us the sentence "R knows that Aizawl is a clean city", our (e). But of course, such a resulting substitution is not the same as our familiar substitution which is purely

extensional in character. For, in this case, the identity-premiss changes from "Aizawl = the capital of Mizoram" to "R knows that Aizawl = the capital of Mizoram is a clean city".

III

Now that we have seemingly achieved some clarity about what makes the context of 'knows that' an intensional one, let us turn our attention to the case of 'necessary that'. We recall the cluster of sentences listed as (f) – (h); (h) was attempted to be derived from (g) on the basis of the identity expressed in (f). The attempted substitution on a true sentence (g) on the basis of another sentence (f) which happens to be a sentence expressing a true identity gave us a sentence, namely, (h) which is unacceptable, or is false in a very normal sense: by no known facts, or even, by no stretch of imagination, is there a necessity on the part of the number of planets of our solar system that we do, as a matter of fact, have, to be greater than 6. The number could have been 6, 5, or any other lower number. Plainly then, the substitution does not preserve truth. But let us look at (g) again. Are there possible alternative readings, just as (d) had? The possible readings would be the following:

(n) Of the number 8 it is necessary that it is greater than 6.

(o) It is necessary of the number 8 that it is greater than 6.
     Or,
(o') It is necessary that 8 is greater than 6.

These two readings are attempted by following the same Russellian insight for distinguishing the scopes of two operators, namely, the necessity operator and the constant operator (or, in Russellian terms, the descriptor operator). In (n) the necessity operator has the smaller scope in relation to the constant operator, and hence has secondary occurrence, whereas in (o) or (o') it has the larger scope, and hence has primary occurrence. (o), which we take to be the same as (o') (–by our earlier observations regarding the pairs (j)-(j') and (l)-(l')–) is nothing but our familiar (g). So, substitution of the singular term 'the number of planets in our solar system' in place of the singular term '8' in (o) or (o') on the strength of the identity expressed in (f) will land us into our unacceptable (h). That is, when the necessity operator has primary occurrence, the substitution gets blocked, just as it happened in the case of the operator 'R knows that'.

One may think, on the other hand, that (n) has a better prospect. If we substitute the singular term 'the number of planets in our solar system' in place of the singular term '8' in (n) we get the following:

(p) Of the number of planets in our solar system it is necessary that it is greater than 6.

Is (p) a true sentence derived by substitution in (n) on the strength of (f)? We vacillate a little bit at this point. If we take the use of the singular term 'the

number of planets in our solar system' in (p) as a purely referential one, then (p) is a true sentence, since we are saying in this case that the number 8 which happens to be the reference of the singular term 'the number of planets in our solar system' is indeed necessarily greater than the number 6. But if we take the use of the singular term "the number of planets in our solar system' in (p) to be an attributive one, then (p) is not a true sentence, since in that case we are saying that the number, being (–because it is–) the number of planets in our solar system is necessarily greater than the number 6, our (h). So, it seems that, unlike with the case of 'R knows that', a reading (the attributive reading of the singular term 'the number of planets in our solar system') in (p) where the necessity operator has a secondary occurrence, and not a primary occurrence, is blocking the substitution. That there could be such a vascilation – that such a blocking may happen even in a reading of (p) with secondary occurrence of the necessity operator, gets confirmed by Kripke's ("Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic") result that the Barcan Formula together with its converse is valid in *suitable* logics when the *population* with respect to the possible worlds are not allowed to vary through the worlds.

The Barcan Formula, named after Ruth Barcan Marcus, in symbols, is: $(x)L(\Phi x) \supset L(x)(\Phi x)$, while the converse of it, in symbols, is: $L(x)(\Phi x) \supset (x)L(\Phi x)$. When we combine them together to get: $L(x)(\Phi x) \equiv (x)L(\Phi x)$, we can note that the necessity operator 'L' is having the larger scope with respect to the universal quantifier, and hence has a primary occurrence on the left side of the equivalence, whereas, it is having a smaller scope, and hence has a secondary occurrence on the right side of the equivalence. The Barcan Formula with its converse, if true, then essentially says that the distinction between a primary occurrence and a secondary occurrence of the necessity operator collapses in a suitable first order quantified alethic modal logic. Kripke proved for such logics that the Barcan formula is indeed true – valid – when in the semantics for such a logic the population with respect to the possible worlds are kept fixed across the worlds. This is a typical case showing that our intuitions, even when we vacillate, have good grounds.

But the upshot of all this is again that the mischief with respect to substitution in the context of necessity is played out not only with the primary occurrence of the necessity operator but also with the secondary one on a particular reading.

Now we face the question, in what way does the modal character of the necessity operator come into play in blocking the substitution. The sentence 'It is necessary that 8 is greater than 6' is true (in the actual world) if and only if the embedded sentence '8 is greater than 6' is true in all possible alternative worlds accessible to the given actual one – which it is. On the other hand, the sentence 'The number of planets in our solar system is greater than 6' will be true in the given actual world, and, may be, also true in some other possible worlds accessible to the actual one, but not in all. The difference obtaining among these two

sentences lies in the occurrences of different *singular terms* in the subject position of the two sentences, although the two singular terms are equivalent in the actual world, if not in any other: 8 is indeed the number of planets in our solar system. Since, the sentence 'The number of planets in our solar system = 8' is not true in all possible worlds, substitution under necessity is not possible. Hence, it looks rather straight forward why substitution under necessity is blocked.

Some may think that the substitution under necessity had to be blocked, in any case, because otherwise we would have committed ourselves to admitting that some properties (predicates) of some objects are *essential* to them. We certainly are not ready to admit that there is some essence in being the number of planets of our solar system, and that the essence lies in being greater than 6. And that is why – it is good that it already got blocked by the *logic* of alethic modality itself – we would have had, in any case, to block the substitution (especially if logic wouldn't have blocked it already). Was it then, that the unacceptability of (h) upon substitution was really dependent on our unwillingness to see properties (predicates) becoming essential to objects in cases? Is it the contingency or otherwise of the predicate – and *not anything relating to the singular term* – that really plays the spoilsport for substitution?

Let us look in contrast at the sentence 'It is necessary that 8 is greater than 6'. Why is it necessary that 8 is greater than 6? Surely, as a number of the planets of our solar system 8 has got no necessity, or essence, to be greater than 6. On the other hand, the number 8, as it is constructed out of the repeated succession operations from 6 has the necessity, or essence that it be greater than 6. So, it is more how the singular term '8' is construed than anything else that makes it necessary that 8 is greater than 6: 8 as the mathematically constructed number that it is – and not as the number of planets – is necessarily greater than 6. We can now notice that the *construals* of the relevant singular terms – and not the contingency or otherwise of predicates – are blocking or opening substitution under necessity. A particular construal of a singular term is blocking substitution by another singular term construed differently. But it will open up substitution if the latter singular term is construed similarly:

(q) 8 = 6 + 2

(r/g) It is necessary that 8 is greater than 6.

(s) It is necessary that 6 + 2 is greater than 6.

There is no problem, even under necessity, to obtain (s) by substitution in (r/g) on the strength of (q). *That it is the choice – now not of any agent, as was the case in the context of 'knows that' – of a particular singular term, or, more specifically, the role that the singular term in question plays in whatever is expressed by the sentence using it under necessity is blocking substitution* is, hopefully, being increasingly clear.

We can recall in this context a telling observation made by Quine ("Two Dogmas of Empiricism") when he was mounting perhaps a decisive attack on the so-called exhaustive distinction between the analytic and the synthetic judgements.

We can take his observation to note that when 'man' is defined as a featherless biped it is accidental that s/he is rational but essential that s/he is two-legged, and, when 'man' is defined as a rational animal it is accidental that s/he is two-legged but essential that s/he is rational: what is essential or necessary can now be seen to be a matter of which particular term in which sense is used in the sentence.

Whether the above observation leads to the possibility that the idea of pure metaphysical necessity is a spurious one is an issue we need not here enter into. We can, at least reasonably draw, for the present, a limited lesson that *the singular terms, and their roles, or the specific construals of the singular terms in the context of 'it is necessary that', and specific construals by the knower in the context of 'knows that' are what goes deep into the contexts which are identified as intensional by the test of non-preservation of truth upon substitution.*

IV

Let us now proceed a little further, although more in a manner of exploration into possible deep insights than in a manner of hard investigation with 'knows that' before we close this exercise for the present. When we are serious with attribution of knowledge from view from nowhere to an agent but also, by being sensitive to *the way* the agent knows the case, we realize the importance of the role of the singular term the agent prefers. The singular term being constituted out of other terms – most of which may ultimately be shown to be general terms – is really manifesting concepts for cognizing an object – the object about which the agent comes to know something [–hopefully by the JTBG ('G' for Gettier) method!]. This is so, since, the general terms are taken to *stand* for concepts that are used in cognition. As using concepts in cognizing an object is the only way for the agent, hence, the agent's *subsequent* identifications and re-cognizing the same object depends heavily on the concepts (in linguistic terms, the expressions occurring in the singular term) the agent has used in cognizing it in the first place. Of course, the agent can later acquire other ways of cognizing the same object under very special circumstances. But the point that can be emphasised here is that the concepts used for cognizing, that is, the specific singular terms used in expressing the case of knowledge are bound up very uniquely and intimately to the agent's effort towards accessing the real object out there. We have seen how the singular terms go deep into making a context intensional. On that count we may take liberty in calling singular terms, in a derivative sense, the 'intensional tools' for accessing objects out there. It is the intensional tools that the agent starts with to encounter reality. And the agent succeeds in accessing reality by non-intensional tools – that is, the extensional tools – only when and where the intensional tools are same for the other agents as well. In such a situation the agents are freed from remaining tied down to their own individual sets of intensional tools – the individual sets of singular terms. The same expressions start behaving extensionally.

When R cognizes a city as the capital of Mizoram, and also cognizes a city called as Aizawl, without also knowing that R has cognized the same city in two different ways using thereby different sets of concepts, R would not let go the substitution, keeping the two singular terms as intensional tools for R. But when later R cognizes that R has cognized the same city by two different intensional tools, and every other agent around R also goes through the same route, the two terms 'the capital of Mizoram' and 'Aizawl' become extensional tools referring to the same object – the same city – within the language that R and R's fellow agents speak. The rule of substitution of identicals becomes operative in such a situation – the context getting extensional in such a case. This happens because use of singular terms in sentences of a language, in such a case, need not any more remain *sensitive* to the way the user of the singular term uses it in the sentence – every fellow user of the term having access to every other's way of using the same term.

Notes

1. This article is a revised version of "Pranab Kumar Sen Memorial Lecture 2017" delivered in Kolkata.

2. A feature with a Tarskian theory of truth: A Tarskian theory of truth proposing a definition of truth for a sentence of a given language requires that in an adequate definition the specification of the condition of truth be a *translation* (into the metalanguage) of the sentence of the object language mentioned for which the definition is to be obtained. Such a requirement prevents having as an adequate definition "'The capital of Mizoram is a clean city' is a true sentence of English if and only if Aizawl is a clean city", since the word 'Aizawl' is not a *translation* of the words 'the capital of Mizoram'. The adequate truth definition can only be: "'The capital of Mizoram is a clean city' is a true sentence of English if and only if the capital of Mizoram is a clean city". This feature of a Tarskian theory of truth is most prominently displayed in the trouble with cases where Tarskian truth-definitions are attempted by using singular name of a sentence the truth of which is to be defined. As an example one can consider completing an attempted truth-definition of the following: "The top sentence of page 65 of Leonard Linski's book *Reference and Modality*, OUP, London, 1971 is a true sentence of English if and only if…." For further reading, see Tarski.

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There, Russell was Right
On the Status of Causality in Modern Science

Shinod N.K.

Abstract:

In this paper I discuss Russell's rejection of causality in his 1912 essay "On the notion of Cause". I argue that Russell's rejection of causality was not only correct but positions similar to that of Russell are available in the contemporary debates on causality. In this respect, I discuss John Norton's idea of causality as folk science and show its closeness to that of Russell's analysis. The veracity of Russell and Norton's discussion of causality is further fortified by discussing the Einstein Podolsky Rosen (EPR) thought experiment from the history of quantum mechanics. Then I consider Nancy Cartwright's criticism of Russell and explain how Russell's account can answer the criticism. In the final session I show the naturalistic assumption of Russell's analysis and show that such an assumption is unavoidable for a thorough going empiricism.

Keywords: Russell, John Norton, Principle of Causality, EPR, Locality.

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1. Introduction

Though Hume denounced causality to psychology, it continued as one of the most wanted principles of common sense and science. Consequently, philosophers attempted to save causality from Hume's attack. This resulted in the proliferation of accounts of causality. After Hume's denial of the regularity account of causality, we have the process theory (Salmon, "An 'At-At'"; Dowe, "Wesley Salmon's" and *Physical Causation*), counter factual theories (Menzies), probabilistic theories (Reichenbach, "The Causal" and *The Direction*, ch. 4, 18 and 19; Suppes, ch. 2; Pearl, ch. 3; Hitchcock, "Probabilistic") and interventionist theories championed by Woodward ("Causation and"). However, Russell has rejected causality and argued that it is not a part of the matured science. In this paper, I argue that Russell's rejection of causality in his 1912 essay "On the notion of Cause" is correct in its essence. I also suggest that not only Russell was right but he got company in the contemporary debates on causality. In this respect, I discuss John Norton's idea of causality as folk science and show its closeness to that of Russell's analysis. The veracity of Russell and Norton's discussion of causality is further fortified by discussing the Einstein Podolsky Rosen (EPR) thought experiment from the history of quantum mechanics. Then I consider Nancy Cartwright's criticism of Russell and explain how Russell's account can answer the criticism. In the last session I show the naturalistic assumption of Russell's analysis.

2. Russell on the Notion of Cause

Empiricists, as Nancy Cartwright ("The Reality" 38) observes, "are notoriously suspicious of causes". Russell was not different. For him, the word 'cause' is inextricably bound with confusions such that a complete extrusion of it from the philosophical vocabulary is highly desirable. Russell's reasons for the extrusion of cause are best summarised in the often quoted passage. It reads:

> All philosophers, of every school, imagine that causation is one of the fundamental axioms or postulates of science, yet, oddly enough, in advanced sciences such as gravitational astronomy, the word 'cause' never appears. Dr James Ward … makes this a ground of complaint against physics…. To me, it seems that … the reason why physics has ceased to look for causes is that, in fact, there are no such things. The law of causality, I believe, like much that passes muster among philosophers, is a relic of a bygone age, surviving, like the monarchy, only because it is erroneously supposed to do no harm. (Russell 1)

Christopher Hitchcock ("What Russell"46) observed that Russell has varying targets in his criticism. The targets of Russell's analysis are:

 a) The notion of cause
 b) The word 'cause'
 c) The existence of causes

d) The principle of causality.

Hitchcock complains that Russell does not distinguish among the above targets. Critique of one target does not always entail the critique of other. For instance, the rejection of the notion of cause and the rejection of the existence of cause demand different arguments. One does not entail the other. The 'notion cause' can be rejected by showing that it is incoherent. One could reject cause by showing that it does not exist. However, the second doesn't amount to the rejection of the notion cause. For example, the non-existence of Golden Mountain does not make the notion golden mountain incoherent. Though Hitchcock's analysis appears correct, a charitable reading of Russell would show the principle of causality as his prime target. Therefore, even though Russell started his discussion by analysing the word cause, I focus only on the status of the principle of causality and the existence of cause.[1] It is the analysis of the principle of causality that found followers even after a century.

Before rejecting the principle of causality Russell cited the definitions of it offered by Mill, and Bergson. According to Mill "[T]he Law of Causation, the recognition of which is the main pillar of inductive science, is but the familiar truth, that invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in nature and some other fact which has preceded it" (qtd. in Russell 6). Bergson suggests that "this law means that every phenomenon is determined by its conditions, or, in other words, that the same causes always produce the same effect" (qtd. in Russell 6). Mill's definition is a variant of the regularity view of causality. In the regularity view, causation is the invariance of succession between two types of events.[2] The invariance condition separates causation from constant conjunction of events. Bergson's formulation safeguards the invariance by incorporating a necessary connection between the events by claiming that the same cause always produces the same effect. Hume denounced the above view by showing that no necessary connection between two events is available in experience (Hume44-57). Without a necessary connection between the events, the regularity view will fail to ensure the invariability of succession. This will turn the regularity into a mere constant conjunction of events. Russell however took a different route. He argued that

1. The same cause-same effect relation, as suggested by the principle of causality, is otiose. (Russell 8)

2. Scientific laws in mature sciences do not employ a principle of causality. Instead, they employ functional relations between events that are usually expressed as differential equations. (Russell 15)

Combining the above two with the idea that causality is not an *a priori* notion, Russell concludes that the principle of causality is a useless relic of bygone age. Russell's two main objects can be stated as the objection to the sameness condition in the principle of causality and the objection to the status of causality in modern science. These two objections are discussed in the following sessions.

2.1 Rejection of the Sameness Condition

The sameness condition in the cause-effect relation can be formulated as follows. Suppose that C_1, C_2 and E_1, E_2 are events where C is the cause and E is the effect respectively. The sameness condition says that, if C_1 and C_2 are the same then E_1 and E_2 must be the same, given all other remains the same. In other words, when two events are sufficiently similar what follows them should also be sufficiently similar. In a nutshell, the same cause must always produce the same effect under similar circumstances. It should be noted that C and E are event types. It is unproblematic to state that an event does not repeat but we get instances of particular event-type. Consider the example of lightning. The lightning that happened at time T_1 and that happened at time T_2 are separate events. The lightening occurred at T_2 is not a replication of that occurred at T_1. However, both of them belong to the same event type (lighting) and hence, one could meaningfully say that there was repeated lightning last night. Unlike Hume, who questioned the necessary connection, Russell argues that the sameness of cause and effect is either impossible or vacuous (Russell 8-13). Let C_1 and C_2 be the instances of C and E_1 and E_2 be the instances of E. In order to obtain the sameness relation, one has to ensure that C_1 and C_2 are the same. One also has to maintain the *ceteris paribus* condition, which Russell argues, works only in smaller domains. This can be explained by considering the following examples. Consider two phenomena, the free fall of a stone and the motion of tides, on the surface of the earth. The motion of a stone in free fall is unaffected by the gravitational attraction of celestial bodies. On the contrary, tidal movements are affected by the influences of celestial bodies. But the laws of Newtonian mechanics are silent about the *ceteris paribus* conditions to be employed in each case. The equations we may use to describe the above two phenomena are F=ma (F-force acting on the object, m-the mass of the object and a is the acceleration) and $F=Gm_1m_2/r^2$ (F is the gravitational attraction between the two bodies with mass m_1 and m_2, and r is the distance between them; G is the gravitational constant;) do not specify the *ceteris paribus* condition. In order to say that the two instances of the free fall of an object O is the same, one has to keep all the conditions (for instance position of the Sun, the Moon etc.) and consequently all the forces that are operative on the first instance intact for the second case. This would complicate the matter to such an extent that it becomes unreasonable to expect a repetition of the first event. The escape route is to stipulate the features that are relevant to each case. With such stipulation we could say that two instances of the free fall of the same object are the same. However, *ceteris paribus* clause employed in the case of free fall might not be applicable to other phenomena. In the case of tidal waves, isolating the phenomenon from the influence of celestial bodies is not possible. This means, only by carefully selecting the domain one could evoke the sameness of cause and effect. This shows that the sameness of the cause and effect is guaranteed locally by pragmatic considerations but it is not operative in the global scale. But, the

laws of science operate in the global scale. For instance, the law of gravitation is applicable in a global scale but we employ different *ceteris paribus* conditions in its application. Hence, the sameness of cause and effect is either impractical or attained by stipulation. If we try to obtain the sameness by adding complex conditions, it became impractical to achieve. If we obtain it through stipulation, then it is not a proper part of science but it is called in for pragmatic considerations. It helps us to make the phenomenon digestive to common-sense. This suggests that the sameness condition is either impractical or otiose. Hence, Russell concludes that causation is not a part of mature science (8-13).

2.2 Causality and Science

If there are no causal relations, then what does physics do? Russell argues that physics in its mature phase does not employ the principle of causality. Instead of causes physics provides functional relations between events. Formulating more correctly, what is offered in physics is dynamical relations among the parameters selected to describe a system in the language of differential equations. This is correct even about the allegedly deterministic Newtonian Mechanics. The equations of motion do not discuss causes. For instance, the second law of motion expressed by the equation $F = m\frac{dv}{dt}$ (F is the force acting on an object, m is the mass of the object, v is the velocity of the object and t is the time of action) does not discuss any causes.

Another reason for rejecting causation is the time invariance of the laws of science. Laws of physics are time invariant but causation is not. In other words, there is a directionality of time employed in the cause-effect relation but that is not recognised by the laws of physics. Physicist Leonard Susskind puts the same by saying that the laws of classical mechanics are reversible or "the laws are deterministic into the past as well as the future" (Susskind and Hrabovsky 8). This means that the law operates both to the past and to the future in the same manner. For instance, the first law of motion expressed as $F = m\frac{dv}{dt}$ works perfectly well even when we reverse the sign of time. However, the cause-effect relation is always aligned from the past to the future. But no such condition is necessarily associated with the dynamical equations employed to describe the laws of physics. Therefore, the directionality of time, which is an invariable component of cause-effect relation, is not recognised by matured science. In a nutshell, Russell suggests that the way causation is characterised is neither useful nor used in the expressions of modern science. Therefore, it is better to extrude that term from the philosophical vocabulary. It should be noted that Russell is not against the employment of 'cause' and 'effect' in the ordinary sense. Rather his suggestion is that such talk is a part of science only in its immature phases. Here we should remember that even at its heydays Newtonian mechanics violated the common notion of cause and effect. In the standard characterisation of cause and effect, the events that are causally connected need to be contiguous and temporally proximate. Also there must to be a medium that transfers the force from one

point to another. Only then an event, which is an instance of a force acting on a body and another event, which is the effect of the above action, can be considered as cause and effect. However, the operation of the universal law of gravitation is a case for action at distance.[3] Even though Newton seems to have despised the action at distance, until the arrival of General theory of Relativity which explained gravitation, Newtonian Mechanics operated with action at distance. Action at a distance, however, is a violation of the standard notion of cause and effect. This shows that Russell was right in pointing out that even Newtonian science violates the principle of causation and hence, the principle of causation is not a part of the scientific description of the world. In the next session, I discuss one of the recent descendants of Russell's ideas in the discussion of causality.

3. Norton and the Folk Theory of Causation

Many philosophers share Russell's scepticism regarding the validity of the principle of causality (Field; Norton, "Do the Causal"; Woodward, "Causation with"; Hitchcock, "What Russell"). Unlike others, John Norton employs the absence of the principle of causality in Physics to denounce the principle of causality. Like Russell, Norton also argues that causation is neither used in modern science nor is a useful idea to understand the operation of modern science. He also suggests that the talk in terms of causality is not a part of mature science but it is a useful way of describing the world in the immature phases of science, which he calls the folk science. Conversing in terms of causes and effects help us make sense of the world and the science in an intelligible manner. However, retaining causality, for Norton, is to trade precision for intelligibility ("Causation as" 12).

Norton's argument against causality is non-Humean in the sense that it is neither an attempt to show the impossibility of necessary connection nor is it grounded in a rejection of metaphysics. However, like Russell, Norton is also a Humean in the sense that he too considers causality as a matter of fact. Therefore, if there is any causal principle, it needs to be recovered from the world. This means, one has to recover causality from the best account of the world. Since the best account of the world is provided by the best science available, one has to recover causality from the best science. If causality is not a part of the description of the world by the best science, Norton concludes that causality has only folk ontology which is applicable to limited realm just like caloric theory or Newtonian gravitational forces ("Causation as" 33).

Norton presents his arguments in the form of a dilemma. He is not rejecting causes as such. What is rejected, as Norton phrases it, is a causal fundamentalism. Causal fundamentalism is the view that "[N]ature is governed by cause and effect; and the burden of individual sciences is to find the particular expressions of the general notion in the realm of their specialised subject matter" (Norton, "Causation as" 15). If causal fundamentalism is correct, it has to face the following dilemma. If there is a principle of causality, "[E]ither conforming a

science to cause and effect places a restriction on the factual content of a science; OR it does not" (Norton, "Causation as" 15). In other words, conforming the science to cause effect relation must provide restrictions on the factual content of science and these constrictions must be applicable to each and every science. If not, conforming causal strictures to science is an honorific but otiose attempt. Norton supplements his argument with a brilliant example from Newtonian mechanics where both determinism and causality are shown broken. He also surveys different accounts of causality and demonstrates that all of them fail to address the dilemma. Like Russell, he too argues that the causal talk in advanced physics is in fact honorific if we consider the nature of the dynamical equations given by physics. Therefore, like Russell, Norton concludes that causation is an empty honorific idea ("Causation as" 15). In the next session I discuss an instance from the history of quantum mechanics where the alleged causal talk failed to accord well with the empirical findings.

4. Failure of the Principle of Causality: The Case of EPR Thought Experiment

In 1935 Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen presented a thought experiment (TE) to show that the then quantum mechanics was incomplete. The idea of causality played an important role in the discussion of the EPR. In this session I discuss the debate surrounding the EPR thought experiment and demonstrate the failure of the principle of causality in modern physics. Before discussing the thought experiment, we have to consider certain crucial differences between Classical Mechanics (CM) and Quantum Mechanics (QM).

Minimally speaking, a physical theory attempts to describe the behavior of a system. A system can be either the entire universe or some part of it. The behavior of a system is explained by explaining the change in the state of a system. A state of a system is an abstract concept. For the present purpose, a state is the configuration of a system at a particular time. In the physics jargon, the abstract state we used to represent the state of a system is called particular state-space. A state-space is the collection of all possible states or configurations of a system. For example, a normal coin has two states, the head and the tail. So, the state-space of the coin is the set of all possible states of the coin. This can be represented by the set C={H,T}, where H is the state head and T is the state tail. A physical theory maps the changes in a system to the possible changes in the state-space of the system. For this purpose, every state of the system is mapped to a configuration in the state-space and any change in the state of the system is explained by confining it to a rule or a set of rules. For this purpose, the state of a system is demonstrated by selecting parameters or variables that are relevant to the system. In the case of a coin toss we select H and T as the variable. Position and momentum are the variables we select to describe the motion of a particle. By explaining the change in the position and momentum of the particle we explain the system. Physical theories differ both in the rules and the mode of representing the states. Classical

Mechanics (CM) and Quantum Mechanics (QM) differ in the way they represent the state-space and the rules they employ to describe the change in the state-space. The state-space in the classical mechanics can be described by set theory. The logic underlying the rules of Classical Mechanics can be described by Boolean logic. Boolean logic is a formalized version of classical two-value logic. Hence, every proposition of CM is either true or false and no indeterminate truth value is allowed. A proposition in CM is a claim about a state. The truth value of a proposition is determined by testing the claim by performing measurements. To illustrate this point further, consider the motion of a particle S having a mass m in the +ve X direction. Let x be the position and v the velocity of the particle at time T. The momentum of the particle p=m*v. The following two propositions about S are meaningful in CM.

1. S has a position x AND S has a momentum p
2. S has a position x OR S has a momentum p

CM assumes that the measurement does not alter the system significantly. Hence, the position and momentum of S can be determined accurately by performing measurements using some measuring apparatus. Therefore, proposition 1 and 2 have definite truth values. In other words, there is a definite position and momentum for S at any arbitrary time T.[4]

QM uses different formalism to describe the state-space. The state-space of QM is not a set but is a vector space. The possible relations in the vector-space are also different from the logical relations possible within the elements of a set (Susskind and Friedman 24). The abstract entities in the vector-space are complex vectors. These details are not relevant for this discussion. The point to be noted is that there is change in the formalism or representation of state-space. Similarly, there is a change in the underlying logic of the rules in QM. In QM a measurement changes the state of a system irrecoverably (Bohr, "Can Quantum" 696). Therefore, one has to consider the effect of measurement in describing any system. This has been captured in the famous uncertainty principle by Heisenberg. The uncertainty principle states that it is impossible to determine simultaneously and accurately the position and momentum of a moving particle. If Δx and Δp are the indeterminacies in the measurement of the position and momentum of a particle respectively, then Δx. Δp$\geq$ h/4 π (h is Plank's constant).[5] According to the uncertainty principle, we cannot measure the position and momentum of S simultaneously and accurately. Hence, in the Copenhagen interpretation of QM by Neils Bohr, Heisenberg and others, a particle has either position or momentum at time T. It cannot have both position and momentum together. This means, the rules in QM does not follow the Boolean logic. Therefore, if S is a QM system, then only the proposition 2 is valid. However, it should be noted that here the OR operator is used in the exclusive sense. Since both, position and momentum, cannot have simultaneous values, the truth value of the proposition 1 is indeterminate in QM. In other words, proposition 1 is not meaningful in QM

(Susskind and Friedman12-21). Given these preliminaries, let us consider the EPR thought experiment.

Einstein, Rosen and Podolsky employed a thought experiment, which is later known as the EPR thought experiment, to show that QM is incomplete. They provide the following necessary condition for completeness – "Every element of physical reality must have a counter part in the physical theory" (Einstein et al. 777). In Classical mechanics, as we have seen above, every state-space that is permitted by the rule has physical value. Consequently, a particle has both position and momentum at any arbitrary time. However, as we have seen above, QM does not allow one to assign physical reality to position and momentum of a particle. The EPR attempts to show that the above view is incorrect.

The thought experiment is as follows. Consider two systems I and II. Assume that they had an interaction between them from time t = 0 to t = T. Suppose that the states of the system before t = 0 were known. The state of the combined system I+II can be calculated by using Schrödinger's equation. Let Ψ be the wave function of the combined system. According to quantum mechanics, we cannot calculate the state of system I or II after their interaction without the help of some measurements on either I or II. Let there be a measurement for a physical property, say momentum, over the system I. Since the total momentum of the system is conserved, from the measurement over I, we could calculate the momentum of system II. Similarly, we could measure the position of one of the systems and calculate the position of the other. Suppose that we measure the position of system I and momentum of II. This allows us to calculate the respective values for the other system. We also assume that the measurement over one system does not affect the other. This is known as the locality assumption. Hence, we could conclude that it is possible to assign elements of physical reality to the position and momentum of a particle simultaneously. Consequently, one could argue that physical quantities with non-commuting operators can have simultaneous reality. The definition of Physical reality which is a sufficient condition is as follows. "If, without in any way disturbing a system, we can predict with certainty (i.e., probability equal to unity) the value of a physical quantity, then there exists an element of physical reality corresponding to this physical quantity" (Einstein et al. 777). Combining the locality assumption and the definition of completeness along with the results of the thought experiment the following argument can be formulated. Either the wave function is not a complete description of physical reality or two non-commuting operators of physical quantities do not have simultaneous physical reality (~P or ~Q). Two non-commuting operators of physical quantity can have simultaneous physical reality (Q). The wave function is not a complete description of the physical reality (~P). Therefore, "the quantum mechanical description of physical reality given by wave functions is not complete" (Einstein et al. 780).

The EPR thought experiment has evolved considerably after its original formulation (Shinod; Home and Whitaker, ch.6). However, what is of interest to our discussion of causality is the assumption of locality. The locality assumption states that if two systems are spatially separated then the measurement on one should not affect the other. As Home and Whittaker noted, John Bell made it more precise by stating that if S_1 and S_2 are two sub-systems that are separated by a distance Δx, and Δt is the time interval between two events associated with S_1 and S_2, then the $|\Delta x| > |c\Delta t|$, where c is the speed of light. This ensures that no signal exchange is possible between the two systems in the time interval between the two events (Home and Whittaker 111; Jammer, ch.6). Einstein did not employ the term locality in the 1935 EPR paper. However, in the original EPR paper the locality assumption is explained as the absence of exchange between the two systems. It reads: "[S]ince at the time of measurement the two systems no longer interact, no real exchange can be taken place in the second system in consequence of anything that may be done to the first system" (Einstein et al. 779). Later Einstein elucidated the locality assumption as the principle of contiguity. In "Quantum Mechanics and Reality" Einstein wrote:

> The following idea characterizes the relative independence of objects far apart in space (A and B): external influence on A has no direct influence on B; this is known as the 'principle of contiguity', which is used consistently only in the field theory. If this axiom were to be completely abolished, the idea of the existence of (quasi) enclosed systems, and thereby the postulation of laws which can be checked empirically in the accepted sense, would become impossible. (322)

Now consider the original conclusion of the EPR, which is a conjunction. It states that either the quantum mechanics is complete or two non-commuting operators cannot have simultaneous reality. However, the thought-experiment shows that the non-commuting operators can have simultaneous reality. Hence, quantum mechanics is incomplete (Fine 32). But, the second conjunct is true if and only if we hold the locality assumption true. Consequently, either quantum mechanics is complete or locality assumption is false. The locality assumption is considered too intuitive to abandon and hence it was maintained. John Bell noted this in the opening paragraph of his article "On the Einstein Podolsky Rosen Paradox", in which he proved the celebrated Bell's inequalities. Bell writes that "[T]he paradox of Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen was advanced as an argument that quantum mechanics could not be a complete theory but should be supplemented by additional variables. These additional variables were to *restore to the theory causality and locality*" (14; emphasis added). Bell's points emphasise the fact that the addition of variables to the theory was an attempt to restore causality and locality to the theory (quantum mechanics). However, the attempts to save causality and locality by incorporating additional variables into the theory did not accord well with the statistical predictions of quantum mechanics. The empirical results backed up the statistical predictions of quantum mechanics and showed

the violation of locality assumption (Aspect et al.). In other words, the world seems to exhibit the unintelligible 'spooky action at a distance', irrespective of the innumerable attempts to make it intelligible to the conventional wisdom of causality (see Berkovitz).

The EPR related debate is one among the many instances in the history of modern physics where the employment of *a priori* conditions to science found wanting. In the EPR case, the locality assumption is not a part of the physical theory. However, it was deemed important because rejecting it would make the theory unintelligible by breaking the traditional notion of causality. Spatial contiguity along with temporal asymmetry are two necessary conditions of causal relationship between two events. Eliminating one would breakdown the causal relationship. However, the world behaved in a way that it does not have to care about the *a priori* conditions that humans impose to make the world intelligible. Neils Bohr noted this very early in his debate with Einstein. He observed,

> [H]owever, a wholly new situation in physical science was created through the discovery of the universal quantum of action, which revealed an elementary feature of ((individuality)) of atomic processes far beyond the old doctrine of the limited divisibility of matter originally introduced as a foundation for a causal explanation of the specific properties of material substances. This novel feature is not only entirely foreign to the classical theories of mechanics and electromagnetism, but is even *irreconcilable with the very idea of causality*. ("On the Notion" 313; emphasis added)

Bohr may be off the mark in his suggestion that causality is not foreign to classical mechanics. However, his observation that the classical idea of causality is irreconcilable with the quantum mechanics has been validated experimentally. This vindicates that both Russell and Norton are correct in rejecting the *a priory* attribution of causality to the empirical world.

5. Nancy Cartwright and the Reality of Cause

Nancy Cartwright ("The Reality") offers a critique of the Russellian view on causation. In her account, causes are real but the laws of science are not. For Russell scientific laws are the core of physics. He argues that the laws of physics that are expressed as mathematical equations do not incorporate causes. They express functional relations. Cartwright accepts this view but asserts that the laws of physics are not real. She fortifies her claim by explaining the use of causes and laws in science. Causes are employed to explain a phenomenon. We cite the causes of a phenomenon to explain why it is so. Another way of explaining a phenomenon is to place it in a general theoretical framework. Modern science uses mathematical framework and the explanations employing it allow precise calculations about the phenomenon. Russell and Norton say that the role of scientific explanation is to do the second. Cartwright argues that one has to maintain a distinction between causal explanations or explanation employing

causes and theoretical explanations. The theoretical explanations refer to the laws of science that are expressed in a mathematical framework. Hence, one has to accept the truth of the laws to accept the explanation. This, as Cartwright observes, follows from the view that the ability of the laws to explain worldly phenomena is an indication of the truth of the law. Inference to best explanation model employs this method. When the law explains more diverse phenomena it is highly likely that the law is true. Else, the success of such explanations would be an absurd coincidence (Cartwright, "The Reality" 39). However, such an explanation has to satisfy what Cartwright calls the requirement of non-redundancy. The requirement of non-redundancy demands that there should not be any alternative explanation to a phenomenon other than the one offered by the particular law employed. If there is a different explanation than the one presented by the law is on offer, then our reasons for accepting the law by considering its explanatory capacity are weakened. Cartwright argues that higher level laws of science that are expressed in a mathematical framework face this challenge. This is the famous problem of under-determination. For instance, consider the Bohr atom model. The semi-quantum model of atom offered by Neils Bohr explained diverse phenomena. However, it failed to account for the fine spectra. Apart from that the phenomena that are explained using the semi quantum model of Bohr received better explanation from the quantum mechanical model of atom that preceded the Bohr atom model. Therefore, we cannot consider the Bohr atom-model, even when it was empirically successful, true.[6] Cartwright argues that unlike the theoretical explanations the causal explanations are true. A causal explanation does not face the problem of under-determination. In a causal explanation we explain an effect by citing its cause. The effects are in the world. And hence, they do not change with respect to the changes in the theory. For example, consider the Zeeman effect. Zeeman effect is the splitting of a spectral line of a particle in a magnetic field. The splitting of the spectral line is the effect and exposure of the spectral lines to a magnetic field is the cause. Both the cause and the effect remain the same even though the atom model we employ to explain it undergoes changes. Not only the effect but also the quantitative relations we derive from the effect remains the same. Cartwright, therefore, argues that the phenomenological laws like Charle's law or Boyel's law in thermodynamics and the quantitative relations they describe are true but the higher order laws or theories that explain the phenomenological laws are not (Cartwright, *How the Laws*, ch. 2 and 3). Consequently, for Cartwright, causes are real but the laws are not. The argument for the reality of causes can be summarized as follows. Causes, and consequently, causal explanation, remain stable even when theories change. They do not face a challenge from alternative explanations. On the contrary, higher order theories do change and they face the challenge of alternative explanations from competing theories. Apart from these, higher order theories or models refer to idealized scenarios, and entities that are not available in the world. For instance,

the Newtonian Mechanics refers to point-masses and fields devoid of the operation of all forces but gravitation. Neither a point-mass nor a field in which the only active force is gravitation is available in the world. Contrasting this with cause and effect, we get the impression that they are the only part of our explanation of the world that remains stable. Hence, Cartwright concludes that it is causes but not the laws that are real.

Cartwright's arguments give the impression that they challenge Russellian account of causation. However, this criticism can be parried in the following manner. The stability of cause and effect can be granted within the Russellian account. However, from the stability of the effects or that of the causes, one could not conclude the stability or reality of the principle of causation. Russell, and Norton can grant localized cause-effect relations. Following Norton, Adams Elgahas also argued that the localization of cause-effect relation by sufficiently isolating a phenomenon is central to causal analysis (110-113). However, what they reject is a principle of causation which is applicable to every field. In order to develop a principle of causation from the stability of cause and effect, one has to show that the same cause and effect are operating in all the scenarios. Russell has already shown the vulnerability of this characterization. The stability of effect and cause, which Cartwright appeals, is a localized phenomenon. But a general account of causation from this apparent stability has to satisfy the non-redundancy requirement, which Cartwright applies to theoretical explanations. This means, the principle of causality should be able to save itself from the varying results we get from the world. But, what we have seen is that the world behaves in a manner that violates the principle of causality. In other words, there are certain effects (a series of events) that are related in a way that the relation between them defies the principle of causality. However, without employing the principle of causality, science effectively explained such effects. The EPR case shows this point. The EPR thought-experiment and subsequent empirical tests demonstrated the violation of the locality assumption. However, one can save the locality assumption by considering a non-standard interpretation of Quantum Mechanics. But this does not accord well with the spirit of Cartwright's arguments. Because, according to her, reality of the effects is unquestionable. Consequently, the violation of locality assumption, which is proved as a stable experimental fact, is real. Therefore, saving the locality assumption by taking recourse to higher order theories will result in conferring metaphysical status to the locality assumption. This is because, according in Cartwright's view, the effects are real but the higher theories are not. Hence, saving a principle by appealing to higher order theories is not a viable option. Therefore, the stability of the violation of the locality assumption in the EPR scenario should prompt one to be suspicious of the locality assumption. In a nutshell, *a priori* constrictions on the content of science in the name of the principle of causality cannot be maintained if we attend to the stability of the effects. This suggests that Cartwright's objection to the Russellian account of causality is in fact not a serious challenge. It should also be

noted that neither Russell nor Norton claims that the laws of science are true. On the contrary they are willing to accept the changes in the sciences because the commitment they make in the analysis of causation is to consider the theories of successful science as the best account of the world. This does not suggest that the laws or theories they accept are in fact true. Interestingly, the Russellian analysis of causation accords well with that of Cartwright. The failure of the principle of causality to conform to the changes in the theoretical account of the world given by fundamental science is taken as the prime reason for rejecting the principle of causality. Cartwright employs similar strategies to reject the reality of laws. She points out that the higher order theories fail to conform to the effects we get from the world and that is one among the many important reasons for theoretical change. For example, the Bohr atom model failed to conform or account for the fine spectra, a stable effect we receive from the world. This suggests that the rejection of a principle of causality lies within the spirit of Cartwright's account of causation. Russellians can reject the principle of causality without committing to the literal truth of the higher order theories or laws of science. Only the failure to distinguish between the rejection of an *a priori* general principle of causality and the rejection of cause-effect relation in toto will prompt Cartwright's kind of criticisms. Therefore, the Russellian analysis of causality can withstand such criticisms.[7]

6. Naturalising Causality

Russell and Norton are thoroughly Humeans in accepting that causality is a matter of fact to be discovered from the world. This means that they accept the famous Hume's fork. However, their rejection of the universal principle of causality is not the traditional Humean argument. The new rejection of the principle of causality can be summarised as follows.

1. Causality is a matter of fact.

2. If causality is a matter of fact, then it should be recovered empirically.

3. If causality is to be recovered empirically, then it should be a part of the best description of the world available.

4. The best description of the world is provided by the available matured science.

5. The mature theories of science do not employ a principle of causality.

    a. If causal principle is true, then it should constrict the factual content of science.

    b. Causal principle does not constrict the factual content of science

6. Therefore, causality is a vacuous but useful honorific term. (Russell 1; Norton, "Causation as" 15)

The premise 3 and 4 are the weakest premises because they blatantly accept

science as the best description of the empirical world. Not only it accepts science but validates it by referring to the success of science. Consequently, some amount of pragmatic consideration is to be brought into account for the success of science. This finally will amount to circularity by referring back to science to validate science. Such circularity, as Quine has noted, may not be vicious. Given that "the Humenan predicament is the Human predicament" (Quine 72), a naturalised approach to causality will have to accept such a caveat. However, a thorough going empiricist has to live with such caveats in the account of causality.

7. Conclusion

Most of Russell's philosophical adventures have been pushed back to the history. The logicist's dreams of the *Principia* were shattered by Gödel's theorems. Though the employment of logic to address philosophical problems did inaugurate a new paradigm in the analytical philosophy, the referential theory of meaning developed in *On Denoting* did not survive the test of time. Logical atomism too has met a similar fate. However, even after a century, Russell's analysis of causality retains currency. Thorough going empiricists, who has a distaste for *a priori* constrictions to the empirical contents of science and hence the world, has to stay tuned with Russell in the matters of causality. Because, there Russell was right.

Notes

1. See Bunge (ch. 1) for an extensive discussion of the terms associated with causality. Bunge makes distinctions among cause, causation, and causality on both linguistic and philosophical grounds. Though such distinctions are extremely useful and important, they are not useful to this paper. In this paper I use 'causality' and 'the principle of causality' interchangeably. The main target of the paper is the principle of causality which is supposed to be applicable to each and every science.

2. In the Humean tradition events are the basic ontological category and causation is a relation between two events. On the contrary, the process ontology theories treat process as the basic unit of causation. In this account, one aims to distinguish between causal and non-causal process (Salmon, "An 'At-At'" and "Causality: Production"; Dowe, "Wesley Salmon's", *Physical Causation*, ch. 4 and "Causal Processes"). Russell's argument against the isolation of event seems to be applicable to the isolation of process. In a nutshell, Russell argues that the isolation of event is arbitrary. Same concern can be raised against the isolation of a process. For Salmon ("Causality: Production" 50) a process is that which is extended over time and space and an event is localized in space and time. In space-time graph, an event is a point and a process is a line. However, an event can look like a process and a process an event depending upon the time scale one chooses. I do not discuss this or other difficulties of the process theories of causation any further. Rather, I take it for granted that any theory of causation, irrespective of the ontological assumption, has to face Norton's dilemma. No theory so far has a satisfactory answer to this dilemma.

3. "Action at a distance is a concept which refers to the ability of one object to exert force on another without direct contact of the objects" (Villecco 48). In Newton's mechanics there is no mediator for gravitational force. Hence, gravitational attraction between two bodies acts without there being a contact or a medium to transmit the force between them. Also, irrespective of the distance between the objects, the gravitational force is supposed to act instantaneously. For example, the sun exerts gravitational attraction on the Earth in the absence of a medium between them. Also, there is no physical contact between the sun and earth. This means gravitational action is an instance of action at a distance. Newton himself was not very pleased with the action at a distance status of gravitation. He wrote "[*T*]*is inconceivable, that inanimate brute Matter, should (without ye mediation of something else which is not material), operate upon & affect other matter without mutual contact; as it must if gravitation in the sense of Epicurus, be essential & inherent in it.* And this is one reason why I desired you not to ascribe innate gravity to me. That gravity should be innate inherent & essential to matter so that one body may act upon another at a distance through a vacuum without the mediation of anything else & by & through which their action and force may be conveyed from one to another is to me such an absurdity that I believe no man who has in philosophical matters any competent faculty of thinking can ever fall into it. Gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to certain laws, but *whether this agent be material or immaterial is a question I left to ye consideration of my readers*" (qtd. in Ducheyne 682-83; emphasis in original).

4. The description of Physical theory presented here is an abridged version of the description provided by the physicist Leonard Susskind. For a detailed discussion, see Susskind and Hrabovsky (ch. 1) and Susskind and Friedman (ch. 1, 2 and 3). This discussion does not follow the standard text book description of physics. However, it aptly explains the logical differences between CM and QM. Susskind's information based approach to physics might

be contentious. However, the description of the differences between CM and QM seems to be a sufficient non-mathematical preliminary for understanding the philosophical import of the EPR thought experiment.

5. The uncertainty principle in its general form states that no canonically conjugate pair of physical quantities can be measured simultaneously with any arbitrary degree of accuracy. If ∂p and ∂x be the uncertainties in the simultaneous measurement of a pair of conjugate physical quantities respectively, then $\partial p.\partial x \geq h/4\pi$ (h is Plank's constant). In other words, the Uncertainty Principe states that no two non-commuting operators can have arbitrarily accurate values simultaneously. i.e., if A and B are two non-commuting operators then, $[A, B] = AB-BA \neq 0$. Position and momentum, time and energy are some of the non-commuting measurable and consequently, the corresponding operators are do not commute. This, in quantum mechanics (in the Copenhagen interpretation) means that, no two quantities corresponding to two non-commuting operators can have physical reality simultaneously. Therefore, quantities like position and momentum, energy and time cannot be measured simultaneously with arbitrary precession. This, in the then dominant interpretation of quantum mechanics by Neils Bohr, Heisenberg and others, means that the quantum mechanical description of physical system cannot have these physical realities simultaneously. What is presented here is a naïve description of Uncertainty principle and Copenhagen Interpretation of QM. For a detailed introduction, see Hilgevoord and Uffink; Faye.

6. I have not made the distinction among model, law and theory here. The example is employed to illustrate the point that higher order theories or models are not literally true even when they unify diverse phenomena by offering an explanation. With his atom model, in the trilogy Bohr explained various atomic phenomena like the line spectra, stability of the atom and derived the Rydberg constant (Bohr, "The Trilogy"; Darrigol). Later, Arnold Somerfield modified the Bohr atom model. This modified atom model was able to explain the Zeeman effect and Stark effect. Employing the Bohr-Somerfield model, Bohr was also able to predict the element with atomic no 72, Hafnium. However, the Bohr atom model is not a true account of the atom. Some of Bohr's contemporaries, while being positive about empirical success of the atom model, were doubtful about the conceptual foundation of the model. Paul Ehrenfest opined that the atom-model is "completely monstrous" but Einstein noted the atom-model as "one of the greatest discoveries" (qtd. in Rigden 237) for its empirical success.

7. Many other criticisms of Russell and consequently of Norton are available in the literature. Suppes (ch. 1) offers a probabilistic account of causality and attempts to save causation. However, Suppes' probabilistic causation doesn't state a principle of causality or explain what cause-effect relation is. It provides a framework to determine whether X is the cause of Y, given p, q and r. In doing so, we assume a cause effect relation. The attempt is to offer a formal account of the cause-effect relation employing the probability calculus. Alyssa Ney also offers a criticism of Russell (see Ney). Ney tries to defend the causal fundamentalism by arguing that facts about difference-making are dependent of obtaining facts about physical theories of causation. However, the argument fails to show that there is a universal principle of causation. At best, Ney shows that cause-effect relation can be seen as a difference-making effect on the world. However, this does not show that there is a principle of causation on operation. We still have to work with piecemeal accounts of causality. I have limited myself to the discussion of Cartwright because she seems to offer a direct criticism by offering a contrary position to that of Russell. Other criticisms too can be accommodated or answered in the way Cartwright was answered.

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Russell and Philosophy of Mind

Ananya Barua

Abstract:
The central aim of this paper is to discuss and debate the two perspectives of consciousness – the 'consciousness of' and the 'consciousness-in-itself', to explore in what ways we can bridge the gap or the chasm between the phenomenal content and the intentional content of the mind. The adherents of 'consciousness of' thesis of the mental content argue that mental states are always directional in nature and as such are representational. (Intentional and representational states of the mental are used interchangeably). No mental state can be directionless at any given time. They argue that the phenomenal properties of consciousness or the consciousness-in-itself are exhausted by their representational content. The prominent defenders of such a theory of mental content i.e. Strong Intentionalism are Tim Crane, Michael Tye, William Lycan, Fred Dretske, Gilbert Harman, Alex Byrne, John McDowell amongst others. Defenders of Strong Phenomenalism are: Frank Jackson, Thomas Nagel and others.

Keywords: Consciousness, Propositional Attitudes, Phenomenal and Intentional Content of Mind.

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1. Introduction

The concept of mental content is a combination of two terms, i.e. mind[1] is that which refers to a concept that specifies the mental in a particular state of belief, thinking, feeling, willing, etc. Content is that towards which the mental state is directed. Just as by the gestures of somebody we can make out whether the person is calling, hugging, or scolding somebody, similarly, by the articulation of mental states[2] we do represent the content in a particular way. Thinking or thought is a mental activity which allows us to make sense of the world, understand it, represent and interpret it in significant ways. Thinking or, thought involves the semantic or, symbolic interpretation of data as and when we form concepts, engage in problem solving, reasoning and making decisions, being emotionally affected, etc.

It is the attitude that makes any particular mental state to be distinctively individuated. The attitude here in this instance illustrates that a person may have different attitudes toward a particular situation. For example, a person may feel elated when he thinks of meeting his beloved at a particular place but the same place might disinterest him if his beloved was not present. Similarly, the same kind of attitude may be developed for different situations. For example, a mother maybe overjoyed when she knows that her daughter is getting married and the mother may be again overjoyed when she knows that she will soon become a grandmother. The attitude here is the same, i.e. of being overjoyed, though the situations are different. Thus, David Smith points out,

> Many analytic philosophers today (following Russell) take "propositions" to be made up of properties and sometimes individuals, so that a proposition is in effect a possible or putative "proposed" state of affairs. This terminology is unfortunate, for it ignores the distinction between content and object of an act of thinking. As often observed, the same object can be represented by different concepts: we can think of Socrates (under the concept) "the teacher of Plato" or as "the husband of Xanthippe". By the same token, the same state of affairs in the world can be represented or intended by different propositions in various acts of thinking: say, where I think "Socrates argued in the marketplace" and you think "the husband of Xanthippe argued in the marketplace." We should thus distinguish the proposition that serves as content and the state of affairs that serve as object of a propositional act or attitude. (258)

Russell extrapolates the significance of the mental representation or, thought by uniquely mentioning the following features:

1. The attitude towards the situation;
2. The attitude represented in the mental content.

This schema is called as "propositional attitudes" (Russell 21, 65), whereby Russell expresses the above in the following schematic manner:

> A Φ that p,
>
> Where A stands for a person who is in a mental state;
>
> Φ is a variable which can be replaced by the name of any attitude or, mental state (beliefs, hopes, wishes) and, that p refers to the proposition signifying the mental content.

To say that some mental acts or, attitudes such as belief, have propositional content is to say that it is directed toward a proposition and thus, has truth-value. For instance, believing that the sky is blue is simply directing my thought to the sky which is blue in colour and that the sky is blue in colour is a true statement. This is the way a lot of philosophers including Russell have understood the mental content. However, there are other mental acts or, attitudes such as pain which are not propositional in nature. They are not propositional because the state of pain, for example, cannot be assigned a truth value because it cannot be articulated in terms of any proposition. In other words, one cannot say whether the state of pain is true or, false. Thus the mental content may be understood in propositional terms when the mental state is directed to a situation, a fact, or, a state of affairs. But we can also think of mental state in non-propositional terms, as say when we think of states of emotion or, pain. Example, when my thought is directed towards the safe arrival of my son, my thought is directed not towards any particular situation or, attitude but represents a state of emotion – "concern" in the case. Now the emotion of concern cannot be assigned any truth-value and therefore, this emotion cannot be articulated in terms of any propositional framework. Thus, a mental content can also be understood in terms of non-propositional terms. What is common to both the contexts is that both the propositional and non-propositional mental contents are the ones to which the mind is directed to. It cannot be fully understood in terms of what is inside the mind. So, what we need is a more generalised account of mental content which includes both propositional as well as non-propositional mental content. The commonality between them lies in the fact towards which the mind is directed. It cannot be fully understood in terms of what is inside the mind. So, what we need is a more generalized account of mental content which includes both propositional as well as non-propositional mental content. Thus David Smith holds,

> As Husserl observed, in the wake of Brentano, conscious experience is paradigmatically intentional: as cognitive science puts it today, mind is representational. Some states of consciousness (like feeling dizzy) are not intentional, but most are. But while it is often assumed that intentional states are essentially propositional in form (like believing that such and such is the case), some intentional states (like seeing this dog) are nonpropositional, and so cannot consist in a proposition. (236)

2. Debate Between Internalism and Externalism

The debate between the internalism and externalism is crucial to the account of the mental content in the area of philosophy of mind. The fundamental battle line for these two accounts is regarding the nature of what constitutes the mental content. Is our mental content determined by the external environment or is its meaning constituted by the internal individualistic considerations? Response to this very question is what makes philosophers opposed to each other.

The internalists, on the one hand, hold that the mental states are non-relational in nature and thus, mental content is internally determined and individuated. They hold that the subjective approach locates the mind to be inside the head. Descartes and the post-Cartesians fall under the internalist banner. They hold that the mental states are determined by facts relating to the mental, considered in isolation from the environment, by facts about internal states themselves.

On the other hand, externalism holds that our mental state is determined in part by relation to the external physical world and is not completely dictated by what lies within the mind. The mind and the world are not mutually exclusive of each other. Rather there is an overlapping connection between our mental states and the physical world. Here, the content is individuated in terms of things external to the mind. Since mind and world are not two independent metaphysical categories, mental content cannot be determined wholly by what is going on inside our mind. Externalism emphasizes that the mind is not simply the raw brain or the functioning of nervous system alone. It is more than that. The environment of the subject plays an important role in the constitution of meaning in a subject's head. David Smith, thus, elaborating on the internalism and externalism divide points out,

> Internalism holds that the intentionality of a mental state is determined by content "in the head"(mind); Externalism holds that intentional content is determined not by what is "in the head" but by external condition of causal or social context. (166)

In this connection, Putnam's classic work, *Meaning of 'Meaning'* can be briefly mentioned. Putnam explores the fundamental question whether meaning is a private mental entity without any influence from the environment or it is a public entity which is determined by the external environment. Putnam has argued that, "'meanings' just ain't in the head!" (227). Putnam gives us a thought experiment where he builds up an imaginary twin earth where everything in the twin earth is identical to that of our earth. In both the earth and the twin earth, the substance which is referred to as "water" has all the apparent properties in common. The only difference is that the twin earth has no water (the way we perceive water as H_2O) in it; rather it has a

substance which is superficially similar to water but is made of more complex substance which Putnam calls XYZ. Now, Putnam questions, when the earthling and the twin earthling are asked about water, do they "mean" the same thing? Putnam holds that water for the earthling will be H_2O and for the twin earthling XYZ, though both of them are in the same internal mental states yet they both refer to two different things. Thus, unknown to them they both individually refer to two different substances when they think of water. So, for Putnam nothing in the head of the earthling or the twin earthling would tell us the difference, i.e. which distinguishes between these two different substances. It is only the environment that gives meaning to the term "water". Thus, we rely and depend on the world to assign meanings. Putnam, therefore, argues that the mental content is constituted by the external environment. Thus Putnam holds,

> You will not have described a possible world in which "water is XYZ," but merely a possible world in which there are lakes of XYZ, people drink XYZ (and not water), or whatever. In fact once we have discovered the nature of water, nothing counts as a possible world in which water doesn't have that nature. Once we have discovered that water (in the actual world) is H_2O, *nothing counts as a possible world in which water isn't H_2O.* (233)

It is understood that both the Earthling and the Twin Earthling are in the same psychological states when they think of "water." Each has the same mental picture when he thinks of water. The same water which the earthling refers to when he thinks of water is H_2O, and is XYZ for the Twin Earthling. This XYZ is the concept of water for the Twin Earthling as he has been taught. The only difference is the chemical composition of water in both the planets. Thus, both the Earthling and the Twin Earthling refer to the same water (as understood by them in their individual planets) when they use the word "water". When the Earthling forms a mental concept of water in his head, he thinks about "that which, lakes, rivers, and oceans are composed of, etc.", just as the Twin Earthling does. Thus, the mental content is not constituted by the environment alone. Meanings are constituted by the understanding and knowledge of the terms and their corresponding reference to the outside world. Thus, the theory that meanings are not in head, is not a tenable position.

3. Mental-Content: As Externalist

The "content" of the mind used in this paper is in the sense portrayed by the externalist group. Galen Strawson (*Mental Reality*), Dan Zahavi (*Subjectivity and Selfhood*) and few others are the torch bearers of mental content as external. The environment does play a role in individuating the thought content. The mind and the environment are not mutually exclusive. Whatever

constitutes our conscious mind is affected by the outside environment. The mind and the world are mutually entwined with each other.

In the domain of mental content, there has been an important distinction made of late. This is the distinction between phenomenal and intentional mental states. This distinction is the core of this paper where mental states are identified as phenomenal states, or, intentional states. The phenomenal mental states are understood as those mental states which are private, isolated, ineffable and unique to the experience of the subject himself. Example: the softness of a silk scarf, the hardness of an ice-cube, the smell of raw mangoes, etc. are unique to the subject alone. There is a particular way in which all these sensations are experienced by the subject. These experiences are private and unique to the subject alone. The intentional states, on the other hand refer to those states which are directed towards the external world. These states have an object-directional aspect in them. For instance, believing, hoping, desiring, thinking, remembering are always directional in nature, and hence they are also known as representational in nature. They are directional because to hope, believe, desire, think or, remember, these acts are always directed towards an external object, event, proposition or action and never to themselves.

The content of propositional attitudes is the proposition, towards which the attitudes are directed, i.e. what is believed, desired, hoped, expected and so on. It is still debated whether all intentional states are propositional attitudes, and so whether content maybe propositional. However, not all mental content, as it has been pointed out, is propositional in nature. There are also certain mental states which are non-intentional and as such non-representational in nature. These states are called the phenomenal states. Emotions such as nervousness, sensations such as pain, etc. are considered to be the paradigm examples. It is thus pointed out that many mental states fail to be propositional in nature. These states are not directed towards any object. There is no distinction between "feeling" and "what is felt." Such mental states are called phenomenal or qualitative states.

4. Role of Qualia

Currently a revolution is happening in the area of philosophy of mind where the physical and the neurological accounts of mind have been analysed. Mind has been understood and explained through functional terms. Its core idea is that mental states (beliefs, desires, being in pain, etc.) are constituted solely by their functional role, that is, their causal relations to other mental states, sensory inputs, and behavioural outputs. While functionalism has its advantages, there have been several arguments against it, claiming that it is an insufficient account of the mind. The account of the mental does not fall in this preview and it is more than this. Beyond the scientific, functional accounts of the mind, there is something which science has not yet been able

to explain. These mysterious parts of mental states occur only in a human mind which remains ineffable and incommunicable. In this context, the concept of qualia can be introduced. Dennett defines qualia as that which is "an unfamiliar term for something that could not be more familiar to each of us: the ways things seem to us" (381).

Dennett identifies four properties that are commonly ascribed to qualia (384-409). According to him, qualia are:

1. *Ineffable*: that is, they cannot be communicated, or apprehended by any other means than direct experience.

2. *Intrinsic*: that is, they are non-relational properties, which do not change depending on the experience's relation to other things.

3. *Private*: that is, all interpersonal comparisons of qualia are systematically impossible.

4. *Directly or immediately apprehensible in consciousness*: that is, to experience a quale is to know one experiences a quale, and to know all there is to know about that quale.

5. *Subjective*: The intrinsic, intuitive feature of qualia is marked by its subjective approach. It is very much an inward feel where it fails to be propositional, and, as such have a direction.

Lewis was the first to explain the term qualia in the following words:

> There are recognizable qualitative characters of the given, which may be repeated in different experiences, and are thus a sort of universals; I call these "qualia." But although such qualia are universals, in the sense of being recognized from one to another experience, they must be distinguished from the properties of objects. Confusion of these two is characteristic of many historical conceptions as well as of current essence-theories. The quale is directly intuited, given, and is not the subject of any possible error because it is purely subjective. (121)

Many mental states seem to be experienced subjectively in different ways by different individuals. And it is characteristic of a mental state that it has some experiential quality, e.g., of pain, that it hurts. However, the experience of pain in two individuals is never identical, since no one has a perfect way to measure how much something hurts or of describing exactly how it feels to hurt. Philosophers and scientists therefore ask where these experiences come from. The existence of cerebral events, or the scientific domain at large, cannot explain why they are accompanied by these corresponding qualitative experiences. The puzzle of why many cerebral processes occur with an accompanying experiential aspect in consciousness

seems impossible to explain. Therefore if functionalism is true either qualia will exist across all hardware or will not exist at all but is illusory. This problem of explaining introspective first-person aspects of mental states and consciousness in general in terms of third-person quantitative neuroscience is called the explanatory gap problem (Chalmers 47, 107). This problem of explanatory gap has tremendous impact on the mind-body problem. This gap is the lack of explanation for consciousness and human experience such as the qualia. In other words, the explanatory gap seeks to identify if any, the possible reasons or causes as to how and why one has the ineffable, intrinsic, and private experience at all.

5. The Way Out: Weak Intentionalism[3]

Let us now state the problem that this thesis is targeting at. Before we do so, let us have a look at the following passage:

> The greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind, maybe even all of philosophy, divides two perspectives on consciousness. The two perspectives differ on whether there is anything in the phenomenal character of conscious experience that goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive and the functional. A convenient terminological handle on the dispute is whether there are "qualia", or qualitative properties of conscious experience. Those who think that the phenomenal character of conscious experience goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive and the functional believe in qualias…. The recent focus of disagreement is whether the phenomenal character of experience is exhausted by such representational contents. (Block 165)

The central aim is to discuss and debate these two perspectives of consciousness. The two perspectives of consciousness are the consciousness of and the consciousness-in-itself. The aim of this paper is to explore in what ways we can bridge the gap or the chasm between the phenomenal content and the intentional content of the mind. The adherents of 'consciousness of' thesis of the mental content argue that mental states are always directional in nature and as such are representational. No mental state can be directionless at any given time. They argue that the phenomenal properties of consciousness or the consciousness-in-itself are exhausted by their representational content. The prominent defenders of such a theory of mental content i.e. Strong Intentionalism are Tim Crane (*Elements of Mind*), Michael Tye (*The Metaphysics of Mind),* Fred Dretske (*Seeing and Knowing*) amongst others. It is important, at this stage, to briefly characterize Strong Intentionalism and compare it with Phenomenalism on the one hand, and other forms of Intentionalism, on the other.

- **Strong Intentionalism:** The phenomenal character of any experience can be exhaustively characterized by reference to its intentional or

representational content. Such states as beliefs and desires are intrinsically intentional. Just as beliefs and desires represent states of affairs in the world, so can sentences, pictures, symbols and a host of other non-mental phenomena. Strong Intentionalism is divided into Strong Reductive Intentionalism and Strong Non-Reductive Intentionalism. Tye and Dretske have been the propounders, while Time Crane has been one of the important supporters of Strong Non-Reductive Intentionalism. The former reduces mental states to functional and informational terms whereas the latter, explains the nature of mental states including that of the phenomenal states such as pain and emotions like euphoria, or depression to be representational in nature without reducing them to any other state(s).

- **Strong Phenomenalism:** The adherents of 'consciousness-in-itself' theory of the mind hold that mental states are intrinsic and subjective in nature. Such a conscious mental content does not represent anything outside the mind. Thus the Phenomenalists hold that the phenomenal or intrinsic or subjective feature of consciousness is the most important feature of consciousness. Ned Block (*Consciousness, Function*), Frank Jackson ("Epiphenomenal Qualia") are some of the adherents of this theory.

- **Weak Intentionalism:** In between these two extreme positions, there are philosophers who favour for a milder position of the two above said theories. They are those who adhere to the Weak Intentionalist thesis. Prominent figures in this group are Galen Strawson, John Searle, Dan Zahavi and a host of other contemporary thinkers who have argued for this version of Intentionalism i.e. Weak Intentionalism. The adherents of this theory are of the opinion that the mental states are neither always intentional nor are they only phenomenal in nature.

What we think has a bearing on the world, and what the world provides us with has a bearing on our conscious mind. We are not isolated, independent entities without a concern about representing world nor can the world be immune to the entities that engulf it. This view of the relationship between the two kinds of content, intentional and phenomenal is known as Weak Intentionalism (Crane, "The Intentional" 41, 45-46). In this paper, I would like to argue for the theory of Weak Intentionalism. We, as subjective beings experience the objective world in a particular way. The mental representations that we have of the presented or the given world is unique to us. The way I feel while seeing the sunset is peculiar to me. However when I describe this feeling in propositional terms, the other too understands what I feel.

Searle states that there are forms of emotions such as elation which are undirected and non-intentional in nature,

> On my account only some, not all, mental states and events have Intentionality. Beliefs, fears, hopes, and desires are Intentional; but there are forms of nervousness, elation, and undirected anxiety that

> are not Intentional … my beliefs and desires must always be about something. But my nervousness and undirected anxiety need not in that way be about anything. Such states are characteristically accompanied by beliefs and desires, but undirected states are not identical with beliefs or desires. (97)

When someone is questioned as to what one's nervousness is directed at there cannot be any coherent answer to this question. It might be just one of those ineffable, intrinsic feelings of the person. However, Searle says that besides the non-intentional states like emotions such as nervousness, elation, etc. and sensations such as pain etc. there are also mental states which are directional in nature. States such as belief, hope, and desire are intentional in the sense of having a direction. For instance, if one is asked what is that you are hoping for, one can satisfactorily respond by saying that one is either hoping for a good harvest, a good academic career, or a good family or so on. Such mental states are directional and are representational in nature, and they are typical examples of intentional states.

- **Weak Anti-Intentionalism or Weak Phenomenalism:** A fourth logical possibility is the theory of Weak anti-Intentionalism. This theory holds that there are neither any conscious states which are directional in nature nor are there any states which are subjective in its nature. The problem of the mental content is only a myth. The advocates of this theory deny the existence of phenomenal content and the intentional contents of the mental. This theory can at the best, be said to be only a logical possibility.

By bridging the gap between the phenomenal and the intentional contents of the mental we hope to show that there is neither a purely subjective domain nor a purely objective domain of our conscious experience. Once embellished together the contents of the intentional mind and the phenomenal mind in a broader holistic framework, what we get is a new theory of the mental content.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the focus of this paper has been on the issue of consciousness and the relation between phenomenal and the intentional content. Upholding the distinction implies, on the one hand there are mental states which are self-contained without any relation to the world surrounding it, or even without any relation to the body it inhabits, on the other hand, mental states which are purely intentional and are individuated by their propositional, truth-evaluable content. If the qualitative aspects of our mind show a genuine form of intentionality, we cannot adhere to this bipartite account of mental content. The difficulty with making a distinction of this kind is that it leads to a kind of Cartesian dualism about mental content. What is interesting to note here is that the scope of this debate has not only

confined its wings to that of the traditional "mind" and "body" gap per se but it has opened up an array of re-consideration over the phenomenal and the intentional dichotomy. The challenge of this paper lies in showing in what possible ways these two so-called distinct kinds of mental content can be related. In other words, the problem remains a problem till the phenomenal and the intentional aspects of the mind are taken as mutually exclusive of each other. Once the distinction between the phenomenal and the intentional is made obscure what emerges is a clearer picture of the mind.

Notes

1. The root of the term mind is from the Latin root *menus* which itself is an evolved form of the Greek word *menos* or life-force. This further has a verbal form *menomai* i.e. 'to desire' or 'crave'. The word *menus* served as the earliest Latin translation of Greek word *nous* used by Homer, Plato and Aristotle. The word *menus* were also a translation for the Greek word *kardia* meaning heart, and of the Hebrew word *leb*, meaning heart or bosom.

2. It is important to state at the very introduction that throughout the work when we talk about mental states we refer to the conscious mental states alone and not the unconscious mental states.

3. For a detailed study regarding the nomenclatures like "Weak Intentionalism", "Weak anti-Intentionalism", and the like, see Smith and Jokic.

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A Russellian Account of Belief Ascriptions

Manidipa Sen

Abstract:

In this paper an attempt is made to understand the Russellian account of propositional attitude ascribing sentences, in particulars those sentences which involve belief ascriptions like, "Tom believes that Superman can fly". A Russellian account is opposed to that of the Fregean one because of the rejection of Frege's two-tier theory of meaning, which claims that propositions occurring within belief-ascribing sentences refer to their sense rather than their reference. Since Russell and the contemporary Russellians reject the distinction between sense and reference, their account of meaning with regard to belief ascribing sentences follow a distinct trajectory. The main aim of the paper is to bring out the debate between these two traditional accounts of meaning and further to make a case for the Russellian account of belief ascription by highlighting the general motivations for adhering to a Russellian account of meaning.

Keyword: Russellianism, Frege, Belief Ascription, Theory of Meaning, Proper Name.

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1. Introduction

The paper is an attempt to make a case for a Russellian account of propositional attitude ascribing sentences, in particular ascriptions involving the relational predicate *"Belief"*, as opposed to the Fregean ones. The use of the adjective "Russellian" (as well as the adjective "Fregean") is significant because I want to point out that it is not only Russell himself who provided us with an alternative to Frege's account of meaning and hence of meaning of terms occurring within a belief ascriptions, this debate continues in contemporary literature between broadly those philosophers who regard themselves to be following a Russellian line of argument and those others who follow the Fregean account. The Russellian interpretation of the meaning of terms, in particular that of proper names and definite descriptions within belief ascribing sentences, faces a whole host of semantic as well as logical difficulties emanating from the arguments given by Frege to distinguish between sense and reference of a proper name, and thus is considered by many philosophers to be either rejected or considerably modified. The main aim of the paper is to try and motivate a Russellian interpretation of belief ascribing sentences as against these arguments. In order to do that the paper is divided into three broad sections. After having cleared some preliminary grounds regarding Russell's and Frege's account of meaning in the first section, I move on to contrasting the Fregean and Russelian position in the second section. The final and main section discusses the three major arguments which motivate the Russellian position that the contribution made by proper names in a belief ascribing sentence like, "Tom believes that Cicero was a Roman orator" or "Lois believes that Superman can fly", is nothing more or less than its reference. If we admit of the Fregean position that in a belief context there is shift of meaning of a proper from its customary reference to its customary sense cannot do justice to the intuitions captured in the three arguments.

2. Preliminaries

Belief, along with a host of other psychological states, is called a "propositional attitude". Many of our psychological attitudes like, believing, doubting, wishing, wanting etc. can be regarded as relations holding between the subject having the attitude, and something else, usually regarded as a proposition, towards which the attitude is directed. So any sentence ascribing a propositional attitude can be said to have the following structure:

$$X \varnothing \text{s that p}$$

– where '∅' can be regarded as a variable to be replaced by a verb like "believes", "disbelieves", "wants", "wishes"', "hopes" etc., while "p" is replaced by a propositions. Thus when we say "Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio" (Russell, *The Philosophy* 57-8), Othello, the believer is related to the structured proposition "Desdemona loves Cassio" represented by the *that*-clause in the belief ascribing sentence.

One of the main questions that may be asked is: how must things stand to Othello in order for the report to be true. Or to put it more generally, what relationship should hold between the person who has the attitude and the object towards which the attitude is directed such that the utterance of the above form is true? There is a debate between the Russellian account of attitude attribution and the Fregean account of the same, which determines the course of the contemporary discussion on the semantics of propositional attitude ascribing sentences. I will, in this paper, try to emphasize on the Russellian account of attitude attribution, which is derived from Russell's account of reference of singular terms.

So, according to the way of understanding sentences of this kind advocated here, it becomes evident that "to believe", along with other propositional attitude verbs, is a dyadic relational predicate, the first term of the relation being an individual referred to by the name replacing "X", while the second term is a proposition designated by a complex "that"-clause. For both Frege and Russell the "that"-clause designating a proposition is actually a singular term albeit a complex singular term whose reference is determined by the reference of it constituents.[1] However, the difference between Frege and Russell in trying to explain what constitutes the reference of a "that"-clause is pivotal in order to understand the Russellian position. The core of this difference lies in the difference in their understanding of belief ascriptions, which is captured in the correspondence between the two philosophers.

Frege writes to Russell in 1904:

> Dear Colleague,
> Mont Blanc with its snowfields is not itself a component part of thought that Mont Blanc is more than 4,000 meters high…. The sense of the word 'moon' is a component part of the thought that the moon is smaller than the earth. The moon itself (the denotation of the word 'moon') is not part of the sense of the word 'moon'; for then it would also be a component part of the thought. We can nevertheless say: 'The moon is identical with the heavenly body closest to the earth'. What is identical, however, is not a component part but the denotation of the expression 'the moon' and 'heavenly body closest to the earth'…. The identity is not an identity of sense, or a part of the sense, but of denotation…. (*Philosophical and* 163)

In reply Russell writes:

> Dear Colleague,
> Concerning sense and denotation, I see nothing but difficulties which I cannot overcome…I believe…Mont Blanc itself is a component part of what is actually asserted in the proposition 'Mont Blanc is more than 4,000 meters high' … we assert … a certain complex (an objective proposition, one might say) in which Mont Blanc is itself a component part. If we do not admit this, then we get the conclusion that we know

> nothing at all about Mont Blanc…. In the case of a simple proper name like 'Socrates', I cannot distinguish between sense and denotation…. (Frege, *Philosophical and* 169)

The contrasting thoughts that are expressed by Frege and Russell about what a proposition is in the above correspondence, bring out the modern dispute between Fregeans and Russellians in analyzing the content of propositional attitude ascribing sentences like, "Ralph believes that Cicero was a Roman orator". Keeping these two quotes in view we can now try to understand the difference in the position held by Frege and Russell in an account of attitude attribution.

3. Contrasting Frege and Russell

We are aware of the broad distinction between Frege and Russell regarding the meaning of proper names and definite descriptions. Frege upholds a two-tier theory of meaning according to which the meaning of a proper name cannot be exhausted by its reference alone. His famous example of informative identity statement "The morning star is the evening star" ("Sense and" 210) is precisely to show that these two expressions, though have the same reference, convey two different senses. That is precisely the reason why the identity statement "the morning star is the morning star" is a mere tautology, while "the morning star is the evening star" is not. We also know Frege strengthened the distinction between sense and reference by further showing why we need to accept a shift in reference in the belief ascribing contexts.[2] According to him, if the meaning of a proper name is determined by its reference alone, then there should not be any cognitive difference between the two sentences "Tom believes that the morning star is Venus" and "Tom believes that the evening star is Venus". However, if Tom was not aware of the truth of identity statement "The morning star is the evening star", he may truly believe that the morning star is Venus while the evening star is not. Thus, Frege says about cases of these kinds, where cognitive value sentence is not determined by truth value of a sentence, "[I]t is not possible to replace one expression in the subordinate clause by another having the same customary reference, but only by one having the same indirect reference, i.e. the same customary sense" ("On Sense" 67).

In opposition to this position Russell and the contemporary Russellians hold that the contribution of a proper name in a sentence is nothing more or less than what the name refers to (see Richard; Salmon). This is the case even where the name is embedded in a propositional attitude ascribing context. Therefore, "Cicero" refers to the individual not only in the sentence "Cicero is a Roman orator", it does so even when the name occurs in the propositional attitude ascribing sentence "Ralf believes that Cicero is a Roman orator."

Thus Russellian account can be regarded as involving the following views regarding the nature and function of propositions, names and predicates:

(a) According to the Russellians,[3] propositions are to be taken as structured entities composed of the individual referred to by the subject term of the sentence and the property or relation referred to by the predicate, So the sentence "Fido is a dog" expresses a structured proposition, whose structure can be presented as the ordered pair <Fido, doghood>. As Nathan Salmon, a contemporary Russellian, points out:

> [T]he proposition that is the information content of a declarative sentence … is structured in a certain way, and that its structure and constituents mirror, and in some way readable from, the structure and constituents of the sentence containing that proposition. (215-16)

(b) Accepting the view expressed by Russell in reply to Frege, the contemporary Russellians hold that the content of an ordinary proper name, like "Mont Blanc", "Fido", "Cicero" etc., is simply its reference. They take a similar view regarding the content of demonstratives and indexicals. Again we may quote from Salmon:

> [T]he contribution made by an ordinary proper name or other simple singular term to securing the information content of, or the proposition expressed by, declarative sentences … in which the term occurs … is just the referent of the term, or the bearer of the name … the information value of an ordinary proper name is just its referent. (216)

(c) Russellians assign contents to other expressions in a similar way to that of proper names, so that predicates are said to refer to properties or relations.

(d) They thus take propositional attitude ascribing verbs, like, "believes" to be a relation between an individual and a proposition having the characteristics stated above.

Now, what are the philosophical implications in accepting the above characteristics of propositions? – One seems to be evident. If someone accepts (a) and (b) – that is, a proposition is a structured entity and the content of a proper name is simply its referent – then it leads him to accept further that the replacement of a name by a co-referential name in a sentence doesn't affect the proposition expressed by the sentence. Therefore, if one of the sentences is true so is the other. From this it immediately follows that the content of the two names, say "George Orwell" and "Eric Blair", is the same, because their content is exhausted by their referent and both the names actually refer to the same individual. If the proposition expressed by the sentence:

1. George Orwell wrote *Animal Farm*

– is structured out of the referents of the constituent expressions (so that it has the structure <George Orwell, being the author of *Animal Farm*>) then the proposition expressed by the sentence:

2. Eric Blair wrote *Animal Farm*

– is the same as the one expressed by 1.

The Russellians extend this view about propositions and function of a proper name in a proposition to sentences ascribing beliefs as well. According to them the contents of beliefs formulatable using ordinary proper names, demonstratives, indexicals and other simple singular terms are singular structured propositions directly about some individual who occurs as a constituent of the proposition. Given the way in which Russellians take proper names to occur in belief ascriptions and that the 'that'-clauses are two structured names of one and the same proposition, they have to admit that the two following sentences:

3. Tom believes that George Orwell wrote *Animal Farm*

4. Tom believes that Eric Blair wrote *Animal Farm*

– cannot differ in truth value. So substitution of one name by another co-referential name would preserve truth even in a belief context.

This, in stark contrast, was rejected by Frege. In case Tom is ignorant of the identity statement "George Orwell is Eric Blair" (which, as we have mentioned earlier is a properly informative identity statement and thus a contingent one), he will assent to (1) and dissent from (2). In that case it will be, according to Frege, true to report Tom's belief with the use of 3 while false to do so with the use of 4. That is why these propositional attitude ascribing contexts are called "opaque contexts" in the first place. Thus, from a Fregean point of view it is absurd to adhere to a Russellian analysis of belief ascriptions. This makes it essential for us to understand why philosophers have opted for a Russellian account in the first place, given the intuitive appeal that the Fregean account has.

4. Motivations for Russellianism

There are various reasons that have prompted philosophers to embrace some form of Russellianism. We may point out three main reasons here. The justification for Russellianism come from the role that propositions are said to play in contexts other than the propositional attitude ascribing ones, the way we usually ascribe attitudes and how in certain contexts propositional attitude attributions are taken to be *de re*.

a) The Role of Propositions Outside Belief Ascriptions:

As has been pointed out, singular propositions composed of individuals and properties of individuals are regarded as the objects of propositional attitude ascriptions. Apart from having an important role as objects of propositional attitudes, propositions are taken to be the bearers of truth and falsity, as well as necessity and possibility. In the propositional attitude ascribing contexts it can be argued that the best way of understanding the role of propositions in these contexts is by way of taking the content of proper names, demonstratives and indexicals to be simply referring to an object or an individual so that the co-

referential names make exactly the same contribution to a proposition (Richard 112-14).[4] Let us take an example to make this point clear.

In an utterance of the sentence:

5. He (pointing to Tom) is happy.

The content of "he" is the individual Tom, and the reference of the pronoun would change according to the context of the use of 5. So the use of the sentence "he is happy" is true in a particular context C *iff* the individual picked out by the use of "he" is happy in that context C. Hence for 5 to be true in a particular context it is necessary and sufficient that the person referred to by "he" in that context is happy. Therefore, "If the contribution of 'he' to the proposition is simply something that determines a reference in the way mentioned above, then the content of 'he', and other such terms, seem to be nothing more or less than the individual named…" (Richard 113). This way of understanding the working of proper names and demonstratives helps in our understanding of modal sentences involving necessity and possibility. Suppose someone utters the sentence:

6. It is possible that Tom is happy.

This sentence is true iff the proposition expressed by the embedded sentence "Tom is happy" is possibly true. And hence any sentence of the general form "It is possible that S" is true iff the proposition expressed by 'S' is possibly true. Now consider a sentence similar to 6,

7. There is someone who is not happy but could have been happy.

A natural partial symbolization of 7 is –

8. ($\exists$x) (x is not happy & it is possible that x is happy).

Now this sentence can be regarded as true when there is an individual such that 'it is possible that x is happy' is true when the variable x is assigned the individual 'I' as its value. This way of understanding quantified sentences like 8 seems to commit us to a Russellian proposition. If an open sentence 'x is happy' expresses a proposition only when the variable x is assigned an individual as its value, nothing more is added to express such a proposition. Thus this kind of quantification into modal contexts provides us with an important ground for positing Russellian propositions. It gives us a prima facie reason for supposing that the content, and thus meaning of proper names and other similar expressions in our language is nothing more than their reference.

Having noted this let us consider belief reports like the following:

9. There is someone who isn't happy, he could have been happy and Lucie believes that he is happy.

A plausible way of symbolizing 9 would be –

10. ($\exists$x) (x is not happy & it is possible that x is happy & Lucie believes that x is happy).

If we think following the above argument that a Russellian proposition is assigned in case of "It is possible that x is happy", then we have to assign the same Russellian proposition to "Lucie believes that x is happy". As Richard points out, if the two 'that'-clauses were to refer to two different propositions, as the Fregean account suggests, then it would have been impossible to explain why 9 seems to correctly imply that the variable x can take the same value across 9 (115).[5]

So what follows from this discussion is that the proposition that Hesperus is rising just is the proposition that we get by replacing "x" in the open sentence "x is rising". Now, the Russelians contend that the same is true in case "x" is replaced by the name "Phosphorus". The same Russellian proposition occurs in the context of belief ascriptions like, "David believes that Hesperus is rising".

b) Considering the Ways Beliefs are Ascribed:

One very important consideration that leads philosophers to take Russellianism seriously comes from considering the general way in which we ascribe a belief to someone. Very often we are indifferent to what indexical, demonstrative, or proper name we use in reporting a belief, so long as the reference is preserved. This kind of indifference, it should be noted, is essential in some contexts. In the case of belief reports it is not merely the believer or the reporter who are important, the hearer – the person to whom the report is conveyed – is important as well. For the success of communication between the reporter and the hearer in a context which is sensitive to this factor, what we require, at the most, is to get the reference right. As Richard remarks,

> [I]f I point at Twain and say 'He's happy', any of the following seem correct report of what I say: MR said that Twain is happy, MR said that Clemens is happy, MR said that you (we are addressing Twain) are happy, MR said that I am happy (twain is speaking). This certainly suggests that the terms are making exactly the same contribution to the proposition determined by the embedded sentences. (116-7)

We can show with the help of an example that the truth-intuitions which lead Frege to conclude that "X believes that a is F" may be true while "X believes that b is F" may turn out to be false even when 'a' and 'b' are co-referential terms, are false. This follows, according to the Russellians like Richard, from the way in which we reason about attitude attributions (Richard 118-9). Let us take Richard's example to understand this point.

Suppose a person A is talking to B through the telephone. She also sees a woman across the street in a phone booth and a steamroller that is about to crash that booth. A does not realize that the person with whom she is talking is the very same person, that is B, who is in danger. She reports the whole incident to B by saying:

11. I believe that she is danger.

But surely A does not say:

12. I believe that you are in danger.

Given the Fregean intuition about attitude ascriptions, it would seem that while 11 is true, 12 isn't. However, Richard argues that 11 and 12 in the described context are both true and that follows from the way beliefs are ascribed and one belief ascription is inferred from other belief ascriptions. Let us elaborate on this following Richard. Suppose B, while talking to A, could see A's panicked behavior and says on the phone:

13. The person watching me believes that I am in danger.

Since 11 is true so is 13. Since B's utterance of 13 heard by A through the telephone is true, A would speak truly if he were to utter the following sentence to B through the phone:

14. The person watching you believes that you are in danger.

But then 12, that is 'I believe that you are in danger' follows from 14 and the further premise:

15. I am the person watching you.

As 14 and 15 are true in this context so will be 12. Therefore Richard concludes,

> The upshot of all this is that there is support in the way we talk and reason about attitudes for the Russellian's claim that substitution of one name of a thing for another in a sentence doesn't change the proposition the sentence determines. The objection … should not by itself move one to reject Russellianism, for we seem to be committed to certain patterns of reasoning that belie this objection. (118-9)

c) Considering *De Re* Attribution of Beliefs:

Another reason which has prompted philosophers that singular terms are used referentially in propositional attitude ascriptions is the possibility of *de re* propositional attitude attributions. A *de re* attribution of belief can be expressed thus:

16. About Mary Tom believes that she is happy, or

17. Tom believes of Mary that she is happy.

A quasi formal symbolization of these two sentences is:

18. (∃x) (x is Mary & Tom believes that x is happy).

Now the argument that follows is an argument by analogy, an analogy between individual constants and individual variables. It proceeds by showing that individual constants play a very similar role as individual variables and pronouns in propositional attitude ascribing contexts, differing only in their constancy.

The most important contribution of a *de re* attribution is that it does not and need not specify how Tom conceives of Mary, that is, the believer conceives of the object of belief, in believing her to be happy. One might say that this lack of specificity results from the fact that the name "Mary" occurs outside of the

scope of the opaque context created by the "believes that" operator, where it is open to substitution and existential generalization. Though this fact that Fregeans refer to is true, there is another fact that they ignore and which needs highlighting here. It is the role that the last bound occurrence of the variable "x" plays in sentence 18 and the occurrence of "she" in 17. Now about these two occurrences Salmon points out, "the fundamental semantic characteristic of a variable with an assigned value, or a proposition with a particular referent, is precisely that its information value is just its referent" (224). The content of "x is happy" and "she is happy" under the relevant assignment of the referent can only be the singular proposition about Mary that she is happy. If this is true of variables and pronouns, then it is true of the individual constants, in particular the proper name "Mary", at least in case where a *de re* attribution takes place. In *de re* attribution the contribution of a proper name to the content of belief report is just its referent.

There is another way in which the similarity between a proper name and a variable is brought out by Salmon in the following few lines,

> All of us are accustomed to using special variables or pronouns that have a restricted domain over which they range. In ordinary English, the pronoun 'he' often ranges only over males, and the pronoun 'she' only over females…. The domain over which a variable ranges … can be quite small…. Could there be variables whose range is a unit set? Of course there could be. (224-5)

Now this kind of unique variables restricted to a single object can be called "invariable variables". And proper names and demonstratives can be seen as invariable variables.

These three then are considerations that lead philosophers to adhere to Russellianism in attitude ascription, in particular of singular propositions. In such cases substitution of co-referential names in belief-reports will preserve truth. Therefore in providing a semantics of such belief reports, we specify singular propositions, consisting of objects and properties the beliefs are about. As substitution of co-referential names does not make any difference to the relevant sentences, we do not require any complicated device to account for the failure of substitution.

5. Conclusion

The above are the reasons that prompt Russellians to argue for their position that there is uniformity in the way proper names function in non-opaque as well opaque contexts. Bertrand Russell, in the beginning of his essay "On Propositions: What they are and How they Mean" says, "A proposition may be defined as: What we believe when we believe truly or falsely" (1). Among the many uses that the notion of proposition is traditionally taken to have, Russell's definition brings out one of the most important ones. He further goes on to saying, "In order to arrive, from the definition at an account of what proposition

is, we must decide what belief is…" (1). The last and the final motivation that we discussed in the above section and which exploits the idea of *de re* attribution of beliefs, also hints at what is the nature of the relationship between the belief and that which the belief is about. As Woodfield, in the very forward to his well-known edited volume in this area entitled *Thought and Object* points out, *de re* beliefs have two features: (i) They are about objects; and (ii) They are tied to these objects constitutively. It seems that a Russellian account of belief ascriptions on the basis of the nature of singular propositions would be able to deal with these two features of beliefs in a better manner than that of a Fregean account, and thus will be a better account of *de re* beliefs.[6]

Notes

1. The "that"-clause may, in this respect be considered on a par with complex singular terms like definite descriptions, like "the present prime minister of India", whose reference is determined by the references of the constituent expressions in the definite description.

2. These kinds of contexts have been called "opaque context" by philosophers in order to bring out the difference between the truth-conditions of a simple declarative sentence and a belief ascribing sentence within which such a declarative sentence may get embedded.

3. For a clear exposition of the contemporary Russellian account of propositional attitude ascribing sentences, see Richard 108-28.

4. It is also a consequence of Kripke's argument that proper names are rigid designators, see Kripke.

5. Consider the sentence: Tom believes that Paul is happy and he surely is. As Segal points out, one of the most plausible ways to understand sentences of this kind is to take the content of "Paul" and "he" to be the same – and the sameness lies in their having the same referent (79). The same may be said about ascriptions like: Everyone who knows Wittgenstein believes that he is a genius.

6. For a detail discussion on *De Re* beliefs, see Sen.

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Facts and Field(s) of Sense
Bertrand Russell and Markus Gabriel

Pooja Choudhury

Abstract:

In the domain of philosophy, *facts* have played a major role in various philosophical discussions. A significant point related to the notion of *facts* in general is that when copied in language, the statement(s) can correspond to facts and as a result make the statement or the proposition true (or false) depending upon whether the statement corresponds. In the Analytic tradition, Bertrand Russell, started his philosophical quest with a view of linguistic analysis, wherein he considered that language could capture all facts there are. However, in a different fashion, another recent contemporary German philosopher named Markus Gabriel, set out to establish a New Realistic trend which comes quite closer to the contextualist framework (not bearing any connections to the correspondence theory) and had a very different take on the notion of facts. In this paper, I shall deal with two philosophers belonging to two different trends and time periods, namely, Bertrand Russell, a 20th century Analytic philosopher and Markus Gabriel, a contemporary philosopher belonging to New Realistic trend. I will attempt to elaborate in both their takes on the notion of *facts* and try to see which take can be considered to be more favourable.

Keywords: Facts, Ontology, Correspondence, Logical Atomism, Propositional Function, Realism, New Realism, Field(s) of Sense.

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Amidst the discussion and debates that cropped up in the purview of *ontology*, the notion of facts is considered to be one of the vital points of interest for many analytic philosophers. In Analytic philosophical trend for instance linguistic analysis was emphasized wherein language in relation to the world was given primacy. To give the proposition the designation of truth or falsity, correspondence with facts was taken into account. To start the discussion of facts I would at first give a holistic analysis of facts as put forth by Bertrand Russell in his lectures on *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* in Gordon Square, London. After that I would proceed over to Markus Gabriel's theory of *field(s) of sense* and see his take over the notion of facts after discussing his theory of *field(s) of sense*. Further I would compare the two theories and in the process try to analyze which theory has a better take on facts.

1.   Russell's Theory of Logical Atomism
Russell mainly focused on analysis of language to the last residue. The main reason why Russell focused on linguistic analysis was to get rid of the ambiguities of ordinary language. From the ontological standpoint, by his theory of logical atomism, Russell wanted to establish that "[T]here are many separate things" (*The Philosophy* 36). Another reason as to why his doctrine is called logical atomism is because in his analysis of language he would solely focus on logical analysis and thus he would arrive at logical atoms as the last residue. It is from this analysis that he wanted to move forward to removing all the obscurities involved in language. His theory was one of *reference* rather than *sense*. Thus, his reliance was solely upon the theory of truth by means of *correspondence*.

According to Russell, facts are not subjective but rather they are objective. This is because Russell considers this world to consist of many entities which are independent and discrete and which forms fact by coming together. The entities in the world are simple but facts are complex and are dependent on the simple entities. Sole emphasis on objectivity rules out the notion of sense from the picture. Parallel to those objective facts, runs language. Russell claimed that facts have *logical forms*. In Russell's *Logical Atomism*, there are two realms; the realm of world and the realm of language. The facts are part of the world. These facts have logical forms which differ depending upon the type of fact it is. That is facts may be atomic if solely one relatum is involved or it may again be dyadic or triadic if two or three relata are respectively involved and so on. These facts have logical forms which are then isomorphised in language. Russell's analysis of the world can be considered to be *logical* because these facts possess the logical forms which are then referred to by means of language. The language of facts which Russell called propositions may be either true or false. This is because, propositions may either correspond to the logical form of facts or they may not correspond. Correspondence gives us a true proposition. Likewise, non-correspondence gives us a false proposition. Thus, facts have the ability to make a proposition true or false. To exemplify, the truth or falsity of my statement that "I have an umbrella

in my room", will depend upon whether I really have an umbrella in my room or not. If I have an umbrella the statement will be true otherwise the statement would be false. However, fact is a kind of relation and not a mere singular word. When I say "umbrella", that term itself is not a fact of any kind. But, facts need to come together with a relation or a certain kind of property. Thus, the example stated above shows a kind of relation between "umbrella" and "my room". Again propositions like, "My umbrella is red in color" will also be a fact if my umbrella is really red in color. The propositions which represent the facts are complex. It is because Russell asserts that a proposition is constituted of symbols. That is, a proposition maybe bifurcated into parts which are themselves symbols.

He further goes into the discussion of various types of facts which I shall restrain from discussing here, as that is not the part of this paper which I am proposing. However, the significant point to be noted from the discussion so far would be that by his *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Russell wanted to establish that the world can be divided into facts each of which portrays a relation or a property.

From the theory of Logical Atomism as mentioned above, it can be seen that Russell attempted to make his ontology a very restricted one solely contained by facts. Throughout his philosophical endeavor, he tried to rely at the principle of *Occam's razor*, and tried to limit language based on the facts outside and also by means of linguistic analysis. His view on the notion of existence is thus quite different from other philosophers. To explain the concept of existence in his philosophy, it is necessary to state the notion of *Propositional Function*. According to Russell, "A propositional function is simply any expression containing an undetermined constituent, or several undetermined constituents, and becoming a proposition as soon as the undetermined constituents are determined" (*The Philosophy* 96). The values which fill up the variables of the propositional function make the function a proposition. The proposition can be given the value of truth or falsity. However, the propositional function according to him comes under *modality*. That is a propositional function may be necessary, possible or impossible. This is a significant distinction between propositions and propositional function; that is, a proposition can only be either true or false, whereas propositional functions can be necessary, possible or impossible:

> If you take "x is x", that is a propositional function which is true whatever "x" may be, i.e. a necessary propositional function. If you take "x is a man", that is a possible one. If you take "x is a unicorn", that is an impossible one. (*The Philosophy* 65)

The possibility of a propositional function implies the notion of existence. Thus, Russell considers existence "[E]ssentially a property of propositional function" (*The Philosophy* 98). Hence, when the variables of propositional functions which are undetermined are replaced by a constituent it becomes true or false depending upon the objectivity of the outside world. The determined variables of the propositional functions give it the status of propositions. The propositional

functions are the logical structure which when given variables becomes propositions. There are many ambiguities hidden in ordinary language which Russell tried to remove by means of logical analysis. I will here deal with one such ambiguity that occurs in case of a non-existent Definite Description. Descriptions which do not denote of course are false since Russell is a referentialist. However, when it occurs in the form of description, it seems that some descriptions which do not exist are meaningful. One particular example of it given by Russell in his "On Denoting" would be "The present King of France is bald" ("On Denoting" 490). This statement seems to refer, however there is no referent to this statement as there is no monarchy in France. It seems to refer because the property of being bald is attributed to "The present King of France" and gives it the form of subject-predicate sentences. The form of this proposition makes it definite when in fact it does not refer to any individual. Because of the definite article *the,* it seems that there is exactly one person who is the Present King of France, but this is not the case. From the outset, Russell's intention was to construct a formal language or an ideal language which gives no space to ambiguity and confusion which we face in case of ordinary language. But analyzing it in terms of propositional function solves the problem of such descriptions. The statement can be put into a logical structure as:

$$(\exists x) ((Kx \,\& \vee y) (Ky > (x = y)) \,\& Bx)$$

This can be read as: There is an x such that x is K (King of France) and if for all y if y is K (that is if y is the King of France) that implies that x is identical with y and x is bald.

Again, the statement can also be analyzed into three statements which will be equivalent to the given definite description. It can be analyzed as:

1. There is at least one x who is the Present King of France.
2. There is at most one x who is the Present King of France.
3. Whoever is the Present King of France is bald.

Here it can be seen that as soon as the description is analyzed, the subject of the description "the Present King of France" which does not denote anything is no more there. "In the true analysis of the proposition, the description is broken up and disappears" (Russell, *The Philosophy* 85). So, analyses of descriptions into propositional functions helps get rid of such kind of problems. This is one among the many problems solved by Russell which appear in ordinary language. I will not go into further details of Russell's solutions to various problems of our ordinary language. However, one thing that needs notice here is that Russell depends on analysis of language and in order to remove any sort of obscurity of ordinary language he depended on logical construction of an ideal language free from all ambiguities.

However, Russell paid less attention to our thoughts or beliefs of something. This is because he belonged to the trend of *Realism*. The trend of *Realism* emphasizes independent existence of things outside our mind. Thus, objectivity is being emphasized here more than the subjective thoughts of the knowing mind. The truth factor which Russell wanted to bestow was a *word to world* relation based truth. Russell emphasized on this traditional form of realism and thus set up an isomorphic relation between the word and the world. However, under such restricted ontological commitments many things are lost especially human subjectivity and along with it the thoughts of the human mind which seem so real despite their objective non-existence. I am going to discuss a very unique trend which was coined to be *New Realism* and which paved the path to both sense and reference and expanded the inclusivity of objects in our ontology.

2. Gabriel's New Realism

In his books *Why the World Does Not Exist* and *Fields of Sense: A New Realist Ontology*, Markus Gabriel gave an elaborate description of the New Realistic trend and by it established why according to this trend the world cannot and does not exist. I will not enter into his non-existence of the world thesis in this paper since it is not relevant. However, I will elaborately deal with the New Realistic trend which he emphasized and also his theory of the *field(s) of sense* which I see as an alternative to facts.

The New Realistic trend is not like the traditional trend of Realism wherein more emphasis was laid on objective existence of things outside the knowing mind. The motive behind this which can be inferred here would be that Gabriel did not want to set up any kind of realistic or idealistic camps but rather this trend of his seems to be the merging point of both. One pivotal point to be noted here is that while accepting this new trend, emphasis was laid to the subjectivity or the perspectives of human being without undermining the objectivity. I would proceed by first explaining this trend by means of an illustration.

Suppose that there is a room full of many people in a conference hall. The setting of the people sitting in that room is such that there is a round table in that room and the people attending the conference are sitting scattered around it. Again, suppose that there is a vase full of flowers in the middle of the table. Now the perception of the vase would be such that it would be different from different angles. Thus x will see more roses since the roses are facing x more. Again, y from the other end will see more lilies since s/he is facing the lilies more. And it might so happen that z cannot see the roses at all. Since, from his/her perspective the roses are perfectly concealed. Thus, if x for instance went on praising the beautiful roses s/he saw after the conference, z will rather question his/her thoughts. From the given example, two things can be considered to exist from the New Realist standpoint. They are:

- The objective existence of the vase filled with several beautiful flowers.

- Secondly, the different perspectives of the vase from different angles of the conference room.

Thus, here, not only the objective existence of the vase is taken into account, but also the perspectives of people. According to Gabriel,

> New Realism assumes that thoughts about facts exist with the same right as the facts at which our thoughts are directed. Thoughts about facts are just more facts. There is no reason to disdain thought, mind, consciousness, or human existence in general on the basis of the notion that the world would be exactly the way it is regardless of our presence in it. (*Why the World* 7-8)

Under this trend of New Realism, he gave his theory of the *field(s) of sense*.

Gabriel introduced the notion of the *field(s) of sense* to explain his notion of existence. *Field(s) of sense* are places wherein something appears. And the appearance of objects in the field gives such objects the status of existence. The equation of existence and *field(s) of sense* in Gabriel's philosophy is:

Existence = appearing in a field of sense. (*Why the World* 65)

If then, what appears in a field exists, then it is significant to see what he meant by the term *appear*. While discussing his *field(s) of sense* theory in his book *Why the World Does Not exist* Gabriel made a distinction between *appearance* and *occurrence* wherein the pivotal point of distinction was the abstract and concrete nature of existence. For Gabriel, appearance includes not only something as concrete as say a pen, but also something as abstract as say a ghost (imagination or belief). On the contrary, occurrence cannot include such entities. Since, Gabriel, endorses appearance as against occurrence, it can be implied that his ontology accepts much more entities and not just concrete entities.

In the *field(s) of sense* theory, one term which needs much emphasis, is the term *sense*. The term *sense* has much significance in philosophy for many years. Bertrand Russell gave least importance to this term. However, Gottlob Frege gave much value to the notion of *sense*. In his very influential paper, "Sense and Reference", Frege elaborated the term *sense* and suggested that the term refers to what we call the *modes of presentation* (210). According to him the same object, that is an object having same reference, can be considered to have different modes of presentation depending upon the sense on how the object in question is introduced. The very famous example that he gives is with regard to the planet Venus. Venus can be understood as *the morning star* and also *the evening star,* depending upon the sense. That is when the planet is visible in the sky at dawn it can be considered to be *the morning star.* And when the planet is visible at sunset then it can be considered to be *the evening star* (215). In this case the referent is the same; the planet Venus, but the senses of the same referent differ. Gabriel's notion of sense, come somewhat closer to this view although Gabriel aimed at the existence of even unquantified things that appear mostly in our imagination.

This acceptance of even non-quantified things is because of the fact that fields are much more inclusive in his ontology. Now, it is important to note, what he meant by the term *field*. Field(s) for him are those wherein some object appears. However, this appearance is not random or not without any form of determinacy. Field(s) are determined by rules. For instance, at this moment I am sitting in the library of my University and typing this paper for a specific purpose. As I am typing, there are certain rules guiding me. I cannot at this moment start dancing or running around in the middle of the library, because at this moment the rule governing this field does not allow me to do that.

Again, another point to be noted here would be that I am using the term *field(s)* rather than *field*. This is because there are infinitely many fields and not just one. At the present moment my field is that of library. At the very next moment, my field would be something else. Again before the library field started, I was in a totally different field, namely, the field of my hostel room. These fields interconnect when necessary and also lose their interconnections eventually. That is the interconnections among the different fields are not eternal. To illustrate, my writing this paper at this moment is due to a specific purpose which was conveyed to me via electronic information long time back. Say the advertisement of paper calling in the University journal. This field will continue for a period of time. However, this field will not be eternal. That is as soon as I finish writing, and submitting the paper, this field will be lost. Likewise, field(s) also can be created. Just like, I created this field by starting to write this paper.

Again, as I have already mentioned in the appearance-occurrence distinction, Gabriel considers objects to appear, rather than occur, so even non-existent entities can come under field and thus exist (since existence is appearance). However, the problem of contradiction that can be conceived to happen in such cases, do not happen according to Gabriel. This is because, *field(s) of sense* as I have already mentioned are not eternal but relative. Thus, when I say *Unicorns exist,* it will be with regard to one field (say the field of imagination). Again, if I say *Unicorns do not exist*, it will be with regard to a different field (say in reality where it actually does not exist). Thus, since existence is relative with respect to fields, the risk of contradiction does not seem to haunt Gabriel's philosophy.

3. Gabriel's Fact in Contrast to Russell

Going by his definition of existence and his theory of the *field(s) of sense,* it can be said that Gabriel's understanding of facts will be quite different than Russell. Fact is not the objective reality that there is. According to him, "By 'fact' I refer to anything that is true of something" (*Fields of Sense* 45). Thus, it is a fact that I am typing in my laptop at the moment. Then, what about non-existent entities that appear and thus exist under Gabriel's ontology? Are those also facts? To this, his reply would be yes. This is because; if at the moment I supposedly see a ghost in front of me, then that would be true of me and thus a fact. Furthermore, Russell emphasized more on the logical character of facts. This is

because every fact has a logical form which when isomorphised in language gives a true proposition. From this it can be deduced that facts in Russell's ontology need to be found in the world. Non-existent entities thereby will have no place in Russell's ontology. In addition to that every objective fact will have a logical form. But, this is not the case in Gabriel. Gabriel's facts range from the objective entities such as tables and cups to the most subjective entities such as unicorns or ghosts or any sort of entities made up by the subjective mind.

Russell's conception of facts as seen is very different from that of Gabriel. This is because, Russell considered propositions to be true based on facts. That is there is an inherent isomorphism embedded in propositions that makes the proposition true or false. Truth here comes in with regard to the relation between facts and propositions. On the contrary, truth in Gabriel is not about the relation between fact and proposition, but it is about the fact itself. It is as much a fact that I can see a ghost in front of me at the moment as much it is a fact that Venus is a planet. Both are facts of the same intensity without any difference. Every thought about an object or every subjective thought is as much a fact as an objective thought. Gabriel thus asserts that "[T]ruth is not primarily a property of propositions" (*Fields of Sense* 46).

Also, with regard to existence, Russell's view was that existence always belongs to propositional function. Again, if it is considered of an object to have some property, say a red pen, it is meaningless according to Russell to again assert that the red pen exists. This is because the existence of pen here cannot be denied after attributing to it some kind of properties. Just like the above mentioned case when "The Present King of France" could not be denied existence after the ascription of baldness. So, Russell relied on analyzing the structure of such propositions and every other linguistic entity logically to avoid contradiction and ambiguity. But, Gabriel did not give such logical character to the existent entities there are. His view differs drastically in this regard since he considers existence to be a property of the *field(s) of sense*. And such *field(s)* can include any number of entities under it. And whatever appears in a *field* exists. But, this view seems to create a problem of contradiction in Gabriel's theory which I will discuss in the final section.

4. Critique of Gabriel's Field(s) of Sense

As I mentioned earlier, the relativity of *fields* appear to free Gabriel from the risk of any form of contradiction. But after analysis, of his theory, one contradiction seems to appear in his philosophy. That is the spatio-temporal contradiction which appears in Gabriel's philosophy because he gave utmost importance to the theory of *field(s) of sense*. Gabriel in his theory rigidly suggested that what appears in fields exists. However, this appearance needs to be pertaining to certain rules. Here we can see the hint of contextualism in his theory. Since, things appear in fields according to rules, and nothing appears arbitrarily, so it can be said that everything is rule-bound with respect to certain contexts. However, one drawback which I noted in his philosophy is that problem arises when too

much emphasis is given on fields and all the things which appear in our field(s) are considered to exist. To instantiate this point, take the case of my sitting in the library at the moment and typing my paper. Again, suppose after a while I finished writing my paper and went out of my library towards the hostel room. Here I have created two fields. One field would be with regard to the library where I am typing my paper. Yet another field would be my going towards the hostel room and supposedly reaching my room. When I am in the library, I am in the field of library. But as soon as I went out, my existence would be at the field outside the library. After reaching the room I occupy the space and time of the room and thus my existence is pertaining to that particular field. But, if from the room I think about what I did in the library, then, although imaginarily I create two persons at two different places at the same time. Both my existence would be real existence pertaining to the theory of the *field(s) of sense* and also because of the fact that Gabriel accepts everything subjective to exist if it occurs in a field. So I will exist twice at the same time (although contextually or with regard to sense). But in the same field, I appearing twice would however be an undeniable contradiction which cannot be solved even by Gabriel's theory. The contradiction in Gabriel it can be said is due to the lack of analysis of facts and endorsing each and every field of sense as a fact. Gabriel, was not bothered about the linguistic implications of facts which are found in the various *field(s) of sense*. He did not give a logical character to anything that exists and so no analysis was done regarding the existence of entities. Since, he considered even non-existent or subjective entities to exist, the risk of contradiction occurred despite the relativity of *field(s)*.

Going by the aforementioned Russellian thesis of existence based on *propositional function,* such a contradiction cannot be considered to occur even remotely in his theory. Both the philosophers endorse multiplicity. However, Russell's multiplicity was based on objective facts. The separate particulars that Russell considers to exist, exhibit relations based on objective facts. This emphasis on objectivity not only saves our ontology from being overcrowded, but, it also saves our ontology from facing any form of contradiction. But there is nothing like an objective fact in Gabriel's theory. For him every thought that occurs in a *field of sense* is a fact (be it objective or subjective). His ontology constitutes both subjectivity and objectivity, because of his importance on the term *appearance* and giving sole importance to his *field(s) of sense* theory. So his theory falls into the problem of contradiction even though the expanded inclusivity can be more captivating. Therefore, despite his limited ontology which might be less appealing to philosophers, Russell's philosophy of *Logical Atomism* seems more favorable as it does not fall into such a problem of contradiction. The parsimonious inclination of Russell led him through a theory of logical analysis which left very limited space for contradiction.

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Russell's Philosophy of Language
An Agenda for his Scientific Method of Philosophizing

Amitabha Dasgupta

Abstract:

The main objective of the paper is to argue that Russell's philosophical concern for language needs to be seen as a part of his concern for scientific philosophizing. It may not be an exaggeration to say that Russell rescued philosophy from its deep rooted traditional linkage that it had with religion and ethics. It was in the same way as Descartes did in fifteen century by rescuing philosophy from its scholastic past. This paper will have three parts. The first part will discuss Russell's conception of scientific method employed for philosophizing. The second part will discuss how Russell's philosophy of language is the outcome of his scientific philosophizing. The third part will show that his philosophy of language as a scientific enterprise lends it support to the development of a constructive thesis concerning the ultimate constituents of the world.

Keywords: Scientific Method, Logical Form, Grammatical Form, Denoting Phrases, Description, Ontological Structure, Extensionalist View of Language.

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Russell had a prolific mind. This was evident from the fact that there was no area of knowledge where he did not have his contributions. His writing eminently shows this since it covers a wide range of topics starting from the foundations of mathematics to such practical aspects like ethics of family life or of social organizations. In all of his writings he systematically held a strong sense of scientific attitude expressing his commitment to objective notion of truth. Russell's pursuit in philosophy, as is well known, is no exception to this. His multi-faceted engagements in philosophy may be viewed as directed towards pursuing scientific way of philosophizing. Scientific philosophizing has a definite meaning for Russell. It has a way of philosophizing based on a scientific method. But what is Russell's conception of scientific method and how does it fit in with his particular philosophical preoccupation, namely, philosophy of language? The focus of the present essay is to explore the connection that exists between Russell's philosophy of language and his scientific method. The latter provides the logical and analytical infrastructure on which his philosophy of language is built. It will be argued that his preoccupation both with logic and language are not isolated persuasions but they are essentially manifestations of his concern for scientific philosophizing. It is thus appropriate that Russell's philosophy of language should be seen as an agenda for his scientific philosophizing. To establish this, a three level argument structure has been employed for the purpose. The first will present Russell's idea of scientific method for philosophy. The second will be concerned with the application of this method to philosophy of language particularly with reference to Russell's analysis of denoting expressions. The third will show how his concern for language leads him to talk about the structure of the world.

1.   Russell's Conception of Scientific Method

It should be made clear at the outset that the discussion on Russell's conception of scientific method does not involve narrating his idea of what constitutes a scientific method in specific terms. It is thus not a discussion on scientific method as understood in philosophy of science where the objective is to construct a formal deductive structure guiding a theory in its attempt to explain a phenomenon. Russell's discussion on scientific method, on the other hand, is more general in terms of its scope since he takes scientific method to be essentially a set of general principles or guidelines to be followed for the purpose of carrying out philosophical inquiry. His objective essentially is how to have a scientific method of philosophizing that will result into a system of scientific philosophy as against the unscientific philosophy of the past dominated by various ideological motives, such as, ethical or religious. In this respect, Russell's book on *Our Knowledge of the External World* bearing the sub-title "as a field for scientific method in philosophy" is highly instructive since it explicitly indicates his strong inclination towards the need for scientific philosophizing. Russell feels the need for scientific philosophizing because like scientific inquiry philosophical inquiry too in its search for truth must be neutral and objective in its pursuit. But

at the same time Russell is conscious of the intrinsic nature of philosophy. As he argues, the empirical method, as used in sciences, will have no application in philosophy. Results obtained in sciences are established on empirical grounds. Whereas results in philosophy are decided on a fundamentally different ground. The reason is that philosophical propositions can be neither proved nor disproved by empirical evidence (*Mysticism and* 109). Philosophy is essentially a priori in character and thus it defies any empirical consideration for establishing philosophical truth. Considering the a priori nature of philosophy, Russell's plea for the use of scientific method to philosophy is based on certain general methodological ethos that characterizes the spirit in which scientific inquiry is conducted. Russell wants the same spirit must motivate philosophical inquiry too. Russell's formulation of his scientific method has a nature which is comprehensive. It is not just stating certain heuristic principles of how to carry out a philosophical inquiry. His stipulated method, on the other hand, provides a full justification of a new turn in philosophy which can be aptly described as logico-linguistic turn based on correct mental attitude. Russell's notion of scientific method is thus having two components. The one is psychological and the other is logical.

First: Russell introduces two psychological principles as a part of his scientific method in philosophy. They are essentially meant for inculcating 'mental discipline' (*Our Knowledge* 240) in a philosopher since it forms, as Russell argues, the pre-requisite for pursuing philosophy dispassionately. His first principle is that while we are engaged in investigating facts we must have the desire to know philosophical truth (*Our Knowledge* 249). It must be the desire which is strong enough to survive through years so that it will not be distracted from its goal by such tendencies like the desire to think that we know (*Our Knowledge* 241), the system-maker's vanity (*Our Knowledge* 241) etc. These later tendencies prevent philosophers in their pursuit for objective knowledge and truth. The other psychological principle that Russell introduced (*Our Knowledge* 242) was called by him the methodological doubt. Its purpose was the same that Descartes had in his mind. But the only difference was that in the case of Russell it was less radical since it was restricted only to the disciplining of the mind. As Russell (*Our Knowledge* 242) says, the practice of this principle will be able to loosen the hold of mental habits that allow us to think in one way. This principle will liberate our mind from such dogmatism and will allow us to new way of looking at philosophical problems with the help of formulating new hypotheses. Old habits must be thus replaced by new imagination.

Second: We now come to the second part of Russell's conception of scientific method which consists of his concern for the application of logic and logical analysis to philosophy. It is rightly characterized by him as logical-analytic method which defines the core of his scientific method since his scientific philosophizing is virtually meant to be indistinguishable from logical analysis.

Russell (*Our Knowledge* 42) thus describes logic as "the essence of philosophy". As he observes, its importance in philosophy is same as that of mathematics for physics. There are three distinctive areas of application where Russell's use of logic in philosophizing can be specially mentioned. Russell's idea of the three-fold employment of logical analysis may be indicated in the following order.

One: Russell finds traditional logic to be highly misleading because the account that it offers, such as, its analysis regarding classification of propositions only in terms of subject-predicate form is not only wrong and thus untenable but more alarming is that it becomes the ground for wrong way of conceptualizing the language-reality relationship. Philosophers due to their adhering to the subject-predicate form of propositions failed to understand and explain large number of facts pertaining to science and everyday life. The reason is that they reduce all facts to subject and predicate and as a result they do not see the possibility of any other forms of reduction. It is in this context that Russell points out the two major failures of traditional philosophy. First, all facts are not amenable to subjects and predicates. There are plenty of facts which refuse to be such a reduction. Russell gives the instances, such as, space and time, greater and less, whole and part etc. Traditional logic finds them unintelligible because they cannot be reduced to subjects and predicates. In Russell's explanation, these facts involve what he calls 'asymmetrical relations'. These relations are such that when they hold, say, between x and y there is no possibility that the same relation can hold between y and x. Asymmetrical relations can thus never be reduced to subjects and predicates. The second difficulty with the subject-predicate structure of propositions is that they can lead to the postulation of a worst form of metaphysics. This happens because it is assumed that the subject expression by definition refers to an entity in the world. But it is always possible that there may be a situation where there is no entity to which the subject expression refers. In such a situation to save the theory the only recourse left is to postulate a universe where such non-entities exist. This results into a questionable metaphysics. Russell liberates the traditional notion of proposition from its rigid subject-predicate structure into a new one that admits of propositions having inventory of logical forms. As Russell claims, formal logic thus changes the entire scenario by providing multiple ways of analyzing propositions so that linguistic basis of philosophical problems can be made evident.

Two: The second aspect of Russell's employment of logic for the purpose of scientific philosophizing is the one where Russell uses logic as a tool for analyzing philosophical problems. Analysis consists of breaking up complex philosophical problems into smaller ones, so that we can clearly see the role that the constituent parts play while assessing a philosophical problem. As a result, these complex problems will look less baffling since the analytic technique adopted here will bring out the real issues involved in these problems. The real issues are lost sight of because language conceals them. It is thus only through

logical analysis of language that they can be discovered. Russell's theory of description is a perfect example of this. His thesis that definite descriptions are not proper names, they are, on the other hand, incomplete symbols, is established on the basis of analysis of the sentences occurring definite descriptions. These sentences are decomposed into several parts which are of diverse logical kinds and perform different logical and semantical roles in a sentence. On the basis of this, Russell shows that they do not denote any actual entity. They cannot be thus treated as proper names or denoting expressions. This thesis is an outcome of logical analysis that Russell introduced which qualifies to be called a methodological principle for practicing philosophy in a scientific manner.

Three: The third aspect of the application of logic or logical analysis finds its expression in what Russell calls logical construction which is also sometimes referred to as constructionism. Constructionism should not be viewed as the method used for postulating hypothetical entities required for the purpose of explanation of facts. Constructionism, for Russell means, logical construction where constructions are made out of entities that are known with a high degree of certainty. The two following remarks from Russell (*Mysticism and* 148) will make the intention of his programme explicit:

> Whenever possible, substitute constructions out of known entities for reference to unknown entities.

The second remark is almost similar to what is expressed by the first one.

> Wherever possible, logical constructions are to be substituted for inferred entities.

Considering this, Russell finds constructionism to be an indispensable methodological principle for scientific philosophizing.

Russell's idea of logical construction can give rise to certain confusion. To say that an entity is a logical construction does not at all mean to deny its reality. Far from being fictitious it is, on the other hand, based on the idea that a thing is analyzable with reference to what is known to be real. It thus carefully avoids postulating any hypothetical entity. Russell's idea of logical construction as a part of his scientific method is in no way removed from reality. His theory of neutral monism is an evidence to this point since it shows that mind and matter though logical constructions their reality cannot be denied.

Russell's programme of logical construction is associated with two important principles. The one is the principle of abstraction and the other is Occam's razor. The task of the principle of abstraction is to get rid of unnecessary abstraction, such as, making philosophy free of metaphysical entities. Occam's razor, on the other hand, is the principle that advocates theoretical economy. It is frequently expressed in the form of a maxim which reads as: Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity. For Russell, this principle forms the ideal of scientific philosophizing since it urges to do philosophy with minimum assumptions and minimum vocabularies. This will put philosophy on a scientific

track. This takes us to the discussion of how Russell looks at language and meaning as an attempt to do scientific philosophizing.

2. Russell's Philosophy of Language: A Commitment to Scientific Philosophizing

Russell's approach to language and meaning was very much motivated by his deep concern for scientific philosophizing. The logico-analytic method that characterizes his scientific method finds its best expression in his philosophy of language. Instead of going into the discussion of the many sided nature of Russell's philosophy of language we will focus on some of the crucial aspects of it in order to present how his approach to language and meaning is guided by his scientific method. In this respect, we will highlight the three issues. First, Russell's distinction between logical and grammatical form of a sentence. Second, Russell's critique of the subject-predicate structure of sentences and the way it hides the logical form of a sentence that subsequently gives rise to Meinongean metaphysics. And third, Russell's critique of Frege's notion of sense which he finds to be scientifically inscrutable.

One: In contemporary philosophy the distinction between grammatical form and logical form has a historic significance since it provides the basis from which analytic philosophy starts. Analytic philosophy since it is essentially a critique of language its primary objective is to retrieve the real logical form of sentences so that the actual logical and semantic import of the sentences can be discovered. This distinction thus becomes indispensable because it provides the method by which philosophical problems that arise due to misuse of language are resolved. The name that preeminently comes in this context is, of course, Russell. He was one of the pioneers to see the need for making this distinction and, thereby gave a new turn – a new way of looking at philosophy. Wittgenstein made a similar observation in *Tractatus* while acknowledging the distinction that Russell made. In his own admission:

> All philosophy is a critique of language…. It was Russell who performed the service of showing that the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one. (4:0031)

To demonstrate the significance of this distinction, we may refer here to Russell's famous argument that 'existence' is not a predicate. The reason is that it is not a property which can be meaningfully ascribed to a subject or to deny it on the ground that the subject lacks this property. On the other hand, traditionally 'existence' is always treated grammatically a predicate. This becomes the source of paradoxes. The obvious case is the one where the subject is a vacuous expression since it does not refer to anything. The question is, how can we account for it within the subject-predicate frame work of sentences? Similarly, in the context of negative existential sentences, such as, 'Romulus did not exist' or 'Unicorns do not exist', the same puzzle arises. That is, what is the status of something about

which we can assert that it does not exist? How to reconcile the assertion of something with its denial at the predicate position?

Russell's response to this problem is that though the word 'exists' is grammatically a predicate it is not logically so since it performs a different function. Russell ("The Philosophy" 200-201 and *Introduction to* 174) builds his strategy at two levels. First, in order to account for the notion of existence, Russell uses the existential quantifier which expresses the meaning of 'exists' through the use of the expressions 'there is'. Russell thus by one stroke changes the entire scenario because the use of existential quantifier changes the very meaning of 'exists' as understood in its earlier predicative use. At the second level, with the help of existential quantifier Russell analyzes the sentences having the predicate 'exist' by the following translation. It is through translation that Russell brings out the hidden logical structure of these existential sentences. The sentence, such as, 'Cows exist' as Russell shows, can be translated in the following way so that it means 'There are x's such that 'x is a cow is true'. This translation makes it explicit the real character of the sentence, namely, to say that cows exist is not to ascribe any quality (existence) to cow but, on the other hand, to assert that there are objects to which the description as summarized in the word 'cow' applies. The same method can be applied to explain the real meaning of negative existential sentences. The sentence 'Unicorns do not exist' can be thus analyzed in terms of the following translation which reads as 'There are x's such that x is a unicorn is true'. This way the misleading nature of grammatical forms of such sentences can be explained on the basis of exhibiting their logical forms which constitute the real meaning of these sentences. This is the way how the puzzle associated with negative existential sentences as mentioned above can be removed. Further, the discovery of logical form will rule out the possibility of postulating the existence of unicorn in any nonphysical form.

Two: Continuing with the earlier theme the next phase of our discussion will be to present Russell's ("On Denoting" 48) critique of the subject-predicate structure of sentences and the distortion that it creates in depicting the semantic structure of language. We will discuss this with reference to Russell's analysis of denoting phrases.

We start with the sentence 'The Present King of France is bald'. It is a sentence where the grammatical subject is 'The Present King of France' whose purpose is to refer directly to a person. The phrase 'the Present King of France' is thus regarded as the denoting phrase or the referring expression that follows from the grammatical structure of the sentence itself. But the fact remains that since France is no longer under monarchy there is no one to whom the denoting phrase 'The Present King of France' can be applied. Now if there is no one to whom the expression can denote, then the sentence 'The Present King of France is bald' is neither true nor false. If this is so then the sentence is to be called meaningless.

But that is not possible because we do understand the sentence as meaningful. The question is, how can these two contradictory demands be reconciled?

To avoid this situation there are philosophers, such as, Meinong and others who try to save the theory by introducing fictitious entities as possible referents for the vacuous denoting phrases like 'The Present King of France'. The argument essentially here is that there is a possible world where such mythical entities like unicorn or Hamlet or the Present King of France exist. Postulating such entities becomes a requirement for the sentences to be meaningful which lack reference.

Russel finds this solution to be untenable first on the ground of scientific method and second on the ground of logical structure of language. From the point of view of scientific method it accepts a system of ontology that is remote from reality. The main problem with these theories is that they lack what Russell calls the "the feeling for reality" ("Descriptions" 17) which must be preserved in any theoretical construction. Logic cannot accept unicorn in the same way as Zoology cannot because the concern for the real is same be it in the context of logic or of Zoology. This shows Russell's acute concern for pursuing scientific method while approaching language and meaning.

The second offers Russell's ("On Denoting") ingenious solution to the problem posed by such vacuous denoting expressions like 'The Present King of France'. The logical analysis of the sentence shows that it is not a subject-predicate sentence. It is, on the other hand, an existential sentence which reveals that the expression 'The Present King of France' cannot be legitimately placed in the subject position. It has the predicative character because it attributes certain properties to the person, namely, the property of being the King of France along with the property of being bald. The denoting phrase 'The Present King of France' is thus transposed to the predicate position. This is possible through the use of the quantifier since it brings out the deceptive character of the denoting phrase and shows its real character by putting it in the predicate position. Note that the existential quantifier by replacing the subject to the predicate takes care of the reference made by the sentence.

Finally, in view of the deceptive nature of these denoting expressions the question arises, what consists of their real nature? Since they do not stand for anything in the world they are certainly not names as Russell points out. They are characterized by him as definite descriptions which are unlike proper names not complete. It is due to this reason that their meaning cannot be decided in isolation from their role in a sentence. That means their meaning must be specified only in the context of a sentence. Considering this, Russell finds that definite descriptions are incomplete symbols. This is evident from Russell's logical analysis where the subject expression 'The Present King of France' is treated as predicate along with the other predicate 'bald'. Both these predicates are incomplete symbols and, therefore, by nature they are in Russell's expression 'unsaturated'. In Russell's argument, these incomplete symbols constitute propositional functions which are

not though propositions they can give rise to propositions through the use of quantified variables and individual constants. This is the way then a proposition can be either shown to be true or false. As an illustration, we cite here the way Russell has formally resolved the problem of denotation. Consider the sentence 'The Present King of France is bald'. The procedure to be followed here is that in order to analyze the sentence, the denoting phrase must be replaced by a definite description that can be stated in terms of propositional function. To give an example, the sentence 'I met a man' can be translated into a propositional function: 'I met X and X is human is not always false'. This procedure will show how the problem of denotation can be avoided. Coming back to the original sentence it can be rewritten as:

There is somebody or other of whom it is true that

1. He is a present King of France: $(\exists x)\,(Kx)$
2. Nobody other than this person is so: $(x)\,((Kx)(y)(Ky)(x = y))$.
3. He is bald: $(x)\;(Kx\,.\,Bx)$
   $: (\exists x)(Kx\,(y)(Ky)(y = x)(Bx))$

Three: In the third phase we will be concerned with Russell's attack on Frege's notion of sense. Russell's scientific method of philosophizing does not allow him to accept Frege's notion of sense on the ground that it is scientifically inscrutable. Frege argues for the independent nature of sense because it determines reference. This makes Frege to identify sense with thought and concept. Senses are thus real and eternal because once a thought is discovered the same thought is handed down from generation to generation, as Frege ("The Thought") points out, while talking about the thought expressed by the Pythagorean theorem. The notion of sense can be thus qualified to be called a Platonic entity residing in the third realm along with logic and mathematics. Russell finds Frege's notion of sense is unacceptable because its very conceptualization involves postulating intentional objects which are untenable from the point of view of scientific approach to language. Scientific approach to language is an extensional approach whose goal is to find out truth. It is because of Russell's commitment to extensional approach to language that he does not distinguish between senses of an expression from its truth. As Russell argues, this distinction arises due to the distinction that Frege makes between sense and reference where reference is made only through the passage of sense. Russell, on the other hand, makes reference direct which is not mediated through sense and as a result, the distinction between the sense of an expression and its truth value is obliterated. Expressions are thus understood in extensional term, such as, 'red' whose extension is defined in terms of the class of red things. Thus it is the object which is referred to by the term that determines the extension of a term. Whereas, in the context of a sentence it is its truth value which determines its extension. As we can see, this is in sharp contrast to intentional or sense based approach of

Frege where thought or concepts provide the mechanism in terms of which reference is made. The question that arises here for Russell is, what scientific legitimacy does this perspective can claim?

There is a second reason for Russell to challenge the justification for postulating sense. One of the important grounds on which Frege can justify his appeal to sense is that it can resolve some of the puzzles. These puzzles arise because there are instances of having sentences in language which are meaningful but they lack truth value. Frege argues that these instances show that truth value cannot be the only semantic value of a sentence. We need to postulate sense as an additional semantic value to explain the meaning of these sentences. To explain his contention, Frege gives three illustrations ("On Sense" 62-67).

(i)   Odysseus was set ashore at Ithaca while sound asleep

The problem with this sentence is that the name 'Odysseus' does not have any bearer. That means it does not stand for anyone. Hence, the sentence is neither true nor false. Thus the sentence does not have any semantic value. Now if semantic value is considered to be the only property for the sentence to be meaningful then the sentence is meaningless. But the fact is that we do understand the meaning of the sentence. The sentence cannot be thus meaningless. To show why the sentence is meaningful we need to attribute some other property to Odysseus other than reference. Frege's solution is that we need to attribute sense to the name 'Odysseus', such as, the hero of Homer's *Odyssey*, the son of so and so.

Russell's response to the problem is that there is no need to take the Fregean recourse. As he argues, bearer less names must be treated in the same way as ordinary proper names are which are regarded by Russell as disguised definite descriptions. This way of analyzing, as Russell claims, will ensure the sentence to have truth value and can thus avoid introducing sense. Now coming back to Frege's sentence (1), Frege would suggest the sentence having the logical form which may be expressed as:

(ii)   Mb

Where 'M' stands for the predicate … was set ashore at Ithaca while sound asleep and 'b' stands for 'Odysseus'. Russell's basic objection here is that the grammatical form of the sentence (1) from which we have derived its logical form is not correct. The reason is 'Odysseus' according to him, is a disguised definite description which may be translated as –

(iii) The hero of Homer's Odyssey was set ashore at Ithaca while sound asleep

The sentence may be analyzed in the following way where 'N' stands for the predicate "is a hero of Homer's Odyssey".

$$(iv)\ \ (\exists x)\big((Nx\ \&\ Mx)\&(\forall y)(Ny \to x = y)\big)$$

This analysis brings out the truth that 'Odysseus' is not a proper name. Its semantic value can be ascribed by translating into definite description which:

(v) $(\exists x)\big((Nx \,\&\, ... x)\&(\forall y)(Ny \rightarrow x = y)\big)$

Odysseus though does not have any bearer, it does not block the possibility of having truth value.

The next is the belief context where, as Frege argues, that sense works as the only semantic value that makes sentences meaningful. The reason is the in belief contexts the legitimacy of Frege's compositionality principle gets threatened since it is found to be inoperative. The main idea behind the principle is that the semantic value of a complex expression is determined by the semantic value of its parts. Now following this principle a further claim can be made according to which it is possible that a part of a sentence can be substituted by another having the same semantic value without affecting the truth value of the whole sentence. To put this idea in the context of a name, a name in a sentence can be substituted by another name if it has the same reference without leaving the truth value of the sentence changed. This is where the problem lies since both the names may have the same reference and yet the result of substitution may turn out to be false. Consider the sentence:

John believes that Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens

These two names though refer to the same person is actually false because John does not know that Mark Twain also called by the name Samuel Clemens. This disturbs Frege's system in a major way which amounts to the giving up of his principle of compositionality. Frege, of course, cannot accept it because the principle of compositionality is one of the pillars of his semantical system. To come out from this situation, he gives his solution. He ("On Sense" 67) makes the distinction between belief context and outside of the belief context. Within the belief context, Frege argues that it is sense which acts as a semantic value. In his argument, within belief contexts 'Mark Twain' and 'Samuel Clemens' refer to their senses which they ordinarily have. That means in belief context, 'Mark Twain' refers not to the man, but to the customary sense of the name which Frege calls indirect reference. This procedure of Frege which allows him to identify customary sense with indirect reference thus allows him to come out from the puzzle created in belief contexts while substituting a co-referential expression with another. Frege thus reinterprets the notion of substitution in terms of sense which says that substitution of an expression with another is possible provided it has the same sense because it will make the sense of the sentence unchanged. Instead of truth value it is the sense that becomes the semantic value of a sentence. Frege claims that the same analysis can be extended to other syntactic constructions concerned with belief expressions and the same result can be obtained.

Russell finds that Frege's solution to the problem of substitution as encountered in the context of belief sentences is not acceptable. The reason is the

solution that Frege offers in terms of sense conceived as semantic value is unnecessary. In Russell's ("The Philosophy" and *Introduction to*) explanation belief sentences do not pose any such problem where a substitution of a true sentence leads to a false one. Russell's analysis is based on his earlier strategy consisting of two ideas, namely, definite descriptions are not referring or denoting expressions and ordinary proper names are disguised descriptions. In the light of this strategy, Russell constructs his argument structure in following way (Miller 42-72). Consider the sentence:

1) Smith believes that the composer of *Fidelio* had cirrhosis of the liver.

Imagine a situation where Smith does not know that the composer of Fidelio is the person who is also the composer of the Moonlight Sonata. That means, to put it in the following form:

2) The composer of *Fidelio* is the composer of the Moonlight Sonata.

Now if we take the two expressions 'The composer of *Fidelio*' and 'The composer of the Moonlight sonata' as proper names, then they assume the same semantic value because they refer to the same person, namely, Beethoven. Given this, it will enable us to substitute 'The composer of the Moonlight Sonata' for 'The composer of *Fidelio*' in (1) without changing the truth value. But the proposed substitution will result into a false consequence since Smith does not know that the composer is the same for both *Fidelio* and Moonlight Sonata. Hence, we cannot hold:

3) Smith believes that the composer of the Moonlight Sonata had cirrhosis of the liver.

This goes against the compositionality principle. Russell since he does not want to give up compositionality principle and also does not want to take the Fregean recourse his attempt is thus to reinterpret the entire scenario in different conceptual term so that the problem arising out of substitution can be avoided by showing that the truth conditional approach can be retained. In Russell's interpretation, the problem that arises for Frege is because definite descriptions are treated as genuine proper names and thus gets a false result. To give a formal representation of Frege's argument, let 'a' be translated as 'the composer of *Fidelio*' and 'Fa' be translated as the predicate '… has cirrhosis of the liver' which can be presented as:

4) Smith believes that Fa

Similarly, we take 'b' for 'the composer of the Moonlight Sonata' in (2) and get

5) a = b

This will enable us to obtain:

6) Smith believes that Fb

This clearly reveals the problem that Frege faced. The steps through which we arrive at may be stated as follows: We substitute (4) which is true on the basis of

(5) to get (6) which is false. Frege thus arrives at the conclusion that in the context of belief sentences sense acts as the only semantic value to account for the meaningfulness of the supposed substitution.

Russell's response to this is that we get false result as expressed in (6) because we have failed to derive the correct logical form of the sentences involved in this particular belief context. In Russell's assessment, thus the sentences (4), (5) and (6) do not correctly represent the logical form of the sentences (1), (2) and (3). Their correct logical form will reveal that they do not allow us to have a substitution from (4) to (5) to arrive us at (6). Russell argues that since the expression 'the composer of *Fidelio'* is not a proper name, the logical form of (1) can be more accurately presented as:

7) Smith believes that $(\exists x)((Gx \& Fx)\&(\forall y)(Gy \rightarrow x = y))$

Here 'G' stands for the predicate '…is a composer of Fidelio'. The logical form of (2) can be similarly presented as:

8) $(\exists x) ((Gx \& Hx \&(\forall y)(Gy \rightarrow x = y)\&(\forall z) \rightarrow x = y))$

Note, 'H' stands for the predicate '… is a composer of the Moonlight Sonata'. It is evident that (8) does not make any room allowing us to substitute into (7). The reason is that (7) and (8) do not have the right logical form to allow a substitution and thus the question of substituting a true sentence to a false one does not arise.

There is one more argument that Frege used for the primacy of sense over truth value. There are contexts where we understand the sense of an expression without knowing its truth value. 'The morning star is the evening star' is the most appropriate example to this. Russell's response to this argument is twofold. First, these two are proper names, and as proper names they are disguised descriptions which do not pick out any object. However, it is true that they pick out the same object but from this it does not follow that have the same semantic value. The reason is 'The morning star' and 'The evening star' are not names and thus their semantic value cannot be the object Venus. Frege's mistake is that he takes them as names. Second, it is true that the semantic property of an expression consists in having the semantic value but that does not rule out the possibility of understanding a sentence without having the knowledge of its truth value.

3. Scientific Philosophizing and the Ontological Commitment of Russell's Philosophy of Language

It has been pointed out as a part of introductory remarks that Russell's interest in language was meant to serve a purpose – the purpose of engaging in scientific philosophizing. The thrust of the earlier section was to make explicit Russell's project on philosophy of language as a part of his scientific enterprise in philosophy where language was chiefly viewed in terms of its logical/analytical character. However, Russell does not stop here. His concern for scientific philosophizing motivates him to connect language with reality. Language, for Russell, thus has an ontological significance. The main objective of this section is

to show the grounds on which Russell finds language being essentially embedded with reality. It can be revealed only through logical excavation where they can be found to be overlapping in terms of their respective structures. In view of this objective we will now present the arguments that Russell used for his claim concerning how language is involved with ontology. In other words, this is how language can be the clue to the discovery of the ultimate constituents of the world.

The aim of philosophy, as Russell (*Our Knowledge* 55) defines, is to search for the skeletal forms of different types of propositions and to discover the systematic relations of dependence between those different types. Russell's approach to this philosophy of language starts with the fundamental presupposition that beneath the grammar of natural language there lies a standard or canonical form. This form (what is known as logical form) is to be discovered in order to have a clear understanding about ordinary language claims. It needs to be mentioned that the linguistic enterprise of Russell does not end with the clarification of language only. Russell perceived that it was through the analysis of language that one could discern the basic structure of the reality that language was about.

The notion of *structure* is fundamental to Russell's conception of linguistic analysis as a philosophical method. It was primarily through his investigations into logic and the foundations of mathematics that Russell first developed an interest in the formal or structural aspect of language. The logic which he developed in *Principia Mathematica* provided him the foundation on which he built his philosophical method. One of the most significant contributions of Russell from our point of view is the application of his discoveries in formal logic to the analysis of propositions that we use while making our ordinary knowledge claims. In this respect, attempts have been made to show the connections that exists between the logic developed in *Principia Mathematica* and the philosophical theories, particularly, logical atomism.

Russell *qua* logician-mathematician is interested in formal structure or 'logical syntax' for its own sake but *qua* philosopher, he is interested in it for another reason. Operating within the framework of the referential theory of meaning, Russell defines the meaning of an expression in terms of an entity of some kind which the expression designates. Accordingly, meaning analysis for him is essentially concerned with the examination of various kinds of entities that language is about. Words are meaningful because they stand for something else. So for a symbol to have genuine meaning it must denote some entity. From this what follows is that there must exist a correspondence between words (non-syncategorematic) in a proposition and elements in the facts asserted by the proposition. In such a relation of correspondence, the proposition and the fact asserted have a common structure. In other words, they share the same logical form. It is this logical form or common structure which is the main object of Russell's philosophical interest.

Russell found that since the propositions of ordinary language did not reveal their logical forms, a method must be adopted by which the logical form of the ordinary language could be revealed. On the basis of his logical theory, Russell proposed that only through analyzing and recasting the propositions of ordinary language it was possible to eliminate the vagueness that associated with non-referential expressions of language. This method, which is known as reconstructionism, was initiated first by Russell and was later adopted by a large number of formalists. Russell believed that reconstructionism, if carried out systematically, would result in a logically perfect language, a language that would "show at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied" ("The Philosophy" 198). Our aim here is to discuss the nature and function of reconstructionism with a view to show how is language-ontology interface possible.

Since Russell's involvement with linguistic analysis basically arose through his investigations in logic and foundations of mathematics, his approach to the question of logical form is formalistic, i.e. he gives sole emphasis to the structural or syntactic features of language. This led him to think that the analysis of propositions should be made on the basis of a general schema underlying the particular content of a proposition, so that it could be shown that propositions expressing different subject matters could still have an identical form. Different propositions such as 'Socrates is mortal', 'Jones is angry', 'The Sun is hot', etc., in spite of their differences, represent something common, "something indicated by the world 'is'" (*Our Knowledge* 40). It is this common features which Russell calls 'forms' and it is in this sense that they are "the proper object of philosophical logic" (*Our Knowledge* 41). It is in this sense also that the different propositions are said to have a common form, since the word 'is' is the 'is' of predication and expresses a kind of relationship existing between the object and the property ascribed to it. These propositions presuppose a common logical schema or logical form P(s).

It is important to note here that, for Russell, analysis of logical form is not a mere formal exercise whose aim is to exhibit only the features of logical syntax. Russell believes that a proper analysis of logical form would give us knowledge of the structure of reality and the propositions corresponding to it.

We started our discussion of logical form with a preliminary distinction between the narrow and extended senses of logical form. We have so far discussed only the narrow or the formal sense of logical form. But as he became increasingly aware that an investigation of syntax alone was not sufficient, Russell himself made use of logical form in its extended sense also. In its extended sense the investigation of logical form involves an examination of the constituents.

The relevance of this whole question can best be understood in the context of Russell's thesis concerning the isomorphic relationship between proposition and fact. According to him, facts are having the form which is the same as the propositions that assert them. As he said:

> Two facts are said to have the same form when they differ only as regards their constituents. In this case, we may suppose the one to result from the other by *substitution* of different constituents. For example, 'Napoleon hates Wellington' results from 'Socrates loves Plato' by substituting Napoleon for Socrates, Wellington for Plato, and *hates* for *loves*. It is obvious that some, but not all, facts can be thus derived from 'Socrates loves Plato'. Thus some facts have the same form as this and some have not. We can represent the form of a fact by the use of the variables, thus '*xRy*' may be used to represent the form of the fact that 'Socrates loves Plato'. ("On Propositions" 286)

Since there is isomorphism between propositions and facts, a proposition is said to 'mirror' the fact. This means that one could discover the form of the fact by discovering the form of the proposition in which that fact is reflected.

Thus in order to discover the true form of a fact, one should be able to determine the form of the proposition corresponding to it. This makes Russell aware of the problem that inquiry into syntax alone cannot serve the purpose. For this one needs to examine the true constituents of the proposition. Russell's theory of descriptions is a case in point. Its methodological significance is that it is an attempt to solve a philosophical problem in the framework of ideal language theory with an ontological commitment expressing the identity exhibited by propositions and facts respectively.

His theory of description shows that the so called denoting expressions are not names since they do not refer to anyone. They are what Russell calls incomplete symbols. Their meaning is defined contextually i.e. in the context of a sentence. On the other hand, the expressions which denote genuine objects do not need to be defined contextually. They assume their meaning independently and are kept intact in the reconstructed version also. At this point, Russell's theory of description involves apart from logical, ontological significance too. The explication of logical form of sentences stated in the form of descriptions shows that there is an isomorphism between facts and propositions i.e. those which are genuine constituents will remain so in the reconstructed proposition.

The reconstructionist programme, if pursued systematically for the explication of logical form, would theoretically culminate in an ideal, a logically perfect language in which "there will always be a certain fundamental identity of structure between a fact and the symbol for it…" ("The Philosophy" 197). By a fundamental identity of structure it is meant that,

> In a logically perfect language, there will be one word and no more for every simple object, and anything that is not simple will be expressed by a combination of words, by a combination derived, of course, from the words for the simple things that enter in, one word for each simple component. A language of that sort will be completely analytic, and will show at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied. ("The Philosophy" 197-98)

Russell believes that ordinary language cannot achieve this, since it is inherently incapable of showing "at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied".

In a logically perfect language what is sought is the logical form of the basic propositions which constitute the basis of the whole linguistic superstructure. These basic propositions are called atomic propositions and each asserts a fact which is known as an atomic fact. Since atomic propositions account for atomic facts they are regarded as foundational elements of language.

This is the way how Russell establishes the ontological commitment of his philosophy of language. This aspect is continuous with the other aspect of his philosophy of language involved in finding out logico-linguistic basis of philosophy. This paper has tried to argue that both these aspects of his philosophy of language taken together form an important part of Russell's concern for scientific philosophizing.

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Book Review

Reflections on Human Inquiry:
Science, Philosophy and Common Life

Nilanjan Bhowmick

We all wonder about the relations between science, philosophy and common life, but the topics present such a wide variety of unconnected thoughts that we despair to have any clear insights. Nirmalanghsu Mukherji's compelling book, *Reflections on Human Inquiry,* brings forth the relations between science, philosophy and common life in ways that are scientifically well-informed, philosophically rich and seamlessly connected to each other. The book has twelve chapters, with the initial chapters (1 to 5) dealing with what is described as the Galilean style and skepticism thereof and the later chapters dealing with the various problems that philosophers deal with regarding the nature of knowledge, belief, consciousness. Then two chapters (11 and 12, respectively) offer reflections on the relation between literature and philosophy and what kind of education is right for our species.

The book has many fundamental insights. To mention just a few: an intelligible space is made for skepticism, some light is thrown on the way the history of philosophy and science are intertwined, remarks are made on the nature and history of Indian philosophy which are surprising and suggestive and a distinction is drawn between the order of things which humans inquire into and the needs of humans.

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Mukherji argues for a position he calls "Reflective Pluralism" which arises out of the general tenor of his book. While the book makes many an important contribution, both in specific and general areas of inquiry, the view titled "Reflective Pluralism," while understated in the book, is one of its most important contributions. I will turn to it last. First, I will consider the other aspects of the book.

It should be kept in mind that no review can really do justice to the fullness and intricacy of each of the twelve essays that the book contains. Different readers with divergent philosophical leanings will pick different essays to be the best in the book.

Even though the essays seem diverse, there is a clear unifying theme. Given the fact that humans engage in inquiry, what are the limits of such inquiry? And what does it mean to say that there are certain things that we cannot inquire about in the same manner that we inquire about in science? What place is there for philosophy beside science in the sense-making enterprise that humans engage in? Is there any place at all?

One way of answering these questions is to follow the distinction Mukherji makes between things and needs, drawn in Chapter Six. There is a certain order of things out there in the world. Things are what are partially amenable to what may be described as the Galilean Style of inquiry. The Galilean way is to think of reality as obeying simplicity. Truth is not a mysterious connection between our thoughts and reality but a worked out connection between the theories we construct, keeping the notion of simplicity in mind, and the world out there.

Unfortunately, while the Galilean style of thinking has made major advances (called "science") there is much that remains in the dark, be it the behavior of a nematode, the consciousness a human being has, the knowledge humans seek, the beauty we perceive or the moral compulsions we feel. Some cases of things that fall out of scientific inquiry may be due to the sheer complexity of the issue involved. A nematode's turning right or left or for that matter a peacock's dance may fall into this domain. But Mukherji thinks that the case is quite different regarding standard concepts that philosophers deal with. Mukherji writes,

> Study of concepts like knowledge, belief, meaning, truth, consciousness, etc. are not studies of properties of things such as mental/brain states; these are concepts that humans need and, therefore, construct to carry on with their social and personal selves. If that is the case, then no development in science can overthrow *these* corners of philosophy. (95)

Even if it is argued that eliminative materialism is correct or that there are no such things as beliefs, we will still need the concepts of consciousness and belief because they are needs and not things to be investigated. Mukherji does not mean to say that needs like consciousness or knowledge or belief cannot be investigated. They can be. Mukherji has a long discussion of how the point of the concept of knowledge is its attribution to others (Chapter Eight) and how there is a

distinction between cognition and belief (Chapter Nine). These are informative discussions, but they do not adhere to the Galilean style of inquiry. They are not supposed to. Needs cannot be investigated in the same way things can be, and even in things, the Galilean style has its limits. In a sense we have two different limits to the Galilean style: one, where complexity in nature is encountered, and two, where we are not investigating things at all, but needs.

The quote above might suggest that Mukherji's stance is deflationary across the board. But I think that Mukherji would not much stress on the deflationary aspect of it. Deflationism would be a wrong way of analyzing his claim. It is like a category mistake of sorts. Needs are anything but deflationary. They are vitally important. They are not *ways of* life, as Mukherji stresses. I would hazard to say that these needs make ways of living possible, though they may have little to do with the content of the way we live, that is, the actual culture we adopt. We at least need to attribute beliefs to each other to be tolerant about different beliefs. Tolerance would be part of the actual culture we adopt, whereas attribution of belief would be a need that we have.

Before I move on to the uses he puts some of his analysis of knowledge and belief to, we need to ask whether it is actually true that beliefs, knowledge, meaning and consciousness are needs and not things.

I think Mukherji's case for belief and knowledge as needs are quite compelling. He maintains that a proper analysis of knowledge – say, at least Justified True Belief – is not a report of a mental state that any person is in but is more a condition of our attribution of knowledge to others. This attribution does not report someone else's mental state either. Those who know are not in a different mental state from those who do not know. Mukherji's view is quite similar to Edward Craig's (*Knowledge and the State of Nature*) view, though clearly developed independently. Craig takes attributions of knowledge to fulfill a need, which is to flag reliable or good sources of information. Humans living in a community need to distinguish between those who are better at certain things than others. We need to figure out whom to trust and whom not to on certain issues. One way to do so is to attribute knowledge to others. An interesting off-shoot of Mukherji's intricate discussion of this matter is the way he applies it to why Indian philosophy seemed to have nothing to do with science and why science remained at best in a nascent state in India. The reason, according to Mukherji, lies in the fact that science requires and depends on the notion of attribution of knowledge but Indian philosophy took the Vedas – the fountainhead of whatever is true – as authorless, *apauruṣeya*. It was not a body of knowledge meant for a complex network of attributions and withdrawal of attributions to humans. Indian philosophy also lacked the JTB analysis of knowledge for the same reason.

Such an analysis is meant to apply to attributions of knowledge. One may well contest the historical claim made. Surely, one may wonder, other factors

could have been at play. Surely, the notion of knowledge in some way or other must have been there in the various communities in India. It is after all a need, and not just a spiritual one but a practical one. But Mukherji's reply might be that the all important concept was not really a concept of knowledge at all, but something very different, more like a strong belief in the truth of the Vedas. This inhibited the growth of science. As a historical claim, it is a remarkable one, and should be considered for further discussion, both amongst philosophers and historians.

Since we have just touched on Indian philosophy, there is another view of Indian philosophy that Mukherji argues for which is unusually interesting. It is well known that Indian philosophy declined or rather was not practiced with the same fervor since the 18th century or so. The Indian intelligentsia took a great interest in western philosophical ideas. This is so even today with analytic philosophy taught and read across the nation at fairly technical levels. It is also well known that the Oxford philosopher Michael Dummett held the view that Indian philosophy was blanketed by the onward march of western culture spread through military conquest (14-15). There is something very obvious about Dummett's view. But Mukherji suggests that the view is mistaken. He quite correctly points out that "in the last century Western philosophy found no lasting foothold anywhere else in the non-Western world *other than India*" (88; italics original).

Other places had colonialism and its educational off-shoots, but India seemed to pick up on philosophy like no other place. This requires explanation. Historical explanations involve many causal factors. Mukherji mentions quite a few, but two reasons stand out in his analysis. One, the Indian intelligentsia was quite liberal by nature. Because of the philosophical tradition of debate between various schools of philosophy and a tolerant co-existence of many schools, the intelligentsia was open to new ideas. They were not automatically intolerant by nature. Secondly, the themes in western philosophy were not alien to the Indian tradition. Indian philosophy already contained much analysis of language and perception and monism and pluralism were as much aspects of Indian metaphysics as of western metaphysics. Since, the concerns of both philosophical traditions were very similar, the Indian intelligentsia did not feel that it was studying some alien system. They were studying something that was a continuation of their own tradition.

In itself, this is a startling thesis. But it does explain, at an intellectual level, the interest of some of the brightest intellectuals in India in philosophers like Russell or Kant. On a personal note, I have never seen students in India complain that they are studying something "western" when they study Kant or Husserl. They enjoy it as a legitimate part of human inquiry. Students in India study philosophy as if it is "borderless", to use a phrase introduced by Arindam Chakrabarti. Mukherji clearly has got something right in his analysis. One has to

assume, in his analysis, that liberality of thought, heterodoxy of opinion, is a critical feature of Indian culture. It is not easy to remember that we have been liberal. It requires some study of history and being just plain intelligent and sensitive. But once remembered, Mukherji's views do fall into a natural place. Indian philosophy was not blanketed, but came alive in a new guise in the study of western philosophy. The view sounds controversial, but I think it should be open to further criticism and debate, instead of being *blanketed* by those who practice Indian philosophy and who may blindly think that Dummett was right. Jonardon Ganeri uses the wonderful phrase "conceptual biodiversity" (341-2) to show what a philosophy without borders should mean. Mukherji's idea is that India, with its heterodox culture, has been the home of conceptual biodiversity for long and the popularity of western philosophy in India is a simple example of such conceptual biodiversity that we are so used to.

Now, let's go back to the view of consciousness. Remember, that the claim is that we need the notion of consciousness but consciousness is not a thing or a property of anything. I do not disagree with the idea that we need to see others as conscious agents, responsible for their actions. But I do think that while it is true that there is a gap that one always feels between any physicalist analysis and the actual feel of consciousness, calling it a need does not remove the gap. It appears that consciousness is a part of the order of things, *and* a part of the order of needs, and an analysis in the order of things is required to account for its existence, however hard the task might appear. There is both a need for a description of consciousness and a need for its ascription. Mukherji does have a long and excellent discussion of the hybrid nature of such concepts as meaning and belief and knowledge. By hybrid, he means that they are ascriptive by nature but are also *taken* as descriptive. But the problem with description, so far as consciousness is concerned, is that description is couched in third personal terms and our experience of consciousness at first hand, phenomenal consciousness, is always first personal. Science seems to be up against the problem that it has no vocabulary to handle such first personal experiences. Mukherji's claim is that such a vocabulary is not needed. The need for the concept of consciousness, according to Mukherji, is "essentially normative, with no demand for descriptive truth" (114). We need to recognize each other as persons and establish an ethical order. But one must still explain why we feel such a powerful demand for descriptive truth, while not denying in any way the pull of the normative in any way.

I will turn now to two topics: one, skepticism and the other, reflective pluralism. Mukherji has a much richer and more traditional notion of skepticism in mind than most modern philosophers do. When he speaks of skepticism, he is not thinking of brains in vats and the dreaming argument. He is thinking of the key character of philosophy as a dissenting voice amongst the dominant systems that claim some aspect of truth. This is a refreshing concept of skepticism, one that all of us can recognize and value, though we tend to forget that philosophy is

aligned strongly with such a conception. Mukherji, in Chapter Five, "The Skeptic and the Cognitivist", maintains that as science breaks away from philosophy, at any particular period of time, the skeptic steps in between the philosophical theory and the scientific theory and suggests that the ambitions of science are too high and they need to be lowered to the right level. Such a view is quite interesting, as usually we think of philosophy as giving way to science but no place for continuing skepticism is usually thought of. But Mukherji's idea is that that is too simple a view of what is actually happening. Portions of philosophy do branch off into science, but the skeptic cautions the scientist about the reach of science. A good example may be Noam Chomsky himself who thinks that linguistics is a science, but cautions about the reach of the subject, pointing out that there may be no semantics beyond syntax. He plays the role of both the scientist and the philosophical skeptic. What is interesting about Mukherji's view is the strong conclusion he draws from such an interplay between skepticism and science: "The labels *philosophy* and *science*, therefore, are not of durable interest; what is of interest is the role of the sceptic in restricting the scope of the new science at a level lower than its original expectations" (73).

The activity of figuring out how far the Galilean style stretches in accounting for phenomena that fall under inquiry is the activity that interests us. Here, the skeptical mind has a greater role to play, both in positing limits to science but also in making it possible to do science within its narrow domain of applicability. As an example, one that Mukherji mentions, is the development of linguistic theory within the domain of syntax, and the problems with its extension to semantics. Exciting research in syntax has not been accompanied with equal excitement in semantics. There is an explanatory weight syntax carried that semantics did not. Meaning may just be a normative need we have, not answering to descriptive demands, to borrow Mukherji's words. Mukherji's remarks about the relations between science and philosophy are not without examples from history. One I can think of is that of George Berkeley arguing for a better explanation of mathematical terms like "inifinitesimal" without which much of physics cannot be understood. Berkeley was skeptical of explanations offered, and despaired of an intelligible interpretation. Thus, he was engaging in a skeptical inquiry into the nature of mathematical terms employed in mathematics and physics. Descartes, of course, was skeptical about the mechanical philosophy of his day accounting for the mind. And his skepticism remains to this day, shorn of substance dualism. However, more such examples are needed to make the claim that Mukherji makes historically accurate. It need not be a historical claim entirely, actually. It can also be taken as a normative claim about how the relation between philosophy and science *should* be thought of than how they actually have played out over the centuries.

I had mentioned the distinction between cognition and belief above. We *cognize* whether our house has a door or not. We have a *belief* about whether God

exists or not or whether electrons exist or not. Small beliefs are not really beliefs, because, as Mukherji argues, to ascribe a belief to someone we also need the idea of a disbeliever. Beliefs are open to debate and challenge, not so for what we cognize. We may cavil about the correctness of this distinction, but Mukherji uses it to make space for skepticism. The skeptic does not have to bother about what we cognize (so we can say goodbye to brains in the vat or the dreaming argument). But skepticism has got a role to play in the beliefs we have. It is quite possible to be skeptical about *all* beliefs. This contention of Mukherji sounds reasonable enough and indeed, I think, of the many contributions the book makes, this is a significant one. For, Mukherji wants to highlight skepticism and its role in philosophy and science but he also needs to make intelligible space for it. That is precisely what he has done by securing cognition (where error is rare) and letting beliefs float more freely, thereby making skeptics enter the arena of belief without being ridiculed. It is a pleasing way in which different thoughts he has expressed in various articles join hands together.

Finally, reflective pluralism. What can this mean? Even though the whole book is an argument for reflective pluralism, a separate essay on it was desirable. I take the term to mean the following. The Galilean style of inquiry marches on, trying to account for phenomena. But it faces major hurdles, as the skeptic keeps pointing out, however inarticulately. The domains of inquiry that do not fall under the Galilean style are not, just for that reason, to be relegated outside the purview of reason. They too can be investigated, but the style of investigation changes. When we investigate reflective needs we adopt a different style of enquiry. We need to make space for such enquiry and not bow to the arrogance of science and think that science is everything and the rest is just stamp collection. Science accounts for very little of all that there is around us. The skeptic does not cease to inquire about the rest, but proceeds to inquire using different strategies. The adoption of such different approaches to different domains of inquiry may be described as reflective pluralism. Thus, if human existence and human psychology are to be best understood through literature, then so be it. Mukherji devotes Chapter Eleven, "Literature and Common Life", one of the best essays of the book, to such issues.

In a sense, reflective pluralism also implies a certain tolerance for different aspects of inquiry. It breaks away from the hegemony of science. It makes us realize that there are other ways to not just enquire but also live. For the current ways of life we have adopted are not particularly conducive to long term survival or even short term survival, if climate change predictions are anything to go by. Mukherji reflects in the last essay of the book, "Education for the Species", on the need to learn from the way tribals live in consonance with their environment. We need to understand and appreciate that they know things we do not. But we cannot do that unless we adopt the position of reflective pluralism.

Reflective pluralism is a strike against hegemony, period. If the Indian tradition of thought was liberal and tolerant, then reflective pluralism is a renewed attempt to capture such a tradition again, in a much richer manner, but also a more urgent manner. More needs to be said about it, though, and I hope more is said about it soon, not just by Mukherji but by other philosophers too. The book is well worth reading, but more importantly, it needs to be discussed widely, and for a long time to come.

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Notes

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2. Collected papers from vols. 16 to 20, vols. 22 to 27 and vols. 30 to 36 have been planned but not published yet.

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Contents

The Transcendental Method of Immanuel Kant
An Appraisal

S. Shyamkishore Singh

Abstract:

Immanuel Kant's "transcendental method" is a distinctive philosophical method which attempts to explore through argument the *a priori* conditions of experience. Kant questions how knowledge, in general, is possible, and how metaphysical knowledge about god, self and world, in particular, is possible. Kant has used the term "transcendental philosophy" to characterise his line of thinking in the formulation of his critical philosophy in which he has attempted to reduce the concepts of the pure reason to a certain number of categories which deal with the nature of both theoretical and of practical (moral) knowledge. His aim is to lay bare the transcendental nature of the features of experience which are present in the case of the *a priori* concepts which form the judgement, and also in regard the *a priori* principles of reasoning. These *a priori* features are characteristic of the *sense, understanding* and *reason* – the three faculties of the mind. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant has introduced the transcendental arguments in the logical order pertaining to the order of sense, understanding and reason. In this paper an attempt is made to discuss the nature of the transcendental argument which forms the *raison d'etre* of Kant's transcendental method.

Keywords: Critical Philosophy, Transcendental Argument, *A priori* Concept, Transcendental Aesthetic, Transcendental Logic.

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I

Immanuel Kant introduced a distinctive method of philosophical inquiry in his formulation of the Critical Philosophy.[1] Philosophers before Kant, such as Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, and Leibniz were satisfied to adopt to philosophy methods already achieved by the special sciences rather than to invent new and unique methods of inquiry peculiar to philosophical investigation. Thus, Bacon adopted the inductive method of the natural sciences; Hobbes and Descartes adopted the mathematical method; and Leibniz employed a combined inductive-mathematical method. Kant's method of inquiry diverges widely from that of the traditional empiricists, because whereas empiricism proceeds inductively from the facts of experience to hypotheses and generalizations grounded on those facts, Kant proceeds from experience to its necessary presupposition. This he demonstrated by means of arguments. Kant was aware of the difficulties involved in developing his unique method since it is not merely concerned with how we arrive at true knowledge about a specific subject matter on the basis of data from experience, or from the given premises to conclusion based on the accepted norms of inference. His method on the other hand, questions how knowledge in general is possible, and how metaphysical knowledge about God, self and world in particular is possible. In the introduction to the second edition (1787 A.D.) of the *Critique of Pure Reason* he wrote: "There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience…. But though all our knowledge begins with experience it does not follow that it all arises out of experience" (41). Kant's problem is: What are the necessary conditions of the very possibility of an experience, the formal features of which are space, time and the categories? Kant replied that experience is possible only on the assumption that the formal features found in experience are *a priori* conditions of experience. Kant called his method "transcendental" since it contained an attempt to transcend through argument what experience must presuppose (Scruton 142).

Kant did not however, formally expound the transcendental method in any part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Instead, he revealed implicitly the nature of the method through the application of the "transcendental arguments" throughout the book. Hence, in order to understand the transcendental method we should study the transcendental arguments. But it is not easy to know the logical features of the transcendental arguments as they do not conform to the pattern of formal deductive reasoning. This is so because the transcendental arguments are peculiar in nature. In the "Transcendental Doctrine of Method" which is the last part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant wrote that "all dogmatic methods whether borrowed from the mathematician or specially invented are as such inappropriate. For they only serve to conceal defects and errors, and to mislead philosophy… (592). According to Kant, "All philosophy is either knowledge arising out of pure reasons, or knowledge obtained by reason from empirical principles" (659; A 840, B 868). Philosophy inquires into the principles of pure reason and it is concerned with knowledge derived *a priori* from the principles. As Kant says, "*Philosophy* is the system of all philosophical knowledge" (657). Whereas, mathematics (as an *a priori* science) can be learned,

philosophy cannot be learned. "(We) can at most learn to philosophise" (657; A 837, B 865). He maintains that it is due to this peculiar character of philosophy that the method of philosophy cannot be explicitly described in precise terms.

II

Kant has used the term "transcendental philosophy" to characterise his line of thinking in the formulation of critical philosophy in which he has attempted to reduce the concepts of the pure reason to a certain number of categories which deal with the nature both of theoretical and of practical (moral) knowledge. He referred to this point in a letter written by him to his friend Marcus Herz (Copleston 206).

"Transcendental" is Kant's epithet for what is neither empirical (i.e. to be derived from experience) nor yet transcendent (i.e. applicable beyond the limits of experience). Those features in our organized experience are to be regarded as transcendentally established, which are the presuppositions of our having that experience at all. Since they are not empirical they must be structural and belong to the mind. This is about the transcendental nature of the features of experience. The same transcendental structure is present in the case of the *a priori* concepts which form the judgement, and also with regard to the *a priori* principles of reasoning. In the "Transcendental Aesthetic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we find the arguments in support of the contention that the essential features of experience are *a priori* and transcendental. In the "Transcendental Logic" of the same Critique we find the rules for and possibility of the employment of the *a priori* concepts. An *a priori* concept is one the elements of which are not related to what is immediately given in experience. Therefore, a transcendental deduction has to be employed since an empirical deduction is not possible because of the *a priori* character of the concept concerned. Kant calls an argument which purports to show that a concept may be employed in judgements "a *deduction*". Any deduction must be preceded by an *exposition* of the concept, that is, the clear setting out of its elements. An exposition which exhibits these elements as *a priori* is metaphysical. A transcendental deduction consists in showing that the employment of a certain *a priori* concept is necessary for some body of knowledge. It is also directed to showing that some *a priori* principle is necessary to the possibility of claiming that some class of judgments is objective. Transcendental deductions are employed in both the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* in more or less similar senses. The term "deduction" is used in the *Critique of Judgment* also, but not in the same sense as in the case of the first two *Critiques*, since the nature of the aesthetic and teleological judgements which the third *Critique* deals with are of a particular order different from those of the cognitive and ethical judgements dealt respectively by the first two *Critiques*.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant introduces the transcendental arguments gradually in the logical order pertaining to the order of sense, understanding and reason. Thus, we have within that order transcendental argument for the apriority of space and time, transcendental argument for the apriority of the categories, transcendental argument for the deduction of the categories within the scope of

"Transcendental Aesthetic" and "Transcendental Analytic". These arguments or deductions are progressively "validated" through additional arguments. In all these arguments Kant has made elaborate use of both analytic and synthetic methods. We shall discuss below some of the typical transcendental arguments.

III

As we have stated above one of the typical transcendental arguments is the argument that "space is a necessary *a priori* representation". We may quote here the second argument of the apriority of space given in the "Transcendental Aesthetic", which says,

> Space is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies all outer intuitions. We can never represent to ourselves the absence of space, though we can quite well think it as empty of objects. It must therefore be regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances, and not as a determination dependent upon them. It is an *a priori* representation, which necessarily underlies outer appearances. (68; A 24, B 38-9)

This argument can be paraphrased thus:

1) Those elements of experience without which experience is impossible are necessary;
2) Space is such an element of experience;
3) So, space is necessary;
4) Now, necessity is the criterion of the *a priori*;
5) Hence, space, which is necessary, is also *a priori*. (Wood 12)

In this argument Kant proceeds from experience to its necessary presupposition. He has pointed out demonstratively that experience is possible only on the assumption that the formal features of experience are *a priori* conditions of experience. The argument is presuppositional in nature because it logically brings out the formal elements of experience which are presupposed in experience itself.

In the "Transcendental Analytic", wherein the categories are deduced in that section entitled "Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding", we find again the employment of transcendental argument to determine the conditions of possibility of objectified or categorized experience. According to Kant, the Transcendental Deduction establishes the validity of general concepts of subjectivity. Kant argues that all knowledge involves the application of concepts to experience. Having shown that no knowledge is possible, not even self knowledge, without the general concept of an object, we can at once conclude that experience must conform to the strictures which that concept contains. In other words, experience must conform to the categories. But, the problem before Kant is "how subjective conditions of thought can have objective validity, that is, can furnish conditions of the possibility of all knowledge of objects" (124; A 89-90, B 122). In reply to this Kant writes, "Pure *a priori* concepts, if such exists, cannot indeed contain anything empirical; yet, none the less, they can serve solely as *a priori* conditions of a

possible experience. Upon this ground alone can their objective reality rest" (129; A 96). Kant's argument seeks to validate the categories in their empirical employment. "The categories are shown to be conditions under which alone experience of objects is possible and for this reason they are inferred to be *a priori* necessary in the sense of being valid for all actual and possible experience" (Wood 21). This stand point is stated by Kant, thus,

> The objective validity of the categories as *a priori* concepts rests, therefore, on the fact that, so far as the form of thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible. They relate of necessity and *a priori* to objects of experience for the reason that only by means of them can any object whatsoever of experience be thought. (126; A 93, B 126)

Kant takes as the underlying principle of the deduction the statement – "Concepts which yield the objective ground of the possibility of experience are for this very reason necessary" (126). This principle is definitional or analytical in character, and as such Kant did not furnish validation for this principle.

Kant not only professed the *a priori* necessity and validity of the categories, but also their subjectivity. The subjective *a priority* of the categories is deduced from the logical *a priority* of the categories. In this context Kant's doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception plays an important role, because the unity of self-consciousness is presupposed by the categories as the categories are presupposed by experience (Wood 24). Kant writes,

> All necessity, without exception, is grounded in a transcendental condition. There must, therefore be a transcendental ground of the unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of all our intuitions, and consequently also of the concepts of objects in general, and so of all objects of experience…. This original and transcendental condition is no other than transcendental apperception. (135-136; A 106)

Kant argues that the categories are necessary for objective experience which has inter-subjective validity. Experience is not possible without *a priori* concepts. Unity of consciousness is the ultimate, prerequisite of experience for it is through this unity that all my experiences (i.e. representations) are connected. Now, whatever is necessary to unitary consciousness is necessary condition of experience, and the categories are so necessary (Walsh 61). This is the substance of Kant's transcendental argument for the *a priori* necessity of the categories. As Kant writes,

> These grounds of the recognition of the manifold, so far as they concern *solely the form of an experience in general*, are the *categories*. Upon them are based not only all formal unity in the [transcendental] synthesis of imagination, but also thanks to that synthesis, all its empirical employment (in recognition, reproduction, association, apprehension) in connection with the appearances. For only by means of these fundamental concepts can appearances belong to knowledge or even to our consciousness, and so to ourselves. (147; A 125; italics in original)

Kant himself has summed up the argument under consideration thus:

> [T]he mode in which the manifold of sensible representation (intuition) belongs to one consciousness precedes all knowledge of the object as the intellectual form of such knowledge, and itself constitutes a formal *a priori* knowledge of all objects, so far as they are thought (categories). The synthesis of the manifold through pure imagination, the unity of all representations in relation to original apperception, precede all empirical knowledge. Pure concepts of understanding are thus *a priori* possible…. (150; A 129-30)

Kant refers to the self as "the transcendental unity of apperception", 'apperception' meaning self-consciousness, and the word 'transcendental' indicating that the unity of the self is not known as the conclusion of an argument but the presupposition of all self-knowledge. The very idea of self-knowledge leads us therefore to the unity of the self, as an entity over and above the totality of its mental contents.

In both the arguments showing the *a priori* character of space and time in the "Transcendental Aesthetic" and the *a priority* of the concepts of the understanding, in the "Transcendental Analytic", Kant made use of transcendental argument which proceeds from experience to the *a priori* grounds of experience as necessary to the possibility of the experience itself. Transcendental deduction consists in showing that the employment of a certain *a priori* concept is necessary to knowledge. As Griffiths holds,

> The conclusion of a transcendental deduction will be some general principle which states the necessary range of employment of the concept. For example, by showing that the concept of causality is necessary to objective judgement, Kant tries to prove that all the alterations take place in conformity with the law of the connection of cause and effect. (166)

Some critics have raised doubt about the very possibility of transcendental deduction,[2] and many others have tried to pluck loop-holes in the detailed working of Kant's transcendental argument. But if we take into consideration Kant's critical philosophy as a whole, the transcendental arguments are essential, because showing that there are *a priori* features in our experience cannot easily be proved by means of the generally recognised forms of arguments, such as, deduction and induction. We may recapitulate Kant's application of the "transcendental" throughout the structure of *Critique of Pure Reason.* This *Critique* is divided into two broad parts, viz. "Transcendental Doctrine of Elements" and "Transcendental Doctrine of Method". The former is sub-divided into two parts, "Transcendental Aesthetic", and "Transcendental Logic". In the "Transcendental Aesthetic" he analyses the nature of sensibility and says that space and time are its *a priori* forms through which all intuitions, which constitute the material of knowledge are given. In the "Transcendental Logic" he makes a further distinction between "Transcendental Analytic" and "Transcendental Dialectic". The "Transcendental Analytic" delineates the *a priori* forms and the principles of pure understanding. "Transcendental Aesthetic" and "Transcendental Analytic" together account for Kant's theory of

knowledge. However, Kant makes the clarification that so far as knowledge is concerned, the categories, which are the *pure* concepts of understanding, are necessarily limited by the conditions of experience. But so far as thoughts (reason) are concerned, they have an unlimited field.

Such a clarification leads to the issue confronted in the "Transcendental Dialectic". The point which Kant makes is that the *a priori* principles which are the necessary conditions of objective (i.e. scientific) knowledge have to be distinguished from the absolute metaphysical presuppositions which lead to the *Ideas of Reason* (i.e. the transcendental Ideas of Self, the World, and God), which cannot be confirmed since they have no basis in experience. The purpose of "Transcendental Dialectic" is to make an exposition of these *Ideas*, showing that entertaining these *Ideas of Reason* will lead to the "transcendental illusions", which are nothing but the fallacious presentations, in terms of antinomies, paralogisms, etc. by claims to knowledge about these absolute Ideas in "Transcendental Metaphysics". The development of Kant's philosophical thought and the arguments advanced in this respect are highly complex. About the "Transcendental Dialectic" and the "Transcendental Deductions", thereof, the distinguished Kantian scholar H.J. Paton has commented that Kant's thought is more difficult to understand than crossing the Arabian Desert (547).

It may be noted that if we consider transcendental argument as reasoning which proceeds from experience to its possible grounds beyond experience (leading in the end to the transcendental problems of illusion), we find transcendental tendencies in the philosophical works of contemporary philosophers like Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein (Körner, "Transcendental Tendencies").[3] We find "remarkable revival of Kantian ideas and modes of thought within analytic philosophy and other philosophical movements"(Körner, "Transcendental Tendencies" 551). Having regard to its abstruse intellectual exercise we have to admit that Kant's transcendental argument is a philosophical enterprise of very high order.

Notes

1. Kant has termed the philosophical view of the second phase of his career as "Critical Philosophy", which, according to him, is contrasted with the dogmatic standpoints which accept any dogma or opinion as true without proper scrutiny of reason. He claims that his philosophy aims at accepting as valid philosophical knowledge which is based on the verdict of reason alone.

2. See, particularly, Körner ("The Impossibility").

3. In an article entitled "Wittgenstein and Kant" published in *Gauhati University Research Journal of Arts*, Volume 34, 1983, the writer of the present paper has attempted a comparative study of Kant and Wittgenstein in respect to the transcendental approach of these two great philosophers

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The Problem of Scientific Discovery
Metaphysical and Epistemological Reflections

Sudhakar Venukapalli

Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to discuss the significance of the problem of scientific discovery to metaphysics and epistemology, which are of seminal significance for an adequate understanding of science as a cognitive inquiry and a creative human endeavor. This examination would enable us to recognize the wide ramifications of the problem and consequently guide our attempt to deal with it in all its richness. Traditionally, epistemology has always sought to serve the interest of metaphysics in the sense that an adequate epistemological theory is always sought to be shown as being implied by or at least compatible with a metaphysical theory. This is all the more so in the case of classical thinkers though such a metaphysical aspiration began to take a back seat in the case of modern epistemologists and was later declared illegitimate by positivists. With the demise of positivism it is in the fitness of things to revive that metaphysical aspiration. This paper explores the question to what aspect of human knowledge should an adequate metaphysical and consequently epistemology theories do justice.

Keywords: Scientific Rationality, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Positivism, Justification.

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1. Metaphysics and the Problem of Scientific Discovery

The central tenet of positivism, classical or modern, is its thesis that metaphysics is bereft of cognitive significance and science being cognitive activity par excellence cannot be said to have any relation with metaphysics. Even when scientists air metaphysical views and engage in metaphysical reflections, those views and reflections were taken to be extra-scientific having no bearing on their scientific activity. It may be noted that philosophy of science, of all philosophical sub-disciplines, was more dominated by positivism. It is this, which brought about the easy and blind acceptance of the idea of science versus metaphysics. It was taken as axiomatic that science is not only non-metaphysical but also anti-metaphysical in spirit. It is an irony of the history of ideas that the anti-metaphysical stance of positivism suffered its waterloo in the very home ground of positivism, namely, philosophy of science. The rise of anti-positivism in philosophy of science and the consequent realization that positivism provided not only a native but also misleading account of science highlighted those dimensions of science that were suppressed by positivism. The most significant of those dimensions concern the metaphysical dimension. However, the realization of the inadequacies of positivism has not been commensurate with the attempt to establish the respectability of metaphysics within philosophy of science. This is due to fact that positivism continued to linger even after its decisive setback. It may be noted that the anti-metaphysical stance of positivism and its invidious distinction between discovery and justification, which resulted in the declaration of the philosophical irrelevance of discovery, have fed upon each other. For the metaphysical thinking enters or characterizes scientific thought in the context of discovery primarily and not in the context of justification where only deduction of the test-implications and their experimental evaluation are undertaken (Jantzen 3211). Hence the total disappearance of positivism and the complete establishment of the bearing of metaphysics on science can be achieved only if problem of discovery is brought to the center of the stage in philosophy of science and, more than that, by bringing to bear the metaphysical idea on the very formulation of the solutions put forward in connection with the fundamental problems of science. This discussion would lead us to recognize the metaphysical ideas, which not only characterize part of the constraints that delineate admissible solutions, but determine choice as well as the terms of the constraints that delineate admissible solutions. They also determine choice as well as the terms of the construal of the problems themselves. In short, science and metaphysics regain via the problems of discovery a relation that was eclipsed by the dominance of positivism, this enables science to present for itself a picture, which is more authentic, and complex than was the one imposed on it till now. On the other hand, this enables metaphysics to further

consolidate its position and reestablish itself as the core area of philosophical thinking (Addis et al. 84).

It may be noted that the metaphysical ideas not only characterize part of the constraints that delineate admissible solutions but also determine choice as well as the terms of the constraints that delineate admissible solutions but also determine choice as well as the terms of the construal of the problems themselves. We can distinguish between two types of metaphysical ideas that are inseparably linked to scientific thought via the process of discovery. Elie Zahar (250-51) mentions with approval in this connection Emile Meyerson's Identity Principle, which consists in denying the apparent diversity of phenomena; or rather, in deriving this diversity from one fixed set of laws. If Meyerson and Zahar are right, the Identity Principle is one of those metaphysical principles, which are integral to science as a whole, such that different stages of science, at least the science of physics, are expressions of the different versions of such a principle. Apart from the above type of metaphysical ideas are those, which are peculiar to specific theories in science. One can mention in this connection Newton's metaphysical commitment to Cartesian metaphysics, wherein only mechanical pull and push are made room for, consequent upon extension being the only defining property of matter – a commitment which compelled him not to consider Gravity as something ultimate but to go in search of further explanation. It may be that many of these theories – specific metaphysical ideas are different exemplifications of the same metaphysical idea that underlie science as a whole. But this is not necessary. However, what is true is that whether general or theory-specific, the metaphysical ideas become more transparent through the magnifying glass of the problem of discovery precisely because metaphysical ideas enter at the formative stage of scientific theories. Metaphysics more often shapes the scientific ideas than decide their acceptance.

2. Epistemology and the Problem of Discovery

Epistemology as the most general inquiry into the nature and limits of knowledge is undoubtedly a normative study, in that it seeks to lay bare the norms that underlie the acceptance of our knowledge-claims. The growth of interest in the problem of discovery has brought to light new modes of tackling the central questions of epistemology. Thomas Nickles says,

> By now, study of historical cases has made many philosophers sensitive to the fact that to ignore discovery, innovation, and problem-solving in general is to ignore most of the scientists' activities and concerns, in many cases not only the most interesting phases of scientific research but also (more importantly) phases highly relevant to epistemology, e.g., to the theory of rationality and the understanding of conceptual change and progress in science. (2)

In understanding the nature of knowledge it is realized now, thanks to Popper's work, epistemology must concentrate on the way in which knowledge grows. The dynamic construal of knowledge has a radical impact on epistemology, which has traditionally construed knowledge in a static form. The study of knowledge in its dynamic mold can be best pursued by understanding the nature and rationale of conceptual change characteristic of all domains of human knowledge, be it ordinary perceptual knowledge or specialized types of knowledge like science, art etc. However, the dynamic quality of knowledge is most palpable in the case of scientific knowledge. Hence, a study of the nature and rationale of scientific change holds the key to the nature of knowledge in general considered in its dynamic aspect. But unfortunately, till now it was believed that the locus of scientific change lay in the context of justification rather than discovery. The study of scientific change with the belief in the exclusive emphasis on justification as constituting the locomotive has produced very questionable theories of scientific change and rationality. The positivists who relegated 'discovery' to the back-ground came out with the theory of cumulative growth of science, which did not fit, into the radical nature of the growth of science characterized by fundamental discontinuities. Their theory of rationality was so narrow that most of the scientific changes appeared non-rational or even irrational – a fact to which they turned Nelson's Eye in the name of logical reconstructability of science. Consequently, the gap between actual scientific practice and its logical reconstruction by positivists was so vast that it was doubted whether in any sense positivist construal of science had anything to do with real science. Popper fared no better. His construal of scientific evaluation consistent with his falsificationist spirit was too negative to account for the positive character of the growth of science, in order to do justice to which Popper had to dilute his original picture of scientific evaluation and had to make room for many norms like increasing empirical content etc., which almost amounted to giving a logic of scientific discovery. By their failure both Popper and Positivists gave a lesson for us, namely, that an adequate construal of the nature and rationale of scientific change must adopt discovery as the focal point of attention.

Another important respect in which the study of discovery can contribute to the enrichment of epistemology pertains to the resolution of a dilemma which epistemology is faced with at its present juncture. From its beginning, epistemology has been a normative inquiry into the nature of knowledge as distinct from areas like sociology and psychology of knowledge. In this context, Leplin maintains,

> The point of the traditional distinction between the contexts of discovery and justification is to insist on the normative character of epistemology. The point is not to dismiss from epistemology merely the genesis of ideas; into the context of discovery go also descriptions of evaluation practices and decisions. However ideas

> are created, scrutinized, and judged, it is only the approbation to
> which they are entitled, accorded or not, that allegedly matters to
> epistemology. (805)

But in recent years there has been a serious questioning of the normative aims of epistemology based on the contention that human knowledge is basically so much context-bound that it is misleading to talk about absolute and universal norms allegedly underlying knowledge and waiting for the epistemologists to unearth them. This has led to a descriptive reorientation of epistemology as illustrated by the rise of what is called, the naturalist epistemology. The protagonists of descriptivism even go to the extent of saying that epistemology should become nothing more than sociology of knowledge. Perhaps it is necessary for epistemology to retain its normative spirit but yet respond positively to the descriptivist demand. The problem of discovery, if taken seriously, can provide an avenue for synthesizing the descriptive and normative approaches and aims. A scientific discovery can be best studied in terms of the norms that the discoverer sets for him and as he formulates them in terms that are partly handed-down from the tradition of which he is a part and partly his own creations. A discovery always has both the dimensions of universality and specificity, calling for both normative and descriptive understanding.

Traditionally, epistemology has always sought to serve the interest of metaphysics in the sense that an adequate epistemological theory is always sought to be shown as being implied by or at least compatible with a metaphysical theory. This is all the more so in the case of classical thinkers though such a metaphysical aspiration began to take a back seat in the case of modern epistemologists and was later declared illegitimate by positivists. With the demise of positivism it is in the fitness of things to revive that metaphysical aspiration. The question is to what aspect of human knowledge should an adequate metaphysical theory, and consequently epistemological theories, do justice?

As Marx (33) very rightly points out, materialism failed to do justice to the activity involved in knowledge, and Idealism failed to construe this activity sensuously. Therefore, an adequate epistemology that can sustain an adequate metaphysical theory must make room for the activity involved in knowledge and must also construe it in sensuous terms. Science is one of the primary epistemic activities and nowhere can the activity involved in scientific knowledge be more palpably felt than in the process of discovery. Hence, a serious consideration of discovery process in science can have very positive implications for epistemology. It may be noted here that Popper rightly dubs the traditional theory of mind underlying the dominant theory of knowledge, namely, empiricism as the 'Bucket theory of Mind' and convincingly establishes its inadequacy (Popper 341). His replacement of the Bucket theory

of Mind by the "Search Light Theory of Mind" (Popper 346) is intended to accord recognition to the activity involved in knowledge-process. However, that recognition fails to play any significant role in the construal of knowledge including scientific knowledge since he relegates the process of discovery to the realm of the non-rational. In short, though the mind works in the Popperian scheme as a searchlight, the mechanisms of that searchlight do not play any role so far as the nature of knowledge is concerned.

In his paper "The Logic of Scientific Inquiry" Joseph Agassivery aptly says,

> Historically, in the best classical tradition of epistemology, the question universally recognized as central, was, do we know *a priori* or *a posteriori?* Now we agree that we do not know *a priori*; perhaps, not even *a posteriori*, though something *a posteriori* does happen: we do learn from experience. This, however, does not settle the issue at all. (223)

This means that our knowledge-claims are neither purely *a priori* though not purely *a posteriori*. That is to say, there are both *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements in it. However, the *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements are to be taken not in absolute sense but in a relative sense *i.e.*, relative to the specific claim and the context in which it occurs. In the case of scientific knowledge-claims, the *a priori* elements concern the problem-solution contexts, the constraints, the background knowledge, etc. The attempt to black out discovery, therefore, amounts to the suppression of the *a priori* element in cognition and results in a distorted account of knowledge. Consequently, it fails us in giving a correct answer to the question how much of our knowledge is *a priori* and how much of it is not and also in what sense of *a priori*. Hence, a serious philosophical consideration of the problem of discovery can shed light on the problem, which Agassi rightly calls the central problem of epistemology. The question whether there is a method that guides our scientific reasoning and if there is, to what extent the practitioner of science must be aware of it, has some bearing on this central epistemological question. Failure to raise these questions land us in a paradoxical situation generated by the following questions which Agassi (223) sharply raises: Do we possess knowledge of the Logic of inquiry *a priori*, or do we learn it? If we possess it *a priori* how can our studies in methodology progress, as they unquestionably do? If we learn it, if we learn about learning, do we possess the ability to do so *a priori?* or can we say, perhaps, that we are methodologically ignorant?

3. Conclusion

The contemporary philosophical debate on the limits of positivism is affirming the view that metaphysical ideas would provide meaningful direction to the processes of scientific inquiry and construction of scientific knowledge.

In other words, metaphysics plays a significant role in science by expanding empirical knowledge and deepening our understanding of the world. Therefore, the issue is not the relevance of metaphysics to scientific investigation, but what is important is, how to make decisions about competing metaphysical theories in interpreting heuristic explorations and scientific rationalities. Scientific communities in the history of science are systematically guided by metaphysical hypotheses and continuously enabled the scientists to arrive at better scientific theories and scientific discoveries. It is in this context, epistemology is construed as a theory of critical appraisal of scientific discoveries. Hence, an epistemology, which sustains metaphysical theory makes room for science as a cognitive inquiry and also construes discoveries in science in sensuous terms.

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Extended Mind Hypothesis and the Problem of Personal Identity

Surbhi Uniyal

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to see the implications of extended mind hypothesis on the questions of personal identity. One of the prominent criteria of personal identity is memory. If extended mind hypothesis argues for extended memory, then how canwe account for personal identity in such a situation? The paper will try to provide an account of personal identity most suitable in the extended mind hypothesis. The paper finds the narrative memory criterion along with a first-person perspective to be the most accurate account of personal identity in extended mind hypothesis. The paper suggests that the self doesn't extend to the environment beyond the body, in the strict sense, which is important to keep the individuality intact, while it is always embodied and embedded in the environment. It will also put forth the concept of the 'person in the world' which bridges the Cartesian gap.

Keywords: Extended Cognition, Extended Mind, Coupled System, Parity Principle, Personal Identity.

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1. The Extended Mind Hypothesis by Clark and Chalmers

The extended mind hypothesis was offered by Clark and Chalmers in their seminal paper "The Extended Mind." Their paper is an attempt to bridge the gap between mind and the world. It starts with a question "where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?" (7). As a reply to this question their paper offers a different sort of externalism, called active externalism which is based on the active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes. This reply is different from the other sorts of replies which state that what is outside the body is outside the mind, and externalism of Putnam which states that the externalism of meaning of words carries externalism of mind. So the sort of externalism offered in their paper is different as environment plays an active role in driving cognitive processes and there is no such demarcation between mind and body or mind and environment.

1.1 Extended Cognition, Coupling and Parity Principle

Clark and Chalmers argue that human cognition depends heavily on the environment beyond the boundary of the human organism. Human organism is linked with the environment in a two-way interaction and creates a coupled system which can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right. "Cognitive processes are alleged not to be all occurring in the head. It is alleged that the environment has an active role in driving cognition and cognition is at times made up of neural, bodily, and environmental processes" (Fahim and Mehgran 99). Therefore human cognition is said to extend to the environment. They took three cases of human problem-solving to illuminate extended cognition, which are as follows:

> 1. A person sits in front of a computer screen which displays images of various two-dimensional geometric shapes and is asked to answer question concerning potential fit of such shapes into depicted "sockets". To assess fit, the person must mentally rotate the shapes to align them with the sockets.
>
> 2. A person sits in front of a similar computer screen, but this time can choose either to physically rotate the image on the screen, by pressing a rotate button, or to mentally rotate the image as before.
>
> 3. Sometimes in the cyberpunk future, a person sits in front of the similar computer screen. This agent, however, has the benefit of a neural implant which can perform the rotation operation as fast as the computer in the previous example. The agent must still choose which internal resource to use (the implant or the good old-fashioned mental rotation), as each resource makes different demands on the attention and other concurrent brain activity. (Clark and Chalmers7)

By analysing the examples it seems that in case (1) the person uses simple mental rotation, while in case (2) the person uses a non-mental or

external rotation by pressing the button. In case (3) however, the person has a benefit of neural implant so he can perform rotation as fast as the computer. Andy Clark clarifies the distinction between case (2) and case (3), he said, in case (2) the rotation is done outside the head and the result is read in by perception, whereas in case (3) the rotation is bounded by skin and skull and the result is known through introspection.[1] Even though there is a difference between case (2) and (3) still both should be seen as equally cognitive as,

> The neural implant uses same algorithm for rotation as in case (2), it is initiated in a same way (by motor cortex activity), and it produces output in similar way (a retinal image). The difference is that in case (2) the processing is spread between the agent and the computer, while in case (3) all the processing takes place inside the agent. (Sprevak 504)

The question arises whether the cognitive processes can cross the skin and skull boundary? Clark and Chalmers finds it question-begging to object that case (2) is not cognitive only because it goes beyond the boundary of skin and skull.

They put forward 'parity principle' to support their argument. The Parity Principle states that "If as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, were it done in the head, we would have no hesitation in recognising as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world is (so we claim) part of the cognitive process" (Clark and Chalmers 8). So if an extended process functions like an intracranial process which is seen to be cognitive then the extended process is also cognitive. "The Parity Principle states that if an extended process is relevantly similar to an internal cognitive processes (save for having external parts), then that extended process should have an equal claim to be cognitive" (Sprevak 505). Therefore, "Cognitive processes ain't (all) in the head!" (Clark and Chalmers 8). Through this example Clark and Chalmers stated that the human organism is linked with the external entity in a two-way interaction and creates a coupled system that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right. The example is not merely to position the shapes ready to fit in a slot rather it is to determine whether the shape and the slot are compatible.

These cases state that human organism leans heavily on the environmental supports.Our mind works only when it is coupled with the so called "external props", without which cognition is not possible.

> It is pointed out that the components in the system have an active causal role, monitoring and controlling behavior in the same manner that cognition usually does, and removing the external component will lead to the fact that the system's behavioural competence will drop, just as it would if some part of its brain is removed. (Fahim and Mehgran 101)

Let us take an example of a shopkeeper who does long calculations for every transaction, he uses a calculator to do the calculations to make his work more efficient. If someday his calculator goes missing or stops working then it will lead to the drop in his competence and he might make wrong calculations which will have an adverse effect on his business. Therefore external support creates a coupled system with mind without which cognition is not possible.

Clark and Chalmers, then offered active externalism, which they defined as, "All the components in the system play an active causal role, and they jointly govern behaviour in the same sort of way that cognition usually does" (8). This type of externalism is different from the traditional externalism of Putnam and Burge. In the traditional externalism "the external features responsible for the difference in our beliefs are distal and historical, at the other end of a lengthy causal chain. Features of the present are not relevant" (Clark and Chalmers 9). As the features are distal and historical they are passive in nature and play no role in driving the cognitive process in the present here-and-now. Whereas in active externalism the external features are active and play a crucial role in driving cognitive process in here-and-now. "Because they are coupled with the human organism, they have a direct impact on the organism and on its behaviour" (Clark and Chalmers 9). If the external features are changed the behaviour of a person also changes. In traditional externalism of Putnam and Burge the features are not the part of subjects' ongoing mental processes, whereas in active externalism environment plays an active role in constituting and driving cognitive processes, it is because traditional externalism is a kind of 'content externalism' while active externalism is a 'vehicle externalism'. "Content Externalism is the view that the contents of the mental states are wide in that they fail to supervene on internal physical features of individuals" (Sprevak and Kallestrup 77). Content Externalism is the externalism about the intentional content of mental states. Like the meaning of "water" is determined in part by the external world, so the content of mental states about water is determined in part by the external world. Here the content of the mental state is determined by physical or social environment. So Putnam and Burge are seen to be content externalists as for them content of mental state like water (in case of Putnam) and arthritis (in case of Burge) were determined by the physical and social environment of the person and are distal and historical (Sprevak and Kallestrup 83). Whereas, "vehicle externalism claims that human cognition is neither brain-nor body-bound: our cognitive processes 'extend' outside the human body to include objects and processes in the external environment" (Sprevak and Kallestrup 78). Active externalism is, therefore, a kind of vehicle externalism where the cognitive processes extends to the environment.

In active externalism cognitive processes and mental states extend to the environment but this doesn't necessarily mean that consciousness extends to

the environment. Chalmers in his paper "Extended Cognition and Extended Consciousness" makes this point clear by arguing that consciousness requires direct access; therefore extended consciousness is not possible. Chalmers states that consciousness requires direct access while an extended process involves indirect access as it is through perception and action. What is distinct about extended mind hypothesis is that cognition can be extended through perception and action. As in the case of Otto, his belief is extended to the notebook by perception and action. Consciousness, therefore, cannot be seen as extended as it requires direct access and not through indirect access via perception and action. The extended processes

> [S]upport information that is only indirectly available for global control: in order to be used in control, it must travel causal pathways from object to eye, from eye to visual cortex, and from visual cortex to the loci of control. By contrast, the internal neural correlates of consciousness need only travel some portion of the third pathway, from certain immediate areas of brain to the loci of control. (Chalmers 18)

Extended process involves two-step availability, from perception it is made available to consciousness from where it is made available for action. This two-step availability is not possible in case of consciousness which involves one-step availability or direct availability. Therefore consciousness cannot extend as it requires direct availability which is not there in the case of extended process. So even if there is extended cognition there is no extended consciousness. Clark and Chalmers therefore states that "the mere fact that external processes are external and consciousness is internal is no reason to deny that those processes are cognitive" (10). Clark and Chalmers mentioned that some find this form of externalism problematic as they identify cognitive with the consciousness, whereas, consciousness means to be conscious of or aware of something. It involves direct access and first-person perspective over one's experiences. Cognition, on the other hand, is a mental process of acquiring knowledge through perception, thought, experience, etc. It may or may not involve consciousness, as there could be unconscious perception where one is not aware of perceiving something. Therefore there is a difference between consciousness and cognition, and hence should not be confused with each other.

Clark and Chalmers argue that the extended cognitive processes are as reliable as internal cognitive processes. "It happens that most reliable coupling takes place within the brain, but there can easily be reliable coupling with the environment as well" (11). If the external props are always available whenever we need them, then they are coupled with us as reliably as we need them. For example, if my mobile phone (which acts as my memory) is always there with me and I can avail of it whenever I need it, then it is as reliable as my biological memory. To reject these external aids just because of the fear of

damage or loss would be incorrect as biological brain also suffers from similar dangers like complete loss of memory or temporarily loses capacities because of intoxication etc. Andy Clark makes this point more explicit in his paper "*Memento*'s Revenge: The Extended Mind, Extended". He said that in order to respond to the serious concerns about the availability and portability or the non-biological candidates, there are some criteria which they have to fulfill in order for their inclusion in individual's cognitive system. The criteria are as follows:

> 1. That the resources be reliably available and typically invoked. (Otto always carries the notebook and won't answer that he "doesn't know" until after he has consulted it).
>
> 2. That any information thus retrieved be more or less automatically endorsed. It should not usually be subject to critical scrutiny (unlike the opinions of other people, for example). It should be deemed about as trustworthy a something retrieved clearly from biological memory.
>
> 3. That information contained in the resources should be easily accessible as and when required. (Clark 46)

These points state that for a non-biological candidate to be included in an individual's cognitive system, it is important that the resource is reliable and always available to the person.

1.2 The Extended Mind

Clark and Chalmers after proposing extended cognition moves further to propose that even mind extends to the environment. "In particular, we will argue that beliefs can be constituted partly by features of the environment, when those features play the right sort of role in driving cognitive processes. If so, the mind extends into the world" (Clark and Chalmers 12). There are cases where external factors make a significant contribution which constitutes our mental states like belief, thoughts, and memory. "This thesis which is called the Extended Mind alleges that the parts located beyond the agent's body can serve as the material vehicles of the agent's mind and accordingly these relevant components should be viewed as constitutive parts of the mind" (Fahim and Mehgran 100). Take an example of a person who is so occupied with his work that he often forgets about the meetings he is supposed to attend, so he tells his wife to remind him about his meetings. In this case his wife is acting as his memory, so his memory is said to extend to his wife.

Clark and Chalmers used an Inga/Otto example to explain their hypothesis of extended mind. First they take a normal case of belief embedded in memory, where Inga gets to know about the exhibition to be held in the museum of modern art and decides to go to see it. She recalls

from her memory that the museum is on 53rd street so she goes to the museum on 53rd street. She believed that the museum is on 53rd street even before consulting her memory. "It was not previously an occurrent belief, but then neither are most of our beliefs. The belief was sitting somewhere in memory, waiting to be accessed" (Clark and Chalmers 12). The second case is that of a person called Otto who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. "He relies on information in the environment to help structure his life" (Clark and Chalmers 12). He always carries a notebook with him wherever he goes. He keeps updating it by adding new information to it. When he needs any old information he consults his notebook. "For Otto, his notebook plays the role usually played by a biological memory" (Clark and Chalmers 12). So Otto also hears about the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art and he also decides to go to see it. He consults his notebook (which acts as his memory), which says that the museum is on 53rd street, so he walks to 53rd street to go to the museum. Otto went to 53rd street because he wanted to go to the museum and believed that it was on 53rd street. Just like Inga who had a belief even before consulting her memory, Otto also had a belief even before consulting his notebook. Clark and Chalmers considered both these cases to be analogous as the role which notebook plays for Otto is similar to the case which memory plays for Inga. The only difference between the two cases is that in the case of Otto belief lies beyond the skin.

The notebook is central to Otto's actions in all sorts of contexts, in the same way as ordinary memory is central in ordinary life. To say that the belief would disappear on the disappearance of notebook is similar to saying that Inga's belief would disappear when she no longer remembers them. Clark and Chalmers therefore assert that "in both cases the information is reliably there when needed, available to consciousness and available to guide action, in just the way that we expect a belief to be" (13). The extended memory is as reliable as the ordinary memory. Both the cases are on par with each other. For Otto the notebook plays the role which biological memory plays. Clark and Chalmers assert that notebook plays the same functional role which biological memory plays. Clark and Chalmers tries to summarize the points in the following ways to show how notebook fulfils to be on par with biological memory:

1. The notebook is a constant in Otto's life – in cases where the information in the notebook would be relevant, he will rarely take action without consulting it.

2. The information in the notebook is directly available without difficulty.

3. Upon retrieving information from the notebook he automatically endorses it.

4. The information in the notebook has been consciously endorsed at some point in the past, and indeed is there as a consequence of this endorsement. (Clark and Chalmers 17)

In this way Clark and Chalmers showed how Otto's notebook fulfils the criteria to be considered on a par with biological memory. This proves that the mind extend to the environment beyond the boundary of the skin.

Clark and Chalmers after proving the extended mind hypothesis then moves on to state that extended mind implies extended self. The self outstrips the boundaries of consciousness. The beliefs constitute who I am. In answering who I am, the boundary falls beyond the skin. Like in the case of Otto, his notebook is a central part of his identity. Therefore an agent is said to spread into the world. Based on this discussion, the next section will take up the issue of extended self in a detailed way and will see the role of extended mind hypothesis on the notion of personal identity.

2. Role of Memory in Personal Identity

Memory is an important concept regarding the investigation of personal identity, as it is through recollection that we establish our sense of being continuous person. That is to say, memory allows us to recall whether or not we are the same person that did X at a previous time which means that the psychological factors like memory, character traits, and beliefs constitute personal identity in contrast to the body. Even if there is a continuity of the same body or brain, still the absence of these psychological factors will cause the absence of personal identity. This paper takes memory criterion of personal identity since memory plays an important role in extended mind hypothesis (which argues for extended memory). Also, memory plays a central role in Locke as well as in the narrative account of personal identity.

In dealing with the problem of personal identity in extended mind hypothesis the question that is addressed in this paper with reference to the self is "who am I" rather than "What am I". Answering the question of 'who am I' consists ofstating ones beliefs, values, memories and future goals. Extended mind hypothesis does not fully deal the problem of personal identity. It does not mention about what makes oneself identical to oneself or what am I, it rather focuses on the question of who am I.

Focusing upon this question of who am I the paper will take narrative memory criterion along with Baker's first person perspective to give an account of personal identity compatible with extended mind hypothesis.

2.1 John Locke's Memory Criterion for Personal Identity

One of the prominent philosophers who offered memory criterion for personal identity is John Locke. Locke formulated memory as a criterion for personal identity in the chapter "Of Identity and Diversity" in his book *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* He states that two persons are identical to each other at different time only if they have the same consciousness. By having the same consciousness, he meant that they should be able to remember their past or that they should have the same memory of the past.

Therefore, consciousness which Locke refers to is equated with memory. So a person Y at time t_2 is identical to X at time t_1 if and only if Y have all the memories of X. For Locke even if the body persist but memory is lost, the person no more remains the same person. The identity of a person entirely consists in his consciousness. Locke's argument goes as follows:

> For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes everyone to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflect on it, that that action was done. (434)

His claim is that the identity of persons is dependent upon the memory of past actions and future goals, as it is through memory that we are able to remember the actions we performed in the past and identify them as our actions. His notion of personal identity can be formulated as: A Person X at time t_1 and Person Y at time t_2, are the same person if and only if they share the same consciousness. It is not the material substance in which personal identity lies, it is rather memory. Therefore, personal identity persists with the continued memory and not determined by the material substance.

The problem faced by Locke's theory of personal identity is that if one loses his memory then he loses his personal identity, he no more remains the same person. The theory which provides solution to this kind of problem is the narrative memory criteria. In narrative memory it is not only the person that retains the memory of his past as a story rather there are others who remember the past of the person and therefore helps him retaining his identity. There are non-biological elements like diary, mobile phone, laptops, and various other external aids where a person can store his memory in a form of stories, notes and pictures and excess it whenever it is needed. Hence, even if a person biologically loses his memory he can anytime refer to these external aids for retrieving his memory and this will help him in retaining his identity.

2.2 Narrative Memory Criterion for Personal Identity
The narrative criterion of personal identity states that what makes an action, experience, or psychological characteristic properly attributable to a person is its correct incorporation into the self-told story of his or her life. Narrative is a dynamic process that constitutes both the way we organise events and experiences of our life to make sense of them and the way we participate in creating the sense of ourselves. It makes sense for me to anticipate future experiences as mine, here what makes them mine is that it will fit coherently and accurately into my own ongoing self-told story. Narrative identity is a kind of psychological unity, not in a passive sense but in

an active sense where the experiences of a person are actively unified and gathered together into the life of one narrative consciousness by virtue of a story the person tells and giving them a kind of coherence. Being a dynamic process our narratives are not permanent rather they are in a continuous evolution and change. "Self is not a thing; it is not something fixed and unchangeable, but rather something evolving" (Zahavi 105). Stories are not accomplished facts, they are always in a process of beingmade and giving new meanings to life. The narrative is not a way of gaining insight into the nature of an already existing self as "I", rather self here is constructed through a narrative. Who we are depends on the story we tell about ourselves.

Who I am depends on the values I hold, the goals I want to pursue and the kind of life I aspire for. It is a whole process of combining the past experiences and values we inhere, the present experiences and the kind of life we wish to have or what we wish to become. Therefore self is a product of narratively structured life. The values or ideals one holds is relative to the cultural, political and social community one lives in. Therefore the notion of self can never be in isolation it is always in relation to others. Personal narrative is born out of experience and gives shape to our experience. We come to know ourselves as we use narratives to apprehend experiences and make relationships with others.

> As you and I are temporally extended (that is, persisting) subjects of experience, this appears to say that we persist by virtue of "identity-constituting narratives". Actions or experiences necessarily belong to the same subject of experience, and hence the same person whenever the right sort of narrative is in place. (Olson and Witt 421)

The narratives about who I am is told in a form of story to others or to oneself. There a consideration of other as narrative is a process of story telling and listening.

Stories involve an agent who is responsible for the actions done in the past which are subject to praise and blame. Narrative criterion implies that what makes some past actions mine is that it flowed from my central values, beliefs and experiences, that there's a coherent story I may tell uniting it to the other elements of life. Narrative criterion paves the way for moral life as a person can take responsibility of his actions done in the past and aspire for a better future by correcting his actions.

Paul Ricoeur gives an account of narrative self-identity where it states that personal identity in every case can be considered a narrative identity i.e. what story does a person tell about his or her life or what stories do others tell about him or her. In *Oneself as Another* Ricoeur distinguishes two different concepts of identity: "identity as sameness ('mêmeté') and identity as selfhood ('ipséité')" (3). Identity of sameness is the identity of something that is always

the same and never changes. Identity of sameness involves questions like 'Is the person x at time t_1 the same person y at time t_2?' Identity here is re-identified again and again as that which resists change. Identity here is of an unchangeable substance that remains same over time. The second kind of identity is the identity of selfhood or ipse identity which is concerned about the questions like 'who am I?', 'who did this' or 'who is the agent?' Therefore identity of selfhood is linked to the realm where actions are ascribed to the agent in the light of ethical norms. In answering the question of ipse identity i.e. 'who am I', a person is forced to reflect upon and evaluate his way of living the values he inhere and the goals he want to fulfil. In this kind of identity question the answer is given from the first person perspective and is a result of an examined life. It is in ipse identity that there is a consideration of the other as other than self.

The identity of selfhood is linked to a realm where actions are ascribed to the agent in the light of ethical norms. The question 'who did this?' can be answered by naming the person with proper name. Ricoeur asks a more philosophically challenging question, why do we use one proper name as a description of a person who from birth to death undergoes many changes? What kind of unity constitutes identity if there is no single feature of identity neither on physical level nor on the psychological level? According to Ricoeur this identity is constituted by a narrative i.e. to answer the question 'who' is to tell a story.

He therefore criticises Locke's notion of personal identity which is dependent on memory. Locke gave few examples to show how a person remains same by having the memory of past and his identity changes if the person is unable to recall his past. One example which he gave was that of a prince whose memory is transplanted into the body of a cobbler. In this case does he latter becomes prince of whom he has the memory or does he become a cobbler which others see him as? Locke says that the person remains to be prince as he has the memory of prince. For Locke personal identity extends as far as self-consciousness of the past actions and thoughts. Thus through consciousness of the self which encompasses different moments of its experience a person constitutes the unity of his or her own identity and on the basis of memory of oneself in past one recognises sameness of the self in different place and time. Locke doesn't solve the problem of loss of memory and split personalities as for him if a personal loses his memory he loses his identity. This problem of loss of memory could be solved in Ricoeur's theory as he talks about collective memory. "Collective memory signifies the transmission of shared experience that has been retained by the group" (Treanor and Henry 151). Our lives are interwoven with others therefore there is a group experience which is like that of family, friends or society. As we have group experiences therefore we have collective memory of the past. In

talking about collective memory Ricoeur is able to solve the problem where a person loses his memory. In Locke's theory if person loses his memory he loses his personal identity but collective memory is an alternative to it, as even if a person loses his memory still there are others who remembers his past therefore in this case his identity is not lost. Collective memory is the memory of a group of people who have had shared experiences. This is how when a person loses his memory there are other people to whom he is connected in this social world who have a memory of his past and knows that he is the same person. They remind him about his past and that person use that memory as his own to account for his personal identity. A similar view is offered by Olson and Witt in their paper "Narrative and Persistence". They call it social narrativism according to which we persist not merely by our own stories about ourselves but also by those that others like parents, partner or friends tell about us. "Our persistence might be determined not only by those that parents, friends, and biographers tell about us. People who never able to tell their own stories may persist entirely because of this" (Olson and Witt 428). In social narrativism forgetting our self narratives would not lead the self to cease to exist since the stories of others about ourselves could secure the survival of the self.

Ricoeur's narrative theory then serves as an alternative to psychological theory of Locke. A unity of a person over time is formed through narrating one's own experiences, namely, the narrative approach performs a bridge between experiences when they are recalled by that person. This is the basic view of the relation between the narrative account and the concept of personal identity. In the narrative account the person narrates his experiences of the past as his own. These narrations are put in the context of the whole life and are seen as a personal history of that person. They also state that it is only through the narrative reconstruction of our continuity through time that we make sense of our present self. Narrative identity is about reconstructing past, perceiving present, and imagining the future. This narrative is like a story which has characters, episodes, imagery, a setting, plots, and themes.

Next section will discuss how narrative memory is helpful in giving an account of personal identity in extended mind hypothesis. Narrative memory seems to be the most relevant criterion for the present discussion in contrast to Locke's memory criterion which faces various criticism based on memory loss situations.

3. The Account of Personal Identity in the Extended Mind Hypothesis

The extended mind hypothesis of Clark and Chalmers holds that cognition does not take place necessarily inside the head of the cognizer, it rather extends to the environment. In everyday life human beings are highly dependent on the environment for their cognitive processes. If a person has to

perform long calculations he uses a calculator to solve it rather than wasting his time calculating it mentally. Similarly if a person has to wake up early he sets an alarm on his mobile phone, to wake him up. A person also uses his mobile phone to record various information like a reminder for meeting a friend for lunch etc. We cannot imagine our life without these external props which help us in various cognitive processes. Therefore, according to Clark and Chalmers, cognition is not limited to the boundary of skin and skull and rather extends to the environment. Their hypothesis rests on the parity principle (discussed in detail in the earlier sections). Human beings are closely linked to the environment by creating a coupled system between them. The components in the environment plays an active role in determining cognitive processes, this is termed as active externalism of Clark and Chalmers.

They further argued for extended mind, where they state that it is not only the cognition that extends rather mind itself extends to the environment. As our mental states like beliefs are determined by the environment therefore mind is seen as extended to the environment. Environment plays an active role in shaping our mental states, which asserts that the mind is not limited to the boundary of skin and skull; it rather extends beyond the body to the environment. Clark and Chalmers used Inga/Otto thought experiment to explain their hypothesis of extended mind.

Now the question arises how do we account for personal identity in this hypothesis of extended mind? If the mind is seen as extended to the world by creating a coupled system, then what kind of personal identity is suitable to it? Can the very notion of personhood be extendable in a similar way as mind is? The parity principle which is central to the hypothesis will be helpful in providing memory criteria for personal identity. It is the narrative memory which is the most relevant to the extended mind hypothesis. The narrative criterion of personal identity states that what makes an action, experience, or psychological characteristic properly attributable to a person is its correct incorporation into the self-told story of his or her life. It is about having a continued psychological existence over time, such that one can remember things done in the past which matters to us and guide our current actions and plan our future in light of who we are. The framework of extended cognition and extended mind is well-situated to the narrative memory for personal identity. Let us see by applying it to the example provided by Clark and Chalmers, here Otto is considered as the same person over time by the memory he has stored in his notebook as his self-narrative. Being an Alzheimer patient Otto maintains a notebook which acts as his extended memory, the notebook also guides Otto's actions and records the beliefs he holds. It guides Otto that he has to go to the museum which is on 53rd street, just like in the narrative identity which guides person's actions and make those actions as his own. Otto is able to identify himself over time by consulting the

notebook which consists the beliefs he upholds, guides his actions in the present and help him construct a future goal and store it in the notebook. Locke's notion of personal identity would be a failure here, as in Locke's memory criterion Otto as a person would cease to exist as Otto, being an Alzheimer patient, unable to remember his past through the biological memory. It is only through the narrative memory that we can account for personal identity in extended mind hypothesis.

Let us take another case of Andy Clark's Memento example, He states that the hero (Leonard) in the movie Memento suffers from a form of anterograde amnesia where he is unable to construct new memories. He is trying to find his wife's killer with the help of notes and body tattoos. With these notes and tattoos he attempts to construct new beliefs to connect them up with his older beliefs as in the case of memory in order to solve the mystery of his wife's death. Clark states:

> At one point in the movie, a character exasperated by Leonard's lack of biological recall shouts: *You* know? What do *you* know. *You* don't know anything. In ten minutes' time *you* won't even know *you* had this conversation! (43; italics in original)

But the person who denies knowledge to Leonard has a very narrow sense of knowledge. It is through notes, tattoos and photos that Leonard is able to construct new beliefs each day and act upon it. Based on the parity principle these notes, tattoos or photos act as his extended beliefs. "Leonard's notes and tattoos could indeed count as new additions to his store of long-term knowledge and dispositional beliefs" (Clarke 43). This is the example which Andy Clark stated to show how beliefs extend to the environment. Even in this case we can see that it is through the narrative identity that one can account for personal identity. The notes and tattoos guide Leonard's future course of actions, it is through them that Leonard remembers what he ought to do. These notes and tattoos help him structure his life which is otherwise not possible. These notes and tattoos are also gathered from Leonard's environment, gathered from his interaction with other human beings around him, from the various photographs, albums recording his past life etc., generally by having a narrative memory through these tattoos and notes about himself. This is how environment helps to structure one's life and govern one's behaviour. Leonard is living his life in the quest for his wife's murderer which is his future goal, and he remembers this goal through the narratives constructed in the form of notes, tattoos and photos. In Leonard's self-narrative there is a character (Leonard himself), a plot or theme (mystery of wife's murder) and drama just like a story.

The other non-biological factors which constitute our memory, are other persons in our environment. Memory extends beyond us to notebook, mobile phone, laptop, or even to other persons in the environment. Just like

our parents who keep on reminding us about the various events of our childhood days. They tell us different incidents starting from the day of our birth. Even though we do not actively remember doing all the things still we add these narratives as part of our own personal history based on the memory of others. We do not live in isolation from the environment or the social world, being in a social world we are related to each other. Just like non-biological factors other persons are also important in our life for aiding various cognitive processes. Even if a person has a complete memory loss still there are people to whom he is closely related who help him to identify himself as the same person by reminding him of his past through various narratives which they remember about him, this is how his identity is kept intact. This is a kind of extended memory which is shared between different people to whom we are related. In this respect the difference between us, normal human beings, and Leonard is just a matter of degree.

Does it mean that the self/person extends to the environment? Through the notion of extended memory can we imply that even the self extends to the environment? According to Clark and Chalmers even self extends to the environment. They state that self/person goes beyond the boundary of consciousness and extends to the environment. "Most of us already accept that the self outstrips the boundaries of consciousness; my dispositional beliefs, for example, constitute in some deep sense part of who I am. If so, then these boundaries may also fall beyond the skin" (Clark and Chalmers18). Who I am involves the belief one holds and if the beliefs are extended to the environment then for them even self extends to the environment. They see a self as being spread in the world and not restricted to one's psychological states inside the head. They state that information stored in Otto's notebook is a central part of his identity as being a cognitive agent. That is why they say, "The information in Otto's notebook, for example, is central part of his identity as a cognitive agent. What this comes to is that Otto *himself* is best regarded as an extended system, a coupling of biological organisms and external resources" (Clark and Chalmers 18). In this way they argue that even self extends to the environment.

Many philosophers are of the opinion that the notion of extended self as proposed by Clark and Chalmers seems highly problematic. In order to problematize the notion of extended self, this paper will take the help of Lynne Rudder Baker's position against extended self. Baker argues that there are no extended persons (self), rather there are only enduring persons or subject of experience who have first-person perspectives.

> On my view, there are no extended persons, persons who extend beyond their bodies. However, there are enduring persons – subjects of experience, agents, who can think reflectively of themselves throughout much of their existence. (They have robust first-person perspective). (648).

Being a person means to have a first-person perspective, which makes them distinct from other living beings. What makes a person distinct from non-biological entities and other living beings is that she has a first-person perspective over her experiences. She is self-aware of having an experience as her own. One can have first-person perspectives only on one's own experiences and thoughts, this is what distinguishes one person from another. It is through the first-person perspective that a person is able to identify the experiences, actions and thoughts as his own. This first-person perspective would be lost in the notion of extended self, where the self is seen extended in the environment to biological and non-biological elements. If a person extends to the environment then he would no longer have first-person perspective rather he will have a third-person perspective. Objects in the world are known through third-person perspective even our own body is known through third-person point of view. If a person extends to the environment then even he will be known through third-person perspective like other objects. If there is no first-person perspective it would be tough to distinguish between persons and robots. It is through first-person perspective that we utter statements about "I" or identify actions and experiences as "mine". This is a unique kind of feeling generated in persons by the virtue of having first-person perspective over their experiences. In Otto case if Otto is seen as extended to the notebook than he is merely reduced to a non-biological entity with no first-person perspective. Here the person ceases to exist as a person and merely becomes a part of the coupled system.

Clark and Chalmers fail to provide a comprehensive account of extended self and leaves it as a passing remark. It needs more clarification as to what they meant by the idea of extended self, what is the notion of self for them. In his own paper, David Chalmers states that consciousness cannot extend beyond the boundary of skin and skull. Consciousness requires direct accessibility therefore it cannot be seen as extended to the environment. If consciousness cannot extend to the environment, then how can self extend to the environment? They should have provided a better understanding of what they meant about the self. Having a first-person perspective or being conscious is not extended to the environment, which is also mentioned by Chalmers. "Since consciousness requires direct availability, extended consciousness is impossible" (Chalmers 18). Self is where the consciousness resides, so if they state that self extends to the environment, then they should maintain that consciousness also extends to the environment. On the contrary, they state that self extends while consciousness doesn't.

Persons are embodied beings who are environmentally embedded, but they are not identical to the body which constitutes them. The bodily criteria of personal identity faces various criticisms. As body undergoes changes still the person remains identical to himself, so it is not the bodily criteria through

which a person persist over time. Even though a person is constituted by the body but it is not identical to it. The persistence condition on which a person continues to remain identical to himself over time is through the first-person perspective. Baker makes a distinction between person and organism (body), where she states that person endures by having a first-person perspective while organism endures by maintaining biological functions.

> The person's persistence conditions are first-personal, and the organism's are third-personal. Hence, it is possible for one to exist without other. The person is not essentially biological, but the organism is. (Baker 651)

A body or organism is known through a third-person perspective and is therefore in a public domain while having a first-person perspective is totally private and cannot be shared with others. Which makes a person distinct from others. Having a third-person perspective on body is to make it distinct and separable from the notion of "I"when we point at our leg and state that "my leg has got hurt", we make a third-person perspective on our body part (leg).

Baker concludes by stating that what constitutes a person may change but a person remains the same. "As long as the first-person perspective continues, so does the person, whatever constitutes her" (Baker 655). Therefore, according to Baker, a person continues to persist as long as she has first-person perspective. However since the first-person perspective cannot be extended beyond the skin and skull so can't person.

The paper takes up these two issues (1) first-person perspective and (2) narrative memory, to explain what is it to be a person and how to identify that person as the same person over time. No doubt, to be a person is to have a first-person perspective over his experiences and thoughts, which makes him distinct from non-biological elements and also from other living beings (animals). Only a person can have a first-person perspective which makes his actions, thoughts and experiences as his own. Through first-person perspective a person is able to distinguish himself from others as he becomes aware that he is not the other and is identical to himself. While it is through the narrative memory that we can account for personal identity in extended mind hypothesis. A person creates a narrative of his past, present and future through a first-person perspective, which makes him identical to himself over time. The narrative memory may or may not be stored in person's head, it can be stored in form of photos, or written in notebook or mobile phones or it can also be stored in other person's memory. The story one creates about oneself is totally from a first-person perspective, even if it is stored outside the head. The person through first-person perspective knows that these are his narratives. Through self-consciousness he is aware that the actions done in the past, the values he adheres to and the goals he wants to fulfil are his own and

not of others. Even when others help a person to construct his identity the person is aware that the narratives others are telling are his own.

Let us take Otto's case, Otto is aware (first-person perspective) that the memory he has stored in the notebook are his own. He has consciously written those narratives in his notebook which he constantly consults and knows that it belongs to him. Being an Alzheimer patient[2]it is only through his notebook that he is able to identify himself as himself over time. He adds new information in the notebook just like how we biologically create new memories, which we can consult whenever we want to. The notebook becomes his extended memory and functions in the same way as biological memory does. But does it mean Otto (a person) extends to the notebook? No, Otto does not extend to the notebook, as persons cannot extend beyond the boundary of skin. We cannot say that Otto's notebook is the person Otto, we can only say Otto's notebook is his extended memory, but not the person Otto. Similarly, when a person acts as other person's memory, we cannot say that these two persons are identical to each other, it is only the memory that extends not the person.

Person, in the strict sense, cannot extend beyond the body as the first person perspective or I-ness is something that is internal and cannot extend to the environment. While a person, only in its broad sense, can be considered extended because a person is always embodied and environmentally embedded in contrast to the Cartesian self.[3] Being embodied means that a person has a body which is spread/located in the environment and the environment affects person's beliefs, values and even his future goals. Therefore, a person is always a "person in the world". A person is not a purely mental/psychological being or a purely bodily being, he is rather an integration of both. He is a psychological being in the sense that he possesses first-person perspective while at the same time he is a bodily being in sense of having a body which is in the world and perform various actions. To say that a person is extended in the world is to assert that a person is an embodied being whose first-person perspective is affected by how/where his body is located in the environment. Following upon the arguments given in the "extended mind hypothesis", that mental states are dependent upon the environment, it can be argued that even the first-person perspective is dependent upon where our body is located in the environment. If two people, James and Sia, are standing in the room facing each other, then, James is able to have a first-person perspective of the room which is in front of him and behind Sia, while Sia will have a first-person perspective of the room in front of her and behind James. They both will have different first-person perspective of the same room just because their bodies are differently located, which affects their perspective of the same room. Similarly, our first-person perspective is affected by how and where our body is located in the world. Thus, first-person perspective is not a purely mental it

is always embodied and embedded concept. Just because we are embodied and embedded with first-person perspective, therefore, we are psychological-bodily being.

Person, in the strict sense, cannot be seen as extended beyond the body which is an important factor to keep the individuality intact. Extending person to the environment beyond the body will lead to the loss of individuality. We cannot held Otto's notebook responsible for the actions he performs, only Otto is held responsible for his own actions. As Otto is the one who has the first-person perspective over the actions he performs and not his notebook. Person is a moral being who is responsible for his actions and is therefore praised or blamed based on the kind of actions he performs. Only when a person performs an action intentionally through first-person perspective, can he be held responsible not otherwise. The external elements cannot be identical to a person as they lack first-person perspective which is internal to the person. At the same time this first-person perspective is based on a person being embodied and embedded. So, to some point, Clark and Chalmers are right in saying that self/person is extended in the environment and not restricted to the psychological states inside the head, in the sense of being embedded in the world and affected by itwhile they are wrong in arguing that self/person extends beyond the boundary of one's body. Extending beyond one's body leads to the loss of individuality, therefore, a person cannot extend beyond the body. It is this notion of being embodied with first-person perspective which makes a person unique.

"Person in the world" is dependent upon the environment as a person's mental states are based on the environment he is located in. Even the first-person perspective is based on where a person is located in the world. The concept of personhood cannot exist if there is no world. "Person in the world" is the one who acts upon the world and whose actions are morally evaluated. It is only because a person is embodied that he is able to act upon the world. Without a body an action cannot be performed, we need a body to perform an action. Like, in order to fulfil the desire to travel the whole world, it is necessary to have a body to move from one place to another and also to make necessary arrangements for it, without a body it is not possible to fulfil this desire. It is only an embodied person who is held responsible for the actions he performs. Being embodied with first-person perspective makes a person morally responsible for the actions performed by him.

The position which has been taken up in this section paves a way for ethical life in extended mind hypothesis where a person has a first-person perspective and identifies himself through narratives. When we ask the question "who am I?" We answer this question from a first-person perspective. Answering this question doesn't involve merely stating the facts about ourselves rather it leads us to reflect upon ourselves and know

ourselves better. In an attempt to tell the story of oneself person tries to recall the relevant parts of his life and analyse whether one is the person one wants to be. When I ask the question "who am I?" I also reflect upon whether the values I adheres to and the goals I want to achieve are the right ones or not. The question is the question of who, distinct from what. It is the question we preferentially pose in the domain of action, we ask, "Who did this or that?" In this way we attest that the action as his or hers that it belongs to one's own self. Reflecting upon oneself makes a person ethical as he reflects upon his actions and takes responsibility for them and then correct the wrong actions done in the past. When I ask myself who am I or how I should live, I draw upon a self-narrative which is an interpretation of my life and a life that has a past and a present and which I project into future and in virtue of it I make sense of my life. Narrative view talks of self as an autonomous agent in which one lives a life that one considers worth living. The agent is autonomous in the sense of leading his life the way he wants and reformulating or restructuring his life. Though the person is autonomous in deciding what he wants to do in his life, he is not isolated. He is always in relationship to others. We are social beings and we follow the norms of a society so a person though being autonomous follow these social and cultural norms in order to act morally. It must create a conviction of autonomy i.e. that one has the will of one's own, freedom of choice and a degree of possibility. Self-making is a means to establish our own uniqueness. This uniqueness comes from distinguishing ourselves from others, which we do by comparing our self-told account of ourselves with the account that others give about themselves. First person narratives help people to transform their self-identity to ones that permit them to develop understandings of their lives and its events, that allow multiple possibilities for ways of being and acting in the world at any given time in any given circumstance, and that help them gain an access to and express or execute agency or a sense of self-agency.

Person in extended mind hypothesis is considered a social being embedded in the world. Environment plays an active role in constituting a person and determining cognitive processes. Person is not seen in isolation from the environment and in doing so it bridges the gap between mind and the world, or self and the world. However, this does not mean that person extends to the environment beyond his body, person being an autonomous agent doesn't extend to the environment in the strict sense of extending beyond the boundary of the body. While, can be seen as extended in the sense of being embodied and embedded in the world. Person is "in the world" therefore the external world affects the mental states of the person, at the same time person is embodied and also have first-person perspective over all his actions and thoughts which makes him unique.

4. Conclusion

The paper provides an account of personal identity compatible with extended mind hypothesis. It starts with an exposition of the extended mind hypothesis and further discusses the theory of personal identity. It discusses Locke's view on personal identity residing in memory and then shows that it has problems. It argues that it is Ricoeur's narrative view of the self that supports Clark and Chalmers' view that the self is an extended entity, in a sense, because narrative memory tends to be not just in ourselves but in others too (including external props like notebook, mobile phone and also other persons). Paper then offers a challenge to extended mind hypothesis by supporting Lynn Rudder Baker's account of first person perspective against extended self/person. As first person perspective cannot extend to the environment. Following upon Baker it argues that to be a person is to have a first person perspective and hence a person cannot, in the strict sense, extend to the environment as first person perspective cannot extend to the environment. While on the other hand it is argued that first person perspective can only be had when embodied and embedded in the environment as the perspectives are of the environment. Thus, the environment is required to have perspectives. Still, the self cannot be extended as it would lose its "individuality". Thus the paper concludes by taking narrative memory and the first person perspective as the criteria for personal identity in extended mind hypothesis and suggests that the self is embodied and environmentally embedded but it does not extend to the environment beyond the body.

Notes

1. Andy Clark in his paper "*Memento*'s Revenge: The Extended Mind, Extended" has added one more case of Martians to substantiate his point. He added Martian player as case (4) whose natural cognitive equipment includes the kind of biotechnological fast-rotate machinery imagined in case (3). He suggests that in Martians case we would have no hesitation in classifying the fast rotations as a species of mental rotation. He argues that according to the parity principle the use of external rotation button, cyberpunk implant and Martian native are all on equal cognitive par.

2. Refer to Otto/Inga example given by Clark and Chalmers.

3. "[O]n the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it" (Descartes 54).

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Explanation and Understanding: United or Divorced?

Aradhana Gupta

Abstract:

In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore and critically examine the connection between explanation and understanding as discussed in the domain of philosophy of science. The question then is– are explanation and understanding independent of each other or are they co-related? For this purpose, it is primarily the positions of Bradford Skow and Michael Strevens that have been taken into consideration. Consequently, an attempt has been made to reach a middle ground between these two positions by stating that while explanation can exist independently of understanding, it is a necessary condition for understanding to be even possible.

Keywords: Philosophy of Science, Deductive-Nomological Model, Explanation, Understanding.

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1. Introduction

[As we already know] 'Explanation' is one of the central themes in the domain of philosophy of science. We speak of what an explanation is, its structure, when does something qualify as being an explanation and also about its various types such as causal explanation, non causal explanation, scientific explanation, mathematical explanation and so on. Now when we speak of what makes something a good explanation, we somehow bring into the picture a notion of understanding with it. For instance, when we say that A gives an explanation of the phenomena 'p' to B, we somehow assume that A understands p and its explanation. Thus, there is an underlying assumption here that there is a necessary connection between explanation and understanding. Wherever there is an explanation, it is accompanied by understanding. Now as intuitive and obvious this connection may seem to some, for some this connection is not that easy to accept. My main aim in this paper is to look at essentially what the relation between explanation and understanding really is and to see if this connection is warranted or not. For this purpose, I shall be looking at the arguments and positions of two thinkers namely, Bradford Skow and Michael Strevens.

In order to arrive at a clear understanding of their positions, I will be looking at the significant and relevant sections of their articles. The articles that I will be referring to are given below.

- Bradford Skow's article titled "Against Understanding (as a Condition on Explanation)".[1]
- Michael Streven's article titled "No Understanding without Explanation".[2]

Skow rejects the connection between explanation and understanding strongly and even attempts to show the problems in the positions of those (namely Elliott Sober and James Woodward) who take this connection to be given. But in this paper, I shall not look at these criticisms offered by Skow against Sober and Woodward. Instead I will only look at his position on this issue. On the other hand, Strevens seems to accept this connection to some degree and offers an account of three kinds of understanding, hence exploring the relation each of these has with explanation. Also it must be noted here that the reason for choosing primarily these two thinkers is that while Skow approaches the issue by taking explanation as the central theme and then inferring understanding as a condition for it, Strevens takes understanding to be the focus and sees how explanation comes into the picture. Thus, each of them approaches the same relation between explanation and understanding but from different standpoints.

Now for the purpose of clarity and convenience, I have divided this paper into sections, each section dealing with a specific theme. The first section deals with Skow's position on the Explanation-Understanding connection. The second section looks at Strevens' position on the same. Following which in the third section, I attempt to analyse both these positions and conclude the paper with the final remarks.

2. Skow's Views on the Explanation-Understanding Connection

Skow begins his article by stating that there is an important connection between explanation and understanding and that this idea strongly appears in Hempel's work titled *Aspects of Scientific Explanation*. It is primarily in this work that Hempel discusses his widely popular model of explanation called the Deductive Nomological Model. His model of explanation stated that there is an 'explanandum' (what is to be explained) and the 'explanans' (sentences adduced as the explanation) along with which a law must also be stated in the form of a premise. Skow here also quotes Hempel:

> A DN explanation answers the question 'Why did the explanandum phenomenon occur?' by showing that the phenomenon resulted from certain particular circumstances, specified in C1; C2; : : : ;Ck; in accordance with the laws L1; L2; : : : ; Lr: By pointing this out, the argument shows that, given the particular circumstances and the laws in question, the occurrence of the phenomenon was to be expected; and it is in this sense that the explanation enables us to understand why the phenomenon occurred. ("Against" 1; Hempel 337)

Here what Skow is signalling at is that Hempel assumed what he calls the 'explanation-understanding condition' in his model of explanation. According to this condition, "Something E is an explanation of some fact F only if someone who possesses E understands F-at least in normal circumstances" (Skow, "Against" 2).

So, for Skow what Hempel is asserting is that the DN model satisfies this condition. But Skow argues that if this condition were true, it would be a good tool to evaluate varied theories of explanation. This is because say, we have some fact F and it can be said to be an explanation of some phenomena E, and if we can arrive at an instance where someone possesses F without understanding E, then we can easily say that the theory is false. Thus, in a way the criterion of understanding can then be used independently to evaluate different theories of explanation. Further, Skow states that this Explanation-Understanding condition is widely accepted. He gives the example of Michael Friedman who in his paper "Explanation and Scientific Understanding" presupposes this condition. When he asked the question "What is it about scientific explanations that give us understanding of the world?" (Friedman5), he drew a direct link between the two. The other two advocates of this connection mentioned by Skow are Elliott Sober and James Woodward. In this article, Skow clearly states that he is against this explanation-understanding condition. He says that on one interpretation it can be said to be false and on another interpretation, it doesn't seem like a useful tool for evaluating theories of explanation. What he exactly means by this is explained in the following passages.

Skow begins his discussion by saying that one of the most prominent views in philosophy of science is that theories of explanation are (or at least ought to be) answers to why-questions (*Reasons Why* 9). He says that he agrees with this idea and is of the view that understanding doesn't seem to be a good tool in the

evaluation of theories of answers to why-questions. He says that sometimes it is said that a theory of explanation is a theory of explaining why. But this is not completely true. Here he mentions Bas van Fraassen whose theory of explanation is a theory of why-questions and their answers (see Van Fraassen). Further, Skow says that clearly a theory of explaining why and a theory of why questions and their answers is not the same. He elaborates on this idea by putting forward the logical forms of both the theories. According to the theory of explaining why, the form of the answer to the question 'why Q' is "Q because R if and only if…" (Skow, "Against" 4). On the other hand, the form of a theory of why-questions and its answers will be as follows. "Person P1 explained (to person P2) why Q if and only if…" (Skow, "Against" 4).

Here, Skow argues that since explaining is a speech act, in the latter case it is necessary that the conditions to be fulfilled for someone to successfully carry out the speech act must be laid down. But it is not the case in the former instance. But he is also quick to mention here that this doesn't mean that a theory of explaining why ought to do more than a theory of answers to why questions. This is because while a theory of explaining why can make use of the notion of an answer to a why question, it does not necessarily have to contain it as a part or even entail any such theory of answers to why questions. It is here that he presents the complete theory of explaining why which is given as follows. "P1 explained to P2 why Q if and only if P1 told P2 the answer to the question why Q in the following way/manner…" (Skow, "Against" 4).

Skow says that though this statement mentions the answer to a why question, it does not contain a theory of such answers. Further, here the 'way/manner' refers to the specific way of telling someone a proposition. But what is this way of telling someone a proposition that specifies a theory of answers to why-questions is not clear. Furthermore, Skow raises a problem. He says that though Fraassen's theory of answers to why-questions was different from the preceding theories of explanation (in the sense that these theories were theories of explaining why and not theories of answers to why-questions), according to Fraassen, the criteria for judging them all could be the same. But Skow says that this is problematic. When the theories are different, it seems quite obvious that the criteria to judge them must be different too. But then we may also conclude that if Fraassen thought that the criteria to judge these theories could be the same then there was no difference in his theory and the ones before him. Moreover Skow too seems to agree with Fraassen here that the pre-supposition that the earlier theories of explanation were theories of explaining why is false. For Skow, it is not just Fraassen's theory which is a theory of answers to why-questions; they all are. Furthermore, Skow asserts that it is the case that in the domain of philosophy of science, though philosophers agree that their aim should be a theory of answers to why-questions, they rarely map out their theories in this way. Instead they present their theories as theories of explanation.

Now what is most significant in Skow's article is that he comes up with the two possible interpretations of the Explanation-Understanding condition. The two interpretations are given below.

1) The first reading takes 'explanation of why Q' in the condition to mean 'answer to the question why Q'. It can be stated as follows, EU1: "A proposition P is the answer to the question why Q only if anyone who knows P understands why Q" (Skow, "Against" 7).

Skow here points out that in EU1 it is not merely the case that explanation is understood in terms of an answer to a why-question. But there is another change that is made that makes it a little different from the original version of the condition. Now in the original version of the condition, it is said that the explanation is 'possessed'. But when we talk of "possessing an answer to a why-question" what we are indicating at is that possessing an answer means knowing the answer. So there is a shift from 'possessing an explanation' to 'knowing a proposition'. Soon after putting forward this interpretation of the EU condition, Skow asserts that this interpretation seems false. This is because according to EU1, it seems that knowing why Q is sufficient for understanding why Q. But for Skow "Understanding is a greater achievement than knowledge, not a lesser one" (Skow, "Against" 7).

To elaborate on this point further, he gives the following example. Suppose Lester has no knowledge of the subject chemistry. But he is familiar with words and phrases like 'acid', 'basic', 'lemon juice is acidic'. Further, when he spoke to his doctor regarding stomach ache and was asked if he had consumed anything acidic recently, Lester replied by saying that he had consumed some orange juice in the evening. On another instance, Lester was shown by his niece a chemistry lab experiment wherein when a piece of litmus paper was dipped into a liquid, it turned red. Curious to know how this happened, he asked his niece the question – "Why did the litmus paper turn red?" To this his niece replied that she had dipped the paper into an acid. Here though Lester knew why the litmus paper turned red, he obviously did not understand why it turned red. So for Skow, while Lester knew why a certain event occurred, he did not understand why it occurred and this is a counter example to EU1.

However, Skow doesn't leave this discussion here. He tries to inquire about what more is needed for Lester to understand why the litmus paper turned red. One possibility he states is that Lester might need more knowledge. Lester needs to know more than just the answer to the question 'why did the litmus paper turn red?' Skow says that maybe Lester must know the connection between the event of colour change and the fact that the litmus paper was dipped into an acid. For Skow, this is a connection "in virtue of which the answer counts as the answer". This means that understanding why Q is not just to know the proposition that is the answer to the question why Q but in addition to also know something about why that proposition is the answer. Thus, EU1 is false.

Here a reference is also made to Skow's earlier discussion wherein he talked about reasons why and also why those reasons are reasons. In his earlier works, Skow had made a distinction between first and second level reasons, where he said that while the former referred to the reason why something happened, the

latter referred to why this reason for the event's occurrence is to be considered a reason (Skow, "Levels" 909).

2) The second interpretation of EU brings the attention not on the answer to the question why Q but on the act of explaining why Q. Here the reference is being made to the speech act of explaining. It can be put in the following terms, EU2: "Person P1 explained to P2 why Q only if, as a result of what P1 did, P2 understood why Q" (Skow, "Against" 9).

According to Skow, here having explained something is different from just telling, in the sense that when one explains something to another person, the listener must understand why an event happened. Further, for him, this interpretation is a little problematic because it competes with some other principles such as the ones given below:

> 1. "P1 explained to P2 why Q only if, as a result of what P1 did, P2 knew why Q."
> 2. "P1 explained to P2 why Q only if, as a result of what P1 did, P2 was in a position to know why Q." (Skow, "Against" 9)

Here Skow clarifies that by saying that principles such as the ones mentioned above compete with EU2 is not to say that they are all incompatible. In fact, according to him, EU2 entails these two principles. But then what Skow means to say by stating that these principles compete with each other is not very clear. Now, Skow argues that though this interpretation of the EU condition focuses on the speech act of explaining, that is not the aim of philosophers when they are looking for a theory of explanation. Therefore, this interpretation of EU doesn't seem to be acceptable.

Continuing his discussion of the two interpretations of EU condition, Skow brings the attention to the aims of science. If we view the aim of science in the light of these two interpretations, then we may say that either the aim of science of explaining "why things happen" means

• The aim of science is to answer why-questions; or

• The aim of science is to inform the public by means of performing the speech act of explaining why things happen.

For Skow, only the former interpretation of the aim of science has the possibility of being true because the latter seems hard to accept.

Thus to conclude, in this paper one of the central points that Skow makes is that there are these two interpretations of the explanation-understanding condition. Further, for him, while EU1 is false, EU2 though has the possibility of being true it is of no interest to philosophers in the domain of philosophy of science.

3. Strevens' View on the Explanation-Understanding Connection

Strevens begins his article by saying the following:

> Scientific understanding, this paper argues, can be analysed entirely in terms of a mental act of "grasping" and a notion of explanation. To

> understand why a phenomenon occurs is to grasp a correct explanation of the phenomenon. To understand a scientific theory is to be able to construct, or at least to grasp, a range of potential explanations in which that theory accounts for other phenomena. There is no route to scientific understanding, then, that does not go by way of scientific explanation. (1)

Hence, his main argument in the article is that to understand why an event occurs is to "grasp" the correct explanation for it. In addition to this, he says that to understand a complete scientific theory is to be able to at least grasp all the potential explanations which can be accounted for by that theory. Clearly, Strevens' primary aim in the article is to defend the connection between scientific explanation and understanding. He states that he is an advocate of the 'simple view' which can be stated as: "An individual has scientific understanding of a phenomenon just in case they grasp a correct scientific explanation of that phenomenon" (1). Therefore, for him there can be no understanding without explanation.

Before delving into this further, he first begins by describing what an explanation is. According to him, an explanation is a set of propositions with a specific structure. Secondly, he moves to the notion of grasping and says that to grasp an explanation is to grasp two kinds of things. Firstly, it refers to grasping that the state of affairs represented by the propositions do in fact obtain, and secondly, it refers to grasping that the propositions instantiate the given structure of explanation. Further, what Strevens does is to draw a distinction between two senses of the notion of understanding, namely, 'understanding why' and 'understanding that'. In order to throw more light on this distinction, he also gives the following example (3). Suppose there is a cat on the mat. According to him, there are two ways in which one can be said to understand this situation. Firstly, I may 'understand that' the cat is on the mat. This means that I am conscious of the cat's existence on the mat, the mat itself and also of the spatial relation between the two. On the other hand, I may also 'understand why' the cat is on the mat. I may know, for instance, that the cat likes the mat or that it was drugged and so it was lying there recovering. According to Strevens, the simple view is an analysis of understanding why. Thus, for Strevens these two senses of understanding are absolutely distinct and separate, that is, while in a situation, I may 'understand that', I may or may not 'understand why' or vice versa. Moreover, he argues that in the former case (that is, 'understanding that'), one ought to know and understand the relation between the objects involved, while such knowledge may not be there in the latter case. To elaborate on this, he gives another example (4). A person with little or no understanding of chemistry may know that water is made up of H_2O. But they will not be able to grasp this in the sense that is required for understanding the chemical properties of water. This is because for understanding the properties of H_2O we require some knowledge of the relation between the hydrogen and oxygen atoms in a water molecule. Hence, to understand that water is made up of H_2O, I must know the relation between the

hydrogen and oxygen atoms. Another example that Strevens offers is that of the Newtonian theory of gravitation (5). He says that suppose that this theory is correct and you know the main tenets of this theory and also the fact that it entails Kepler's laws. So that means that you know the propositions that make up the correct explanation of Kepler's laws and also that these propositions stand in the correct relation to constitute an explanation. But according to Strevens, it is possible that you may still fail to 'grasp' the propositions in such a way that they facilitate understanding. For instance, you may know that Newton's second law of motion is true, but you may still not know the entire contents of this law and if this is the case then according to Strevens, you are not in the position to understand the phenomenon that is explained by this law. Thus, Strevens' main point is that in some cases the kind of grasping that is needed to understand may be much more demanding in the sense that it may require a more "intimate acquaintance with the structure of explanation"(5) than that is provided by mere knowledge. So, there must be direct apprehension of the holding of the conditions of correct explanation. Moreover, this direct apprehension which is the fundamental relation between mind and the world, refers to 'understanding that'.

In his discussion of grasping, Strevens also brings into the picture the notions of 'factivity' and 'verbal articulation'. He says that it may be asked whether grasping is factive. This means that if we are to grasp that the cat is on the mat, should there a cat on the mat? It is here that he brings in the notion of a non-factive grasping. For this, he distinguishes between two components of grasping, namely, the psychological component and the obtaining of the grasped state of affairs. According to the former, there is grasping of an internally correct state of affairs, that is, here the existence of understanding is not dependent on the way things are in the outside world; whereas in the latter, it is the other way round. So, here, there has to be some sort of a match between the explanatory model and the outside world. After this he moves on to the second notion, namely, of articulation. Now the question arises whether what is grasped can be verbally articulated. Here he argues that to grasp a proposition does not necessarily imply an ability to make the proposition explicit. In other words, if someone is unable to articulate or communicate an explanation that they have grasped does not imply that what they have grasped is essentially incommunicable but only that he/she is not the right person for the job of communicating the explanation.

Further, continuing his discussion, Strevens emphasises on the correctness of explanation for there to be scientific understanding. It is not the case that an incorrect explanation can give rise to understanding. But before taking up any stance on the same, Strevens first attempts to put forward the notion of correctness as such. Here he gives the following example (7). He says that suppose the young earth creationists believe that the Grand Canyon was formed in a relatively short span of time due to a huge flood. Suppose that this argument for Canyon's formation is taken to be an explanation for it. Moreover, the young earth creationists can be said to fully grasp the various elements of this explanation. But according to Strevens, they still fail to understand the formation

of the Grand Canyon because their explanation is not correct. Here we can clearly see that for Strevens there is a strong and unbreakable relation between correct explanation and understanding. However, as mentioned before, Strevens also accounts for the possibility of the view that understanding is grasping in the sense of the psychological state wherein understanding is not dependent on the way things are in the outside world. Herein, the notion of "sense of understanding" comes into the picture. Moreover, according to Strevens, there is no need to argue against this view. Instead, the two notions of 'understanding why' should be allowed to co-exist, that is, a broad notion that requires the correctness of a grasped explanation and the narrow sense which does not mention any such requirement. This means that to understand a particular state of affairs in the broad sense then is to grasp a correct explanation of that state of affairs. On the other hand, to understand the same set of state of affairs in the narrow sense is to grasp an 'internally correct explanation' of the state of affairs.

Now it may also be argued that sometimes we may even understand false theories and thus, correctness of an explanation may be said to be standard too high for the notion of understanding. To elaborate on this idea, Strevens gives the example of high school graduates who, for instance, are expected to understand Newtonian physics irrespective of the fact whether or not it is ultimately correct (11). It is exactly here that Strevens brings into the picture the third sense of understanding. This is known as 'understanding with'. Strevens states that just like the other two senses, 'understanding with' also involves act of mastering a scientific explanation. To understand some theory in this sense is to then be able to use and apply that theory in explaining a range of events and phenomenon. In other words, "When you can explain, or grasp the explanation of, every phenomenon that the theory is in principle capable of explaining, you understand the theory completely, in the 'understanding with' sense" (Strevens12).

Thus, 'understanding with' comes in degrees, that is, the wider the range of phenomena that you can explain the better you understand the theory or explanation. Moreover, the notion of 'understanding with' does not require the accompanying notion of correct explanation. What is instead required is that the narrow psychological sense of grasping be in place. This means that 'understanding with' requires that the standards of internal correctness of an explanation be satisfied. Thus, both 'understanding why' and 'understanding with' "represent distinct epistemic achievements" (Strevens 12). Taking this discussion forward, he then talks about the position held by the 'simple view' on the notion of 'understanding why'. He states that to understand something in the sense of 'why' is to grasp the correct explanation of that phenomenon. This means that whatever has no correct explanation cannot be understood. But this is a problematic claim to make because counterexamples to this claim can be easily given. One such counterexample that he discusses is of the theory of relativity. Now we may know that general relativity is a fundamental theory. But we also know that it has no clear scientific explanation for it. Nevertheless, we can use relativity to explain a wide range of phenomenon. But explaining the notion of

relativity itself using the laws of nature seems impossible. The simple view would imply here that since general relativity does not have an explanation, therefore it cannot be understood. But according to Strevens, clearly this conclusion is not acceptable as it disregards the competency of physicists. According to Strevens, what is needed to respond to this counterexample is to distinguish between 'understanding why' and 'understanding with'. Though physicists may understand general relativity in the latter sense, they are unable to understand 'why' the theory of relativity is true.

   Further, he argues that 'understanding that' and 'understanding with' can be said to be preconditions for every explanation, in the sense that they are not the products of a correct explanation. These sorts of understanding do not arise out of a correct explanation. In fact they are needed for there to be a correct explanation. But on the other hand, 'understanding why' is not a precondition for constructing an explanation. Instead in this case, both explanation and understanding are to be understood as existing simultaneously in some sense. Also, for him, just like there can be degrees of a correct explanation (that is, there are be several correct explanations of the same phenomena) there are degrees of grasping and understanding too. This means that you may not be fully clear about how a certain explanation of an event works but you may still understand most of the elements of the explanation. So, while you may understand a phenomenon and its explanation well, you may not understand it perfectly. Furthermore, he takes the notion of understanding to be active, specifically the notion of 'understanding with'. What is meant by being active here is that understanding involves not just the mere activity of grasping facts and propositions but also their application to a wide range of phenomena. But then we may also ask as to why this component of 'being active' can't be ascribed to 'understanding why'. Here Strevens says that we may say that understanding why involves not just a grasping of the propositions but also the act of being able to construct an explanation from its parts. But it seems to him that this requirement is too strong to accommodate our everyday understanding talk. For instance, he says, that we may understand the tidal phenomena but maybe unable to come up with an explanation for the tides borrowing from gravitational physics because of a lack of say, physical imagination or mathematical creativity. So, instead we may place a weaker condition on 'understanding why' in order to make it active. Here, we may make the same claim as the simple view, that is, "to understand a phenomenon is to have the ability to see how its occurrence fits a correct explanatory model" (Strevens 15).

   Thus, for Strevens, there are three senses to understand an event or phenomenon. You can understand that it occurs. You can understand why it occurs. You can understand it in a way that you can explain other events under the same theory. So the question is – can there be understanding without explanation? To this he says that,

   • "There can be no 'understanding why' without a correct explanation.
   • There can be no 'understanding with' without internally correct explanations.

• There can be 'understanding that' without any explanations at all"
(18).

Therefore, while Strevens accepts a strong and unbreakable connection between understanding and explanation in the first two cases, he does allow for the possibility of some sort of a disassociation between the two in the latter case.

4. Analysis and Conclusion

The central aim of Skow's paper is to argue against the commonly accepted view that there is a connection between explanation and understanding. He also brings into the picture the two significant readings of the explanation-understanding condition and shows how while the former is false, the latter is not the concern in philosophy of science, thus showing that in the light of either of the two interpretations, this connection between explanation and understanding can just not be accepted. But it must also be noted that by arguing against understanding, Skow does not intend to outrightly reject this notion. He only wishes to assert that it is not a useful tool in evaluating our theories of explanation. On the other hand, the primary aim of Strevens' article is to establish this connection between explanation and understanding and though he sets out to seek an answer to the question – 'Can there be understanding without explanation?' he concludes with the thought that one single answer is not possible for this question. The primary reason for this being that he distinguishes between three senses of understanding and consequently, the relation between each of these senses and the notion of explanation has to be explored. Hence, no one answer is possible. Nevertheless, he does admit that in two out of the three senses of understanding, explanation is an indispensable part. So, in the cases of 'understanding with' and 'understanding why', no understanding is even possible if there is no explanation (though whether the explanation is objectively correct or internally correct may differ in the two cases).

What may be interesting to note here is the way both these thinkers approach the same issue. While, Skow sets out to argue against the view that imposes understanding as some sort of a condition on explanation, Strevens approaches it the other way round. For Strevens, explanation is in some sense a necessary condition for the possibility of understanding. Hence, borrowing from these two positions, we may conclude that though it seems clear that understanding necessarily does require that there be an explanation, that is, for me to understand a certain event, I must have an explanation for that event, we may at the same time say that the contrary may not hold. It may not be necessary that when I have an explanation for something, I necessarily understand it too.

In fact, this position seems to be a middle path in some sense between the positions of Skow and Strevens. Simply put, according to this new stance,

• In order for there to be understanding of a certain event, I need an explanation for that event.

• But for there to be an explanation of an event, it is not necessary that I understand the explanation and the event. An explanation can exist independently of understanding but not the other way round.

Now first let us look at the latter assertion. This assertion states that there is no necessary connection between explanation and understanding in the sense that an explanation of an event may not be accompanied by an understanding of that event. This assertion has been amply justified by Skow. His example of the litmus paper test is a significant instance of this. Clearly in the example, Lester despite possessing the knowledge and the explanation for the change in the colour of the litmus paper failed to understand the phenomena. This is because understanding and explanation belong to different epistemic levels. Simply put, mere possession of knowledge of an event and an understanding of the event itself are two different things. For instance, I may ask a student – 'Why do plants need sunlight?', to which he may adequately respond by saying that plants need sunlight for photosynthesis. But on further questioning, the student may fail to explain what photosynthesis is or why it is an adequate explanation for the plant's need for sunlight. This shows that while the student possessed an answer to the why-question, he did not understand the event in question. Thus, mere possession of explanation is not a guarantee of the corresponding understanding that may arise from it. Moreover, agreeing with Skow, it can be argued that understanding is in some sense a far greater epistemic achievement than knowledge. The primary reason for this being that the former requires something in addition to knowledge in order to qualify as understanding. Now what this 'something' is may be open to further speculation but Skow seems to be right in suggesting that this 'something' primarily involves not just a knowledge of the reason why an event occurred but also the reason why that reason is a reason for the event's occurrence. Hence, understanding is founded on knowledge of both first level reasons and second level reasons, whereas explanation involves only an exposition of the first level reasons to why-questions.

Now let us move on to the first assertion. According to this assertion, for an understanding of an event/fact to even be a possibility, an explanation is a must. This assertion has been put forward by Strevens who argued that there can be no 'understanding why' without correct explanations. Clearly in the present context, it is primarily why-questions that are being dealt with and so only the notion of 'understanding why' must be taken into consideration. Now in order to elaborate on this assertion a little more let us look at a previously discussed example again. For instance, after extensively discussing the theme of photosynthesis in class, I ask a group of students the question – 'why do plants need sunlight?'. Now in order to judge whether or not a student has understood this phenomena, my primary expectation would be that he/she is able to give an adequate explanation stating the reasons for the why question. However, in order to further ensure that the student has fully understood the phenomena, I may also

expect that he/she is able to answer the follow up questions too. Hence, the point here is that being able to produce an explanation for a certain event/fact is the first step to ensuring that the event/fact has been understood. Thus, agreeing with Strevens, it can be said that explanation is a necessary condition for understanding. For how can there be understanding of an event/fact if an explanation for that event/fact cannot be produced?

Therefore, the middle ground that emerges between Skow and Strevens' positions is that while there can be explanation for an event/fact without a corresponding understanding of the event/fact, understanding of an event/fact necessarily involves that an explanation be given for it. Although this position may seem epistemically complex, I believe that it still seems like a reasonable position to hold. Nevertheless, it is open to further challenges and criticisms.

Notes

1. Page numbers in all the citations to this article are given in accordance with the open access version of the same available in the website of *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*. The cited page numbers, therefore, do not correspond to the inclusive page numbers referred to in the 'Works Cited' list. For the open access version, see www.web.mit.edu/bskow/www/research/understanding.pdf.

2. The inclusive page numbers of this article informed in the Journal's web entry are dissimilar with that of the page numbers in the enclosed PDF version of the same therein. Hence is the mismatch between cited page numbers of the article and inclusive page numbers referred to in the 'Works Cited' list in the current paper.

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Genesis of the Frege-Geach Problem

Sushruth Ravish

Abstract:

One of the major objections to non-cognitivistic theories of moral language is called the Frege-Geach problem. It is named after Peter Geach who provided the most famous exposition of the problem and Gottlob Frege, from whom Geach claimed to have drawn inspiration. Although Peter Geach is most often associated with the formulation of the problem, he was not the first philosopher to highlight the eponymous problem. The paper begins with a historical look at the works of W.D. Ross, who in 1939 had presented an objection similar to Geach's and John Searle, who independently came up with a speech-act version of the problem. In the next section the article looks at Geach's works taken to be the most emphatic exposition of the concept. The paper argues that although Geach attributes the central theme to Frege, he does not mention any particular work of Frege, from where he is borrowing the insight. Most commentators also seem to have ignored this point. The third section of the paper attempts to trace the 'Frege-Geach problem' precisely to some of Frege's articles, namely "Begriffsschrift", "The Thought", "Negation", and "Compound Thoughts", to analyse how correct Geach's attribution of the problem to Frege is.

Keywords: Frege-Geach Problem, Geach, Frege, Begriffsschrift, the Embedding Problem.

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1. Introduction

One of the major objections to non-cognitivistic[1] theories of moral language is called the Frege-Geach problem (also referred to as the Frege point, the Geach test, or the Embedding problem). It is named after Peter Geach who provided the most famous exposition of the problem and Gottlob Frege, from whom Geach claimed to have drawn inspiration. Some philosophers hold the problem to have altered the landscape of metaethics and dealt a fatal blow to non-cognitivism (Fisher 91). Others claim to have devised ways to deal with the problem (see editor's comment in Fisher and Kirchin 341). However, what cannot be denied is the fact that the problem has attracted the best minds in the field of metaethics including R.M. Hare, Simon Blackburn, Mark Timmons, Alan Gibbard and Bob Hale. These philosophers have proposed elaborate responses to the problem, which in turn have spawned further debates and counter-arguments. In this paper, my objective is not to enter this intense debate but look at the arguments that started this entire discourse. Although Peter Geach is most often associated with the formulation of the problem, he was not the first philosopher to highlight the embedding problem. So to be historically fair, the first section of this paper briefly looks at the works of W.D. Ross, who in 1939 had presented an objection similar to Geach's and John Searle, who independently came up with a speech-act version of the problem. In the second section, I shall focus on Geach's articles – "Imperative and Deontic Logic", "Ascriptivism", and "Assertion", which contemporary commentators take to be the most emphatic exposition of the concept.[2] In the article, Geach attributes the central theme of his paper to Frege but does not mention any particular work of Frege, from where he is borrowing the insight. Most commentators also seem to have ignored this point. The third section of my paper will attempt to trace the 'Frege point' precisely to some of Frege's writings, namely "Begriffsschrift", "The Thought", "Negation", and "Compound Thoughts", to analyse how correct Geach's attribution of the problem to Frege is.

2. What is the Frege-Geach problem?

As mentioned earlier, the Frege-Geach problem is known by other names as well. It was first referred to as the "Frege point" by Geach himself ("Assertion" 449). In its general form, the Frege point can be expressed as saying that propositions containing predicates mean the same irrespective of whether they occur as part of utterances, where we hold the predicates to apply or as part of larger propositions (inside the context of other sentences), where they occur as *unasserted* (Blackburn, *Spreading the Word* 190). Consider the italicised propositions below:

(a) *It is raining*
(b) If *it is raining*, then the match is cancelled
(c) Either *it is raining,* or I am hallucinating

The proposition 'It is raining' is asserted in the first case but unasserted in the second and third instances, where it occurs as part of a larger complex of words. The Frege point holds that the proposition 'It is raining' means the same in all three instances.

Moral philosophers have built on Geach's formulation of the Frege point to argue against non-cognitivistic theory of moral language. Non-cognitivists claim that moral terms cannot have the same kind of meaning as other descriptive terms. In metaethics, the Frege-Geach problem is taken to argue that "there is no linguistic evidence whatsoever that the meaning of moral terms works differently than that of ordinary descriptive terms" (Schroeder, "What is" 704). A simple version of the problem could be understood using an example of the argument form *modus ponens*, involving moral terms (Blackburn, "The Frege-Geach" 349):

> (1) Stealing is wrong.

> (2) If stealing is wrong, then getting one's little brother to steal is wrong.

> (3) Therefore, getting one's little brother to steal is wrong.

(1)-(3) is held to be commonsensically valid, and is used in moral judgments. Now consider this:

> (i) He is working at the bank

> (ii) If he is working at the bank, he must have his feet in the river

> (iii) Therefore, he must have his feet in the river.

Obviously (i)-(iii) is not valid because 'bank' does not mean the same in all occurrences. The argument is then held to be invalid because of the fallacy of equivocation. This is the initial problem that expressivists (and non-cognitivists in general) face in explaining the identity of meaning (in this case, of the proposition 'stealing is wrong'). Expressivists hold that moral judgments in (1) are not descriptions but expressions of attitudes.[3] So they could say that (1) expresses an attitude of condemnation. This works well for simple moral statements, but it would be a problem in explaining what (2) means, because no attitude seems to be expressed there. The statement seems to be asserted without any indication of what the speaker is thinking.

For the expressivists, the critical task, then, is to explain the identity of the meaning in (1) and (2). Without accounting for the sameness of meaning in asserted sentences like (1) and unasserted sentences like (2), *modus ponens* would be invalid since we would be indulging in equivocation. The argument (1)-(3) would not be valid for the same reason if the sentence "Stealing is wrong" had different meanings in the two premises.[4] The larger problem plaguing non-cognitivists would be to explain how to justify "the seemingly innocuous and straightforward way in which we use and manipulate the same moral phrase across different sort of contexts when we reason and think" (Kirchin 113).

Geach's test is the use of Frege Point to the concept of conditional or negation to establish a more generic way to filter out illicit forms of non-

assertoric force (Dummett 349). Geach calls it a "radical flaw" to ignore the distinction between calling a thing 'P' and predicating a thing 'P' (Geach, "Ascriptivism" 223). For example, in (2), neither is it being asserted nor denied that stealing is wrong. Expressivists, however would read the meaning of a proposition like (1) to be given by the act of 'calling stealing wrong'. According to expressivists, 'wrong' is not part of the propositional content but has a non-assertoric force (like condemning or disapproval). However, when we take sentences like (2), there is no assertoric force attached to 'wrong'. But instead of comparing the correct and incorrect versions of *modus ponens*, Geach claims that the argument (1)-(3) is evidently valid and hence concludes that if one holds a non-descriptive theory of meaning while dealing with embedded predicates (unasserted contexts), then equivocation is engendered. Since such an equivocation would render the argument invalid, non-descriptvistic theories stand discredited. This strategy can be generalized to deal with not only moral terms but any given predicate.

Embedding problem can be understood as the general challenge that faces any metaethical semantic view, when it attempts to explain how moral sentences can have the same meaning both when it occurs on its own as well as when it occurs bounded in a context, say under conditionals, negation or disjunction. It can be said that the Embedding problem, specific to the constancy of meaning as it is, can lead to a more general set of issues tackled under the Frege-Geach problem (Strandberg 4).

Recent attempts at dealing with the Frege-Geach problem have focussed more on the problem of negation than on moral *modus ponens*. Consider (1) Stealing is wrong; and (4) Stealing is not wrong. Expressivists traditionally have dealt with the problem of explaining how (1) and (4) are inconsistent attitudes. If in the manner of emotivists, expressivists consider (1) to be equivalent to 'Boo! Stealing', then what inconsistent attitude would (4) explain is the question posed to them. 'Hurray! Stealing' doesn't seem to fit. Now consider: (5) Not stealing is wrong. Unwin (338) points out that expressivists have difficulty in explaining the change in the scope of 'not' from the subordinate context in (4) to the larger scope in (5).To explain the way normative terms like 'not' can switch between a wider and a narrower scope within the expressivist framework, is the newest version of the Frege-Geach problem expressivists are grappling with.

3.   Forerunners of the Frege-Geach Problem

Although Ross had written about the problem in 1939 and Searle in 1962, it is Geach who caught the world's attention through his paper in 1965. One reason could be that while both earlier works had limited themselves to metaethics and criticism of existing viewpoints, Geach through his invocation of Frege, struck at something much more revolutionary than the earlier writings. A brief look at these earlier works would help us appreciate the novelty of Geach's attempt better.

3.1 W.D. Ross

W.D. Ross, in his 1939 book *The Foundations of Ethics,* can be found to have clearly argued the Frege point, albeit in a different form. Ross criticizes positivists like Carnap, who understand all judgments involving the words 'good' and 'ought' as commands. Although, he concedes that certain moral statements of the form 'you ought to…', urge listeners to behave in a particular way, he points to cases where the obligation has reference to the person herself, or something in the past or possible future, in statements like 'I ought to do so-and-so' or 'if this and that were the case, you ought to do so-and-so' and argues that such statements can hardly qualify as commands. Hence, it is found that 'ought' can occur in genuine commands as well as plain statements. Yet, one can see that 'ought' does not change its meaning from one sentence to another. Further, talking about the meaning of 'ought', Ross concludes that:

> What distinguishes its meaning from that of the genuine 'do so-and-so' is that one is suggesting to the person addressed a reason for doing so-and-so, viz. that it is right. The attempt to induce the person addressed to behave in a particular way is a separable accompaniment of the thought that the act is right, and cannot for a moment be accepted as the meaning of the words 'you ought to do so-and-so'.(33)

He also takes objection to Ayer's claim that ethical statements merely express a state of mind, and are non-assertive. In his view, "whatever be true of dislike, it is impossible to disapprove without thinking that what you disapprove is *worthy of disapproval"* (34; italics in original).

3.2 John Searle

In his 1962 paper "Meaning and Speech Acts", John Searle makes an argument similar to Geach's argument using speech act theory. While Hare holds that to say *A* is 'good', is to commend *A*.[5] Searle reformulates it to be the case that in saying

(1) This is a good car,

what is being uttered, has the same function/use/force as the sentence

(2) I commend this car (Searle 425).

But here, Hare runs into a problem for there can be a host of sentences where 'good' is used in its literal sense but the speech act of commendation does not seem to occur (for example: 'I wonder if this is a good car' cannot be changed into 'I wonder if I commend this car'). Searle also felt that, while the meaning of the sentence 'I promise to pay' is understood by considering that it is used to promise, 'I don't promise to pay' is understood as 'I don't perform the speech act of promising to do it', 'This is not good' cannot be understood to mean 'I don't perform the speech act of commending it' (Schroeder, "What is" 706). Searle takes this difficulty to be arising from an attempt to identify the meaning of a word with a single speech act or a range of speech acts. He argues that in certain

instances (like in conditionals) this analogy between 'true', 'good', 'know' and performative verbs like 'confirm', 'commend', and 'guarantee' fails to hold. For him, the performatives only answer the question 'What is it to call something good?' but not 'what is it for something to be good?' He adds:

> [A]ny analysis of "good" must allow for the fact that the word makes the same contribution to different speech acts, not all of which will be instances of calling something good. "Good" means the same whether I ask if something is good, hypothesize that it is good, or just assert that it is good. But only in the last does it (can it) have what has been called its commendatory function. (429)

4. Peter Geach and the Frege point

Geach, as has been mentioned earlier, is by far the most invoked philosopher when it comes to the embedding problem. Geach's views on the topic can be found in mainly three of his articles "Imperative and Deontic Logic", "Ascriptivism", and "Assertion". In his article "Imperative and Deontic Logic", the most relevant part of the paper for us perhaps is a footnote:

> There arises here a difficulty for what may be called performatory theories of the predicates "good" and "true"– that to predicate "good" of an action is to commend it, and to predicate "true" of a statement is to confirm or concede it. For such predications may occur within "if" clauses; the predicates "good" and "true" do not then lose their force, any more than other predicates used in "if" clauses do; but "if S is true" is not an act of confirming S, nor "if X is good" an act of commending X.(54)

In "Ascriptivism", Geach's purported aim is to refute 'ascriptivists'. He labels those philosophers 'ascriptivists', who hold that

> [A]n action *x* was voluntary on the part of an agent A is not to describe the act *x* as caused in a certain way, *but to ascribe it to A, to hold A responsible for it.* (221; emphasis added)

Ascriptivists hold that there is no question of truth or falsity and when B agrees with C's ascription of an act to A, B is taking a quasi-moral attitude toward A. Facts cannot force B's view, since scientific facts would work in the descriptive domain and not in the ascriptive realm. Geach initially raises two minor arguments against ascriptivists. Firstly, ascription of an act to an agent does not necessarily mean taking up a quasi-moral attitude and secondly that moral blame can be distinguished from the judgment that a particular action was voluntary.

He then moves on to his major criticism that ascriptivists confuse between calling a thing 'P' and predicating 'P' of a thing. In an 'if, then' clause or disjunction, P may be predicated of a thing without being called 'P'. For example, "If the policeman is saying the truth, the motorist was over speeding" ("Ascriptivism" 222) is not asserting that the policeman is saying the truth. Different uses of the same terms cannot be encouraged, as arguments in *modus*

ponens then, would be rendered invalid. Geach uses Frege's distinction between predication and assertion to make his point. In order that a sentence in which 'P' is predicated of a thing, be called 'P', the sentence must be used assertively. However, 'P' can be predicated of a thing as a clause within another sentence, in a sentence used non-assertively. Hence, condemning a thing as 'bad' has to be explained through predication and 'bad' can be predicated without any condemnation (As in the case of "If gambling is bad, asking people to gamble is bad"). With this, he claims that it is pointless to explain the use of the terms 'bad', 'intentional', in terms of non-descriptive acts of condemnation, ascription or imputation.

The most elaborate treatment of the Embedding problem is found in Geach's article "Assertion". Whereas Searle and Ross had raised objections specifically against moral language or at least emphasized mostly on moral judgments, Geach seems to focus more on logic and language. Geach begins by presenting what he calls the "Frege Point":

> A thought may have just the same content whether you assent to its truth or not; a proposition may occur in discourse now asserted, now unasserted, and yet be recognisably the same proposition. (449)

In other words, whether we agree with the truth of the proposition or not, the content does not change. Although the Frege point seems evident, he believes that many confusions arise from philosophers missing this point. He feels that what is put forward as a proposition, neither is by default asserted nor does its content change when asserted. He is against using sentence or statement as a substitute for proposition. He rejects sentence as a substitute because it's possible that grammatically same sentences might occur as different propositions. Statements are also ruled out for they would appear contradictory if we talk about unasserted statements.

Geach makes several specific arguments to expound the Frege point. Following are the areas where Geach finds the Frege point making its presence felt:

i.   *Modus-ponens*
ii. Disjunctive statements
iii. Conjunctive statements
iv. Double-barrelled statements
v.   Statements with negations
vi. Statements with inherent assertoric force
vii. Existential statements
viii. Statements with descriptive fallacies

We'll look at each of them in detail.[6]

(i) *Modus-ponens*

Geach takes up Gilbert Ryle's claim that a statement cannot in the same vein appear as asserted and unasserted.[7] According to Geach, Ryle argues that in

hypothetical statements, the antecedent and consequent clauses are not assertoric and hence not statements. Geach feels that replacing statement with propositions solves the problem as Geach concedes the possibility of unasserted propositions, in which case, the antecedent and the consequent could be put forward without being asserted. He suggests incorporating Frege's assertion sign[8] explicitly, to resolve any confusion. Geach also responds to Ryle's criticism that modus ponens leads to infinite regress (Ryle claims that a principle of inference cannot appear as premise and hence argues that if 'if p then q' is needed as a premise to derive q from p, then by extension, 'if both p and if p then q' as a premise for the inference of 'q' from 'p' and 'if p then q'). He finds these unsatisfying as logical sufficiency is achieved by the addition of 'if p then q' to p while deriving q. Hence he rejects the notion of license that Ryle proposes. Geach goes on to show how *modus ponens* is legitimate, only if we were to assent to the Frege point.

Consider *modus ponens:*

(1) p

(2) If p, then q

(3) Therefore q

Here, in (1) and (3) p and q are asserted respectively, but neither p nor q is asserted in (2). But if (1) and (2) are considered as premises and we refuse to acknowledge that propositions can be unasserted, we have a problem of varying uses of the terms p and q. Hence anybody who alleges that p and q in (2) are not propositions, is burdened to show how (2) can stand as premise in if p, then q; p; therefore q. Thus in the given *modus ponens,* one can conclude that p and q are unasserted in the 'if' clause, p is asserted in the second premise, while q is asserted in the conclusion. Unless we concede this, it will amount to equivocation, and it would become impossible to make sense of the notion of validity and *modus-ponens*.

(ii) Disjunctive statements

Geach emphasizes the importance of the Frege point to logical connectives too. He asserts that we evaluate the truth value of disjunctive statements on the basis of truth values of disjuncts (even when neither of the disjuncts is asserted), and hence we must accept that the disjuncts have truth values independently of being asserted. Geach feels that not accepting the Frege point will threaten the very notion of truth-functional logic. He talks about the exclusive (*vel*) and inclusive (*aut*) interpretations of 'or' (*p vel q*; *p aut q*). In either of these cases, even if the entire proposition is asserted, individually neither p nor q is asserted. By holding that the truth value of the entire proposition is determined by the individual values of the disjuncts, we are obligated to hold that the disjuncts have truth values independently of being asserted and hence would qualify as propositions. He rejects the idea held by some "Oxford-trained philosophers" that sentences can have truth values only in so far as they are used to make statements, as it would clearly not hold in the case of disjunctive statements

(Geach, "Assertion" 452). He feels that to claim that the truth value of the proposition is a function of the truth values of the disjuncts had they been separate, is an empty statement as we are deriving their sense from the given statement and ascertaining their truth values, yet denying that they have any truth value in the combined statement. Geach finds this approach as nothing more than an unreasonable stubbornness to deny truth values to unasserted propositions.

(iii) Conjunctive statements

Geach considers it to be a mistake to think of '*p* and *q*' as not being different from the pair of '*p*', '*q*'. Conjunction, when asserted, is different proposition compared to its individual units (He gives the example of a street being mistakenly treated as a kind of a house). However, when it is not asserted, it can occur as a single proposition as in the case of 'if *p* and *q*, then *r*'. This is not to say that all conjunctions remain single units. This other kind of statements which can be broken up into separate propositions is called 'Double-barrelled statements'.

(iv) Double-barrelled statements

Such statements can be of two types. The statements of the first kind are those containing a phrase of the form 'the fact that *p*'. Consider an assertion 'X is aware of the fact that Y is corrupt'. According to Geach, it can be broken down into the pair of assertions 'X is convinced that Y is corrupt' and 'Y is corrupt'. Taking this to be a single proposition would lead us to a violation of the law of excluded middle. The statement 'Either *X is aware of the fact that Y is corrupt* or *it is not the case that X is aware of the fact that Y is corrupt*' would not be a logical truth and can only be agreed by somebody who holds that *Y is corrupt*. Geach calls such propositions "a double-barrelled" ("Assertion" 454) assertions and holds that even in questions, requests, and commands, this assertoric force persists with the phrase 'the fact that'. For example if one were to ask 'Is X aware of the fact that Y is corrupt?' there is still an assertion that Y is corrupt.

The other category of double-barrelled statements includes those statements that can be broken up into two separate assertions. In statements like 'X has pointed out that *p*' and 'X fancies that *p*', one can see that there are two separate propositions. In the first it would be 'X has maintained that *p*' and '*p*' whereas in the second it would be 'X thinks that *p*' and 'not *p*'. Even when embedded, these propositions continue to have an assertoric force. Geach gives the example of the statement 'If A is under the illusion that *p*, then *q*', where there is an implicit assertion of 'It is not the case that *p*'.[9] He proceeds to show that in cases of requests, commands, and questions too, assertoric force is retained.

(v) Statements with negation

Speaking about negations, Geach finds that the way a proposition can appear without assertion, a negation can also appear without rejection. Thus, it is possible to present negation of *q* without rejecting *q* as false as in the case of '*p* or else not *q*', or '*p* and *q* or else *r* and not *s*'. It is not polarly opposed to assertion.

Rejection of a proposition can also be understood as the assertion of the negation of the proposition.[10] He extends this understanding to belief structures and argues that there is no believing and unbelieving. It is only believing and not believing. There can be beliefs towards different objects, but they will not be opposites as beliefs. He makes an exception for emotional attitudes like love, hate, etc. They would be opposites as attitudes.

(vi) Statements with presumed inherent assertoric force

If one got an impression so far that hypothetical statements necessarily destroy the assertoric force of propositions that come as its parts, Geach dispels that misconception too. Consider a statement like 'If X is under the illusion that p, then q'. Here, both propositions, 'It is not the case that p' as well as 'If X is under the impression that p, then q' are asserted. Geach feels that these are special cases and barring these exceptions which can continue to assert even when embedded as a clause in other sentences (such exceptions typically tend to be of the double-barrelled kind we saw earlier) there are no expressions that inherently convey assertoric force. He believes, any attempt to find such an expression, are misguided, for even expression like 'it is true that…' can appear in hypothetical statements, unasserted. In most cases, the conjunction 'if' cancels all assertoric force and since it can be grammatically prefixed to any sentence, there can be a clear case of robbing propositions of assertion, without altering its grammatical structure or how it sounds.

Geach proceeds to consider ordinary expressions like 'it is true that' that seem to stand for the assertion sign. Though it is correct that 'it is true that p' is almost indistinguishable from 'p', it doesn't mean that 'true' is redundant (as in 'what the policeman said was true'). He mentions that Frege himself had attempted something like this but later rectified it. One could also argue that if 'it is true that p' is equivalent to 'p', then as we have earlier seen that p can come asserted or unasserted, it is a futile attempt. Geach also asserts that predicates are often mistakenly defined as that which is asserted of a proposition, but we have seen that same predicate can occur in an asserted proposition or unasserted clause. He criticizes Strawson for aligning with such a view when Strawson tries to explain predicates as terms which inject assertoric force into propositions. Geach refutes him by contending that predicates can be negatively presented and that the same predicate can occur in both asserted and unasserted propositions (for example in interrogative statements). Among 'P' and 'not P', one is not logically prior to the other, but both are grasped together.[11] Thus, predicates cannot have an inherent assertoric force. The matter is especially clear once we realise that predicates can be negatively asserted, in which case even if the proposition is asserted, the predicate is unasserted.

(vii) Existential statements

Existence is also a concept that Geach feels is often erroneously associated with assertion. Consider the proposition 'Either the Lochness monster exists or

many observers are unreliable'. The existence of the monster is not asserted. Giving the example of a 'goat-stag', Geach argues that mere 'goat-stag' is neither true nor false but 'there is a goat-stag' can be true or false without ever being asserted by anybody. He dismisses any attempt to show that the above examples are not existential statements, (in the purported absence of judgment of existence) by saying that 'there is an A' is undeniably a proposition different from 'A'.

(viii) Statements with 'descriptive fallacies'

Geach now looks into theories that hold that predicating some term 'P' is not describing an object but performing some other thing. According to these theories, to hold the view that predicates indeed describe what the object is, considered to be the 'descriptive fallacy'. According to these theories, to say a proposition is true is to confirm or concede it and to utter something as bad is to condemn it. Thus, it is claimed that we don't state what happened but ascribe the act to the subject. Geach believes that all such theories would fail to account for those cases where same sentences appear in 'if…, then' clauses. He gives the example of the statement, 'If what the policeman said is true, then…'. In this case there need not be any agreement with what the policeman is saying. Extending the argument, in any given 'if' clause, there is no ascription or moral verdict that is passed. However, if anti-descriptivists were to say that same form of words can have different uses, they'll have greater problems. Geach contends that we'll be bogged down by the problem of equivocation discussed earlier. He illustrates another example in moral reasoning:

If doing a thing is bad, getting your little brother to do it is bad
Tormenting the cat is bad
Ergo, getting your little brother to torment the cat is bad

Geach argues that 'bad' should mean the same in all four occurrences. One cannot shift the meaning from evaluative to descriptive, among the premises. In the major premise, it is clear that the speaker is not condemning 'doing a thing'. Geach claims that 'bad', like predicates earlier, has no inherent assertoric force.

5. Finding Frege in the Frege-Geach problem

Interestingly, Geach never gives any citation for his 'Frege Point'. He only claims that Frege had made this point in his youthful work, "Begriffsschrift" (Geach, "Assertion" 449). During my literature review, most of the references to the origin of Frege-Geach or the Embedding problem stopped at Geach[12] and rarely mentioned any of Frege's works. Some made thematic references to Frege's distinction between assertion and predication or to his treatment of 'not'.[13] Strangely, I did not come across any author citing "Begriffsschrift" itself, as the source of the Frege point. Given the plethora of responses to the Frege-Geach problem and intricate developments in the field, perhaps most scholars choose to focus on the repercussions of the problem rather than investigating its genesis.[14] Reasonable though such a strategy is, it creates space for an interested researcher

today, to take a closer look at the justification of Geach's attribution of the Frege point. The task, in such a case, would be to find out how much of Frege is present in the Frege-Geach Problem. This section undertakes such an exegetical attempt to look at "Begriffsschrift" and Frege's later writings to find out how deeply the Frege point was embedded in Fregean thought.

Before we undertake such a study, it might be pertinent to familiarise ourselves with some of the terms that Frege uses, namely thought, judgment and assertion.

(a) Thought: For Frege, what we communicate through sentences is the content of the sentence. Thought is that part of the content of a sentence that can be taken as true/false.[15] Thought is the sense of the sentence and becomes comprehensible to us through sentences. If two sentences convey the same thing, then what is common to them can be called as the thought.[16]

(b) Judgment: The act of acknowledgement and not mere comprehension of a thought is called as Judgment. It is perhaps a mental acceptance of the truth of a thought. Judgment does not alter the thought that is being recognised as true. However, grasp and expression of a thought can happen without judgment (as in the case of poetry).

(c) Assertion: It is the external act corresponding to the inner act of judgment. A sentence uttered with an assertoric force makes the judgment explicit. Assertion is an action and is completely different from the formation of content.

Here is Frege describing the above mentioned distinctions in his own words:

> An interrogative sentence and an indicative one contain the same thought; but the indicative contains something else as well, namely, the assertion. The interrogative sentence contains something more too, namely a request. Therefore two things must be distinguished in an indicative sentence: the content … and the assertion. The former is the thought, or at least contains the thought. So it is possible to express the thought without laying it down as true. Both are so closely joined in an indicative sentence that it is easy to overlook their separability. Consequently we may distinguish:
> (1) the apprehension of a thought—thinking,
> (2) the recognition of the truth of a thought—judgment,
> (3) the manifestation of this judgment—assertion. ("The Thought" 294)

Another key aspect of Frege's theory is the Assertion sign '|—'. He uses this to express judgments, by situating them to the left of the expression that indicates the content. The sign comprises of the horizontal stroke '—', called the content stroke and the vertical stroke '|' called the judgment stroke. Without the judgment stroke, all that will remain are a bunch of ideas without an acknowledgement of truth. No judgment is possible without it. He elaborates:

> For example, let |—*A* stand for the judgment 'Opposite magnetic poles attract each other'; then —*A* will not express this judgment; it is to produce in the reader merely the idea of the mutual attraction of opposite magnetic poles, say in order to derive consequences from it and to test by means of these, whether the thought is correct. When the vertical stroke is omitted, we express ourselves *paraphrastically*, using the words 'the circumstance that' or 'the proposition that'….*The horizontal stroke* that is part of the sign |— *combines the signs that follow it into a totality, and the affirmation expressed by the vertical stroke at the left end of the horizontal one refers to this totality.* Let us call the horizontal stroke the *content stroke* and the vertical stroke the *judgment stroke.* ("The Thought" 311; italics in original)

It is not very difficult to see that the separation of the content from the assertoric force is clearly indicated. Perhaps this is what inspired Geach to phrase the Frege point, since the content of a sentence is detached from the act of assertion, in other words, the thought and the assertoric force are separated. This appears to the closest reference to what Geach affirms in "Assertion". The rest of the sections in "Begriffsschrift" tackle particular aspects in modes of inference in conditionality, negation and the like. However, "Begriffsschrift" is not the only work where Frege engages with the concepts of assertion and content. Therefore, one could explore if some of his other works contain more direct and clear pronouncements to the effect.

"Negation" is an article that offers one such hope. Here, making a difference between indicative and interrogative sentence, Frege says:

> [I]n an interrogative sentence neither the truth nor the falsity of the sense may be asserted. Hence an interrogative sentence has not as its sense something whose being consists in its being true. The very nature of a question demands a separation between the acts of grasping a sense and of judging. (119)

This sense of the interrogative sentence is called thought by Frege:

> Thoughts that perhaps turn out later on to be false have a justifiable use in science, and must not be treated as having no being. Consider indirect proof; here knowledge of the truth is attained precisely through our grasping a false thought. The teacher says 'suppose a were not equal to b.' A beginner at once thinks 'What nonsense! I can see that 'a is equal to b'; he is confusing the senselessness of a sentence with the falsity of the thought expressed in it. (119)

As we will see later in the section also, Frege's examples are mainly mathematical and scientific. Here he seems to feel that in scientific investigations too, falsity is useful. Even if a question is false, we still are able to make sense of it. Further in the article, he takes the help of the conditional – 'If the accused was in Rome at the time of the deed, then he did not commit the murder.' Frege argues that:

> [T]he thought contained in the sentence may be acknowledged as true by someone who does not know if the accused was in Rome at the time of the deed nor if he committed the murder. Of the two component thoughts contained in the whole, neither the antecedent nor the consequent is being uttered assertively when the whole is presented as true. We have then only a single act of judgment, but three thoughts, viz. the whole thought, the antecedent, and the consequent. (120)

This perhaps is one of the clearest hints regarding Frege point that we have found in Frege's writings so far. The argument using the conditional to claim that neither the antecedent nor the consequent is asserted, while the whole statement is still presented as true, can be without doubt said to be an inspiration for Geach.[17] Frege also makes the point that if we are not to concede this, indirect proofs will become impossible. With the help of the procedure of *contraposition,* one may move from the proposition ("Negation" 120):

'If $(21/20)^{100}$ is greater than $\sqrt[19]{10}^{21}$, then $(21/20)^{1000}$ is greater than 10^{21}'

to

'If $(21/20)^{1000}$ is not greater than 10^{21}, then $(21/20)^{100}$ is not greater than $\sqrt[19]{10}^{21}$'

This valid jump cannot be permitted if we do not grant the Frege point. Frege asserts that:

> [A]nybody who admits legitimacy of our transition from *modus ponens* to *modus tollens* must acknowledge that even a false thought has being; for otherwise either only the consequent would be left in the *modus ponens* or only the antecedent in the *modus tollens;* and one of these would likewise be suppressed as a nonentity. ("Negation" 120)

He posits that even a false thought needs to be acknowledged as containing sense and as being part of a 'hypothetical thought complex'. Even for negation, one would need recognition of the thought. This is so because if we were to assume a false thought to be a thought without being, it would be like negating what's not there.[18] For example, consider the statement, 'The sun revolves around the earth'. Although the statement is evidently false, one must acknowledge that it has a thought and then deny its truth. Thus, even for the act of negation to be possible, we must acknowledge that propositions can occur unasserted, or assertion and denial will pass by one another (White 134-135). Frege gives an example that trial by jury would have been impossible if it were not possible for different people to hear a statement and arrive at a falsity after grasping its sense. Like negation, in interrogation also, the sense of the question has to be grasped before replying even in the negative. Later, about negation, he adds:

> Our act of judgment can in no way alter the make-up of a thought. We can only recognize what is there. A true thought cannot be affected by our act of judgment. In the sentence that expresses the thought we can

> insert a 'not'; and the sentence we thus get does not contain a non-thought (as I have shown) but may be quite justifiably used as antecedent or consequent in a hypothetical sentence complex. Only, since it is false, it may not be uttered assertively. But this procedure does not touch the original thought in any way; it remains true as before. ("Negation" 122)

The inspiration for the analysis done by Geach regarding negation in "Assertion" can perhaps be said to have been borrowed from here:

> What we do is to insert the word 'not,' and, apart from this, leave the word-order unaltered. The original wording can still be recognized; the order may not be altered at will. Is this dissolution, separation? Quite the reverse! it results in a firmly-built structure. ("Negation" 123)

He further argues that if one were not to accept this view, the notion of *duplex negation affirmat* (double negation) would be impossible to explain. Frege says "Negation would thus be like a sword that could heal on again, the limbs it has cut off" ("Negation" 119). In fact, it appears that Frege's discussion of negation went much deeper than what Geach offered in his paper. The problem of the scope of normative words that was mentioned earlier in the section can be found here, when Frege states:

> We usually suppose that negation extends to the whole thought when 'not' is attached to the verb of the predicate. But sometimes the negative word grammatically forms part of the subject, as in the sentence 'no man lives to be more than a hundred.' A negation may occur anywhere in a sentence without making the thought indubitably negative.[19] ("Negation" 125)

In "Ascriptivism", Geach makes the distinction between predicating 'P' of a thing and calling a thing 'P' (223). One can find a similar form of argument in this claim that Frege makes:

> that to grasp a thought is not yet to judge; that we may express a thought in a sentence without asserting its truth; that a negative word may be contained in the predicate of a sentence, in which case the sense of this word is part of the sense of the sentence, part of the thought; that by inserting a 'not' in the predicate of a sentence meant to be uttered non-assertively, we get a sentence that expresses a thought, as the original did. ("Negation" 126)

A point that is not mentioned by Geach is that Frege holds 'thought' to be public and shared, much the way, 'sense' is in his famous article "Sense and Reference". He asks "Can a thought that is present to all …as one and the same thing have a part that is not common to all of them? If the whole needs no owner, no part of it needs an owner" ("Negation" 122). This could be held as a strong criticism for any expressivist theory of meaning. Expressivists have at their core, the understanding that moral statements are expressions of subjective attitudes. Frege would have found such a view, highly objectionable.

Frege is equally forthright in "Compound Thoughts", when he says "for in an assertion sentence we must distinguish between the thought expressed and the assertion" (3). He argues here also that the same thought can be asserted as well as unasserted in an interrogative question. Like earlier, Geach's thoughts can be located in Fregean ideas. Here Frege raises certain issues that remind us of Geach's formulation of 'double-barrelled' statements:

> Suppose witnesses are asked: "Did the accused deliberately set fire to the pile of wood, and deliberately start a forest-fire?"; the problem then arises whether two questions are involved here, or only one… this whole is a single question which should be answered affirmatively only if the accused acted deliberately both in setting fire to the pile of wood and also in starting the forest fire; and negatively in every other case. For the thought of the whole question must be distinguished from the two component thoughts: it contains, as well as the component thoughts, that which combines them together; and this is represented in language by the word "and". ("Compound Thoughts" 3)

The way Geach gives the example of the policeman and the motorist in "Ascriptivism", Frege gives the following example, which is also similar to how Geach analyses conjunctive statements in "Assertion":

> In the compound sentence "If someone is a murderer, then he is a criminal", neither the antecedent-clause nor the consequent-clause, taken by itself, expresses a thought. Without some further clue, we cannot determine whether what is expressed in the sentence "He is a criminal" is true or false when detached from this compound. ("Compound Thoughts" 12)

Thus one can see that not only in "Begriffsschrift" but also in "Negation", and "Compound thoughts", the essence of the Frege point is reflected.

6. Conclusion

More than five decades ago, invoking Frege, Geach posed an important objection to the wide class of 'noncognitivistic' metaethical views that had at that time been dominant and widely defended for a quarter of a century (Schroeder "What is"). The problem has been debated ever since, and is considered a central and significant issue in the field. Geach, it was seen claims to be borrowing the crux of his argument from Frege, but has not provided any specific reference or citation. Most contemporary scholars too have not concerned themselves with explicitly tracing it to exact sentences and paragraphs from where the Frege point could have been inferred. The present paper has attempted to fulfill that task of textual exegesis, and close that link for future researchers. The paper concludes that Frege point can be traced to the notion of assertoric force employed by Frege. This assertoric force was considered external to content and more than one of his works corroborates this idea. Expressing a thought without affirming it as true, was a doctrine he abided by throughout his academic life, "Begriffsschrift"

onwards. Our close examination of the Frege-Geach problem and its genesis further convinces us that the objections at the heart of the issue have much broader implications transcending the field of metaethics. Beyond the moral *modus ponens* and negation in moral inferences, what Frege-Geach problem establishes is that a sentence has the meaning it does, prior to and independently of the particular uses to which it can be put, and it is *that* meaning in terms of which those particular uses can be explained. As Wittgenstein puts it, "Every proposition must *already* have a sense; assertion cannot give it a sense, for what it asserts is the sense itself" (75).

Notes

1. I follow Schroeder ("What is", and *Noncognitivism*) in using Non-cognitivism as an umbrella term to include differing views of emotivism, prescriptivism and expressivism.

2. Out of the three papers, "Assertion" is where Geach seems to have fully developed his argument. The other two contain similar insights nonetheless.

3. Stoljar finds expressivists to typically make three claims. First, that moral claims are not truth-apt or that moral statements cannot have truth values. Second, that moral statements do not describe the world. Third, that moral statements express emotions or other non-cognitive states, such as attitudes or desires (81).

4. One might wonder why cognitivists do not face the problem of equivocation. The answer lies in the distinction between force and content. Simply put, cognitivists would claim that the meaning or content of the words does not change between statements like (1) and (2), what changes is the force. In (1) there is an assertoric force and in (2) there is none. Thus, they avoid the fallacy of equivocation.

5. Hare felt that the traditional truth conditional theories of meaning cannot account for the 'semantic significance' of the different moods of our language (like imperative, indicative etc.). Hence he tries to find a theory of meaning that handles imperatives, indicatives as well as moral statements. Prescriptions, for Hare, satisfy that condition (Schroeder, "What is" 706-707).

6. The objective behind this comprehensive discussion of Geach's paper is two-fold. Firstly, it is to understand the widespread applicability of the Frege point. As Geach himself says, "The magnitude and variety of philosophical errors that result from not seeing the Frege point justifies a missionary zeal in this matter" ("Assertion" 464). Secondly, it helps us understand how fundamental the objection that Geach raises is. This also marks a contrast with Searle and Ross, who had restricted criticism to offer and that too to moral statements alone. Geach in some sense, is able to present a much more abstracted version of the problem, a more fundamental problem in philosophy of language than a limited objection with respect to moral judgments.

7. Ryle in his paper "'If', 'So' and 'Because'" argues that *if, then* statements must be regarded as some kind of licenses. According to him, utterances like *p*, so *q* are arguments and not statements since they cannot occur as premises (250).

8. The assertion sign would be explained in detail in the next section.

9. Geach however makes an exception for the verb 'know'. If the verb 'know' appears in the antecedent of a hypothetical, it does not commit the utterer to assert the proposition.

10. If one were to regard negation to be qualitatively different from assertion, then we would have two differing logical forms '⊢' for assertion and '⊣' for negation. This is a needless complication, according to Geach.

11. Predicates, in Geach's view are distinguished from subjects by the fact that negating a predicate can get us the negation of the proposition in which it was originally predicated.

12. See, for example, Skorupski; Blackburn (*Spreading the Word*); and Kölbel.

13. See Sinnott-Armstrong; and Horwich.

14. It could also be the case that given Geach's enormous scholarship in, and close acquaintance with Frege's writings, researchers, understandably, took Geach's word for it.

15. This view leads Frege to consider indicative sentences predominantly in his analysis.

16. It is to be noted that thought is not psychological in nature. "[I]t confronts everyone in the same way as something objective, whereas each man has his own ideas, sensations, and feelings, which belong only to him. We grasp thoughts but we do not create them" (Frege,"A Brief Survey" 300).

17. Also "Negation" appeared in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege,* a book Geach edited with Max Black in 1952.

18. "There can be no negation without something negated, and this is a thought" (Frege, "Compound Thoughts" 2).

19. Frege, holds that there can be no meaningful distinction made between negative and affirmative judgments or thoughts. He gives the examples of a group of sentences like 'Christ is immortal'; 'Christ lives forever'; 'Christ does not live forever'. It becomes very difficult to distinguish between affirmative and negative sentences ("Negation" 125).

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Deconstructing the 'Mind as Mirror' Metaphor Richard Rorty's Critique of Representationalism

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Abstract:

The idea that the mind is similar to a mirror which reflects the objects existing independently in the outside world or the theory of representationalism, is a topic of discussion since the time of Plato. This idea is evident in the works of modern philosophers like Descartes, Locke, Kant etc., and is also accepted by the analytic or linguistic philosophers. However, this idea is subjected to severe criticism and one such critique is Richard Rorty, an American philosopher who initially was interested in the works of analytic philosophy but soon changed his views and became a vigorous critique of it. Rorty attacked the basic assumption of analytic philosophy which claims that to be meaningful, language must accurately represent the fact. He questioned, 'How language could be able to represent facts while talking about the notions of God, soul, just, good or beautiful? And without the existence of such facts, 'How philosophy was able to speak meaningfully about the notions of ethics, metaphysics, religion, aesthetics, and justice? In this paper, our aim would be to analyze the notion of representationalism with reference to the works of Richard Rorty and to explain whether or not Rorty's claims are substantial.

Keywords: Mind, Mind as Mirror, Representationalism, Richard Rorty, Descartes.

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1. Introduction

Philosophers since ages consider knowledge to be the product of a connection between the mind and the world resulting in representation. Philosophy expands on this comprehension, asserting an exclusive area of knowledge concerning representation, particularly what takes into account to be considered as accurately mirroring the world. From traditional to modern and then to the analytic philosophers, the theory of representation was of much importance. They believed in the utilization of the mechanism of representation to attain knowledge.

In his most celebrated book, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (*PMN*), Rorty tries to establish the argument that the project which philosophy undertakes to determine the accuracy of minds' representation of the world that would ultimately generate knowledge is flawed. He criticizes the idea that, "knowledge as accurate representation, made possible by special mental processes, and intelligible through a general theory of representation" (*PMN* 6). Rorty argues that we should abandon the idea of the mirror of nature and thereby never try to re-frame the task of finding out the circumstances in which the accurate representation occurs. Rorty observes that a particular 'picture' concept began to command how philosophers consider our connection of the real world, an image that is not compulsory or valuable. To quote Rorty, "the picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of the mind as a great mirror, containing various representations, some accurate, some not, and capable of being studied by pure non-empirical methods" (*PMN* 12).

The two important arguments highlighted by Rorty in critiquing the notion of mind as mirror are:

1. Since the so-called 'mirror' is assumed to have distinct powers to reflect the objects of the world, then it must be something in contrast with the entire world. Therefore, the question arises, "Is it possible to determine the relation of correspondence between the mind and the world"?

2. Again, the 'mirror' is believed to be accurately representing the objects of the world. But then the question is, "How can the accuracy of such representations be determined?"

On being asked "What is responsible for making the idea of the mirror of nature controversial?"Rorty pointed towards the theory of representation. Representation was supposed to overcome skepticism by describing the mechanism in which it works and its correspondence to the reality. Rorty says that the mechanism of representation and the object which it represents are different. Our conception of the mind as a part of the mechanism of representation compels us to consider the mind as entirely distinct from reality. This conception questions our knowledge regarding the correspondence of contents of the mind to reality. In the working of the whole process of representation, it is the framework of the mind which makes us differentiate the appearance from reality. It also, Rorty believes, uplifts our confidence to pursue the path of skepticism concerning our potentiality to know the true nature of reality.

To begin with, Rorty concentrates on the seventeenth-century philosophyin which the intellectuals fixed their attention to the allegory of the mind as the great mirror which reflects the objects exactly as they exist in the external world(*PMN* 3-5). Rorty claims that the intellectuals of seventeenth-century thought that the mind of every individual is their initial point of correspondence with the outer world. They considered the mind to be a cluster of inner mirroring of the environment in such a way that it seems to us that the knowledge of these reflections is our guide to know the environment.

Rorty opines that such kind of thinking was relevant to the intellectual scenario which was prevalent at that time, he was referring to the differences in opinion between the church and the scientific doctrines, which were in continuous conflict with each other in the seventeenth century. Rorty assumes that if we accept the mind to be a mirror of nature then eventually it turns out that the inner reflection of each person will be the foundation of all knowledge. In this way, reflecting on mental phenomena appeared to be fit for providing the basis to the sciences. Rorty claimed that philosophy in the past started to appear in an attempt for aiding sciences as it was indulged in a societal dispute with the churches or religious organizations. Rorty finds that science, in the long run, was successful in its very own mainstream self-governance. The Church needed to withdraw from managing the world of God's creation to a more illuminated position that God gives us the resource to work these issues ourselves. However, Rorty was much interested in discussing the aftermath of the issues. He states that what happens next is the idea of the mirror of nature began to develop peculiar problems in its way which people became aware of.

2. Descartes, Leibnitz, and Locke on Representationalism

We shall try to analyze first the works of the three modern philosophers, i.e., Descartes, Leibnitz and Locke, who according to Rorty were representationalists. It is evident from their writings that both Locke and Leibnitz were having the same representationalist outlook towards language. To quote Locke, "the use of linguistic symbols for men is either to record their thoughts for the assistance of their memory, as it were to bring out their ideas, and lay them before the view of others" (504). Human beings by virtue of their being born in a societal structure are provided with the means of language so that they can communicate their ideas and feelings to others. According to Locke, an individuals' communication with the other individual involves three ends which are: a) the effort which an individual makes in order to make his thoughts or ideas understandable to others, b) to adopt a method which can very lucidly and aptly conveys one's thoughts, c) hence, to deliver knowledge from one individual from another. But if these three ends are not met then Locke says that "language is either abused or deficient when it fails any of these three ends" (504).

Leibniz combines these views of Locke into a single statement that language performs the task of representation and also the explication of thoughts. Leibniz

strongly affirms with Locke that language works as a mode of communication among individuals in society. He further states,

> I believe that without the desire to make ourselves understood we would indeed never have created language. Once created, however, it also enables man to reason to himself, both because words provide the means for remembering abstract thoughts and because of the usefulness of symbols and blind thoughts in reasoning since it would take too long to lay everything out and always replace terms by definitions. (275)

Both Leibnitz and Locke believed language to be inferior to thoughts or ideas. They give more importance to thought rather than language. Descartes also shares similar views with Locke and Leibnitz while expressing his opinion about the association of language and ideas.

Descartes says that language owes its association with reason and what regulates human thought process is also the reason. As Descartes says, "whatever exists in the objects of our ideas in a way which exactly corresponds to our perception of it is said to exist formally in those objects" (114). Descartes' views, thus, appear to be representational as he believes that thought dominates language and language represents thoughts.

Representationalism considers that language is not a product of nature, its origin is not derived from nature, rather it is the construction of reason, it is conventional. Language performs its function following arbitrary rules and not natural principles. Both Descartes and Locke have agreed upon the conventional nature of language. Leibnitz also agrees with both of them, but he has to say something more. Leibnitz states that the superiority of human beings over animals can be determined based on intellectual capability as human beings can choose a mode through which they can communicate. Leibnitz seems to have adopted a more comprehensive approach on this issue. He notices that the meaning which the words signify are arbitrary as they are not oriented by natural needs but by reasons.

One interesting feature which we find in the early modern period is the idealization of language. The early modern philosopher's consideration was that the language directly represents thoughts which in turn points to the imperative existence of consciousness and also to the linguistic idealism. Hence, language is put into the world of ideas and its material facticity is denied. Such linguistic attitude was insisted upon by many philosophers and Locke following his seventeenth-century fellow philosophers accepted this standpoint. Locke, being an empiricist, believed that what language is accustomed to representing are the sensible things and what connects language with the sensible things are the ideas.

Rationalism also gives equal importance to ideas and considers that ideas are extremely important because experiences are not the originator of ideas and also because language is not able to transcend ideas to relate with sensible things. To be more precise, pure ideas are what the language represents, and they do not point to any external objects. Although, the notion of an innate idea is highlighted by the rationalists and the notion of acquired ideas is put into the foreground by the

empiricists, what appears to us is that both have some inclination towards idealism and philosophy of consciousness. The topic which the consciousness analyses is the order in which things exist and thus, we find the existence of three elements, representation, language, and consciousness. Hence, language is subjected to perform the sole function of representing ideas and it is also subordinate to some sphere of technicality.

Rorty's understanding was that even Kant was not able to solve these issues, rather he made the notion of the mirror of nature more problematic and multi-faceted than previously it was. The followers of Kantian philosophy are still trying to find the connotation of his views. Kant's philosophy involves endless measures and to quote James Tartaglia:

> It provided subsequent generations with a paradigm to build a professional way of life around. And Kant provided this paradigm with an ancient history, by convincingly tracing his concerns back to those of Plato and Aristotle. This allowed him to lay claim to the honorific title 'philosophy', a word 'ineluctably' associated with the Greeks, while making his paradigm seems continuous not only with over two millennia of Platonists and Aristotelians, but also with his immediate predecessors like Descartes and Locke, who had similarly grappled the problem of the mirror. (86)

According to Rorty, the idea which Kant advocated and which also brought revolution in the approach of philosophy is the notion of the 'mind' (*PMN* 7), which in turn safely occupies a specific place for the inquiry of the mirror and that too at a level which is beyond the access of any empirical model.

After the traditional and modern philosophers, the analytic philosophers also adopted this view of representationalism. Rorty attacks the contemporary theory of analytic philosophy, specifically its 'linguistic turn' aspect. Rorty says that the linguistic turn is an, "attempt to find 'successor subjects' to epistemology" (*PMN* 10). Rorty claims that though it appears that there is huge gulf between the works of Kant, Frege and Russell, specifically their works on idealism and descriptivism respectively, he considers that all these views have deep down somewhere an indisputable adherence to the perspective of representationalism. Traditional philosophy is held captive by the picture of 'mind as a great mirror', containing some accurate and some not so accurate representations. Rorty says,

> [W]ithout the notion of mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself. Without this latter notion, the strategy common to Descartes and Kant-getting more accurate representations by inspecting, repairing, and polishing the mirror, so to speak-would not have made sense. (*PMN* 12)

Rorty supposes that the idea of the mirror of nature addressed an obsolete yet tireless human need and that the world would be a superior place if we could exceed it. The need which Rorty talks about was articulated in different ways in his writings. But as James Tartaglia says, the best way he suggested among all is the requirement for "redemptive truth" (87). Tartaglia says,

> [R]edemptive truth is a set of beliefs which would end once and for all,
> the process of reflection on what to do with ourselves; it would present
> the one true description of what is going on, allowing everything, person,
> event idea and poem to be fitted into a context that will somehow reveal
> itself as natural, destined and unique. It would be, you might say, the
> meaning of life. (87)

The redemptive truth, according to Rorty, thus, can never be attained by philosophy and he considers this goal to be illusory.

What Rorty feels is that the notion of the mind as the mirror of nature was clutched because it offered the possibility of another more common vision of 'redemptive truth', when the intensity of religion was starting to disappear. As it appeared that philosophy would be able to find out the circumstance in which the mind mirrors the nature if it can ascertain how exactly the mirror works. If we assume that science could be able to fulfill all those conditions, then it might lead to the path of discovery of redemptive truth and not the revelation of it. Otherwise, philosophy should itself take up the task of constructing a metaphysical order to disclose the objective truth and then it should work forward to reveal the redemptive truth based on objective truth and should decide the scope of redemptive truth.

But the purpose of reaching the redemptive truth in which the mirror was intended to assist is however fanciful or unreal. And when this realization would dawn into the human minds, then they will renounce the idea of objective truth, they will then end their effort to advance the sciences, and get hold of the idea that our thinking of the world and about ourselves is something which we should decide on our own. Nothing should ever influence us for deciding for ourselves, and we have the freedom to explain and re-explain the world as many times as we wanted, as this will open up the path for finding new and innovative alternatives. This is supposed to be the most essential task that human beings should accomplish.

Freeing ourselves from the burden of objective truth, the creative nature which is latent in us will be released from the leash. Rorty believes that every individual being will possess in themselves the imperative maturity that will help them overpower the destinies of their own.

Rorty says that the mind as an internal domain of 'vision', is the one where the world is introduced to consciousness. This reason might have motivated the philosophers to consider that there exists an accurate correspondence between the mind and reality which results in the formation of knowledge in the appearance of mirroring. Rorty criticizes this alienation of philosophy from the rest of culture and its continuation of focusing into the study of the relation of correspondence and how such relationships can or cannot enlighten and sustain our knowledge claims and techniques of investigation. Rorty claims that knowledge would not have recommended itself as an accurate representation of the object if the philosophical insight was not held captive by the picture or representation of the mind. Rorty urges for dismantling the mirror of nature notion as it deflects our focus from

acknowledging the linguistic and social nature of belief and justification respectively. Rorty advances an alternative perspective of knowledge which he calls "epistemological behaviorism" (*PMN* 174), Rorty defines this as "explaining rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us say, rather than the latter by the former, is the essence of what I shall call 'epistemological behaviorism'" (*PMN* 174).

Since we can't pursue an epistemic association with reality which gets away from the social and linguistic circumstances, Rorty appeals us to renounce epistemology. He asks to abandon the idea that armed with a theory of knowledge, philosophy can define a "permanent neutral matrix" (*PMN* 179) for the adjudication of any claim to know. The limits of epistemology, which Rorty talks about, do not necessarily lead to the refutation of the subsistence of the reality which is extra-linguistic. Rorty abandons the view that language can be assumed of consisting the relation of correspondence to reality which the epistemologists have conventionally tried to exhibit. The problem always lies on conceiving the mind as a medium of representation as it does not convince us on a solid philosophical ground that how the whole process of representation works.

In the modern period also many epistemologists have tried to put forward a basis or a foundation upon which knowledge could rest. Every philosopher has attempted to discuss the issue on the background of present philosophical scenario and hence every time they came up with something new, no unanimity is seen in their views regarding the foundation of knowledge. Every one of them tended, any way to be set apart by the possibilities of the time from which they emerged. However, all the efforts made by the philosophers in framing a detailed epistemological description of the relationship between the mind and the reality which is non-linguistic did not succeed and hence they were unable to impart a dependable model.

Rorty describes that the subject-matter of traditional philosophy consists in examining and analyzing the knowledge claims and its foundations. Hence, philosophy is restricted with the task of conducting a non-empirical analysis of the concept of mind and which also aims to explore how reality can accurately be represented by the mind. Rorty classifies such epistemology as the outcome of the erroneous picture leading to the confinement of traditional philosophy. Such an erroneous picture of reality describes the mind as the great mirror with the power of representation. Rorty says that every time we try to provide a comprehensive account of epistemology as to the relation of mind and idea of representation, it compels us to make the difference between the appearance and the reality and it motivates us to have a skeptical outlook concerning our capability in order to know the reality as it exactly exists.

The revised version of epistemic justification which Rorty presents can be conceived "as a social phenomenon rather than a transaction between the 'knowing subject' and 'reality'" (*PMN* 9). Rorty states that the justification of beliefs are, "not

a matter of a special relation between ideas (or words) and objects, but of conversation, of social practice" (*PMN* 170). He further writes,

> Sellers and Quine invoke the same argument, one which bears equally against the given-versus-nongiven and the necessary versus contingent distinctions. The crucial premise of this argument is that we understand knowledge when we understand the social justification of belief, and thus have no time to view it as accuracy of representation. (*PMN* 170)

Rorty always places his ideas on the background of a historical, social and cultural context. He is concerned more about the practical aspects of human life rather than the transcendental aspects. He believes that the historical and cultural possibilities about the philosophical ideas of human beings direct us to the rejection of the notion of the mind as a mirror of nature. Rorty takes this idea to be illusory and puts that no philosophy can be based on such an imaginary notion of reflection of some mirror. If we abandon the idea of mind as a mirror and accept it as illusory, then we will be confident enough in the way in which the western world has discarded religion and approached a secular way of life.

Rorty says that the backdrop in which the traditional philosophy developed was dominated by religious dogmas and many philosophers of that era, in spite of considering themselves to be modern, had some sort of religious acceptance in their minds which reflects in their works. He explains the lingering of the philosophers on the 'mirror metaphor' to be the continuation of their desire to attain knowledge of something extraordinary and larger than petty imaginations and abiding and stable than the fortuitous cultural, social and linguistic surroundings in which we live. If we acknowledge the uncertain and changing nature of our linguistic and social inhabit, then we can free ourselves from the shackles of that epistemology which entices us the greed to know the transcendent. Then we will be relieved from the burden of the mind as a great mirror and will just share our thoughts through linguistic propositions and hence, there will be no need to trouble our minds with the task of mirroring the reality.

Talking about the three philosophers whose works motivated Rorty to shape his thoughts on representationalism – Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey – he says that Wittgenstein's flair for deconstructing captivating pictures needs to be supplemented by historical awareness (*PMN* 12). Heidegger has a historical viewpoint which helps us to detach from the convention and enables us to share a historical account of the emergence of the pictures which were held captive, but Rorty points that Heidegger's work lacks attentiveness towards the idea of a social perspective about the advent of the picture (*PMN* 12-13). Both Heidegger and Wittgenstein are concerned with the rarely favored individual rather than with society is the opinion of Rorty (*PMN* 13). Again, in Dewey's works, we find that the social perspective has been addressed and in addition to that culture is no longer dominated by the ideal of objective cognition but by that of esthetic enhancement (*PMN* 13). Rorty held on to the view that all these three philosophers' works

motivate us to change our traditional perspective of looking at philosophy and adopt a fresh approach toward our interpretation of philosophy.

Rorty was very critical of the theory of representation. He was influenced by Dewey, in the place of the term 'representation' he suggested the term "coping" and says that the relation between the mind and the world is one of 'coping' and not 'representation'. To quote Rorty, "[as] long as we think of knowledge as representing reality rather than coping with it, mind or language will continue to seem numinous" (*Consequences of* 202).

Descartes was credited by Rorty as the originator of the concept of mind as an apparatus of representation in the modern period. Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* writes that there are some strong points of differences between Aristotle and Descartes regarding their understanding of the idea of the mind (*PMN* 51). Descartes seemed to have reformulated the idea of perception intending to simplify the theory of skepticism and to make it more understandable for the people. Aristotelian philosophy, on the other hand, is not concerned about the question of correspondence between the mind and the reality because the mind and the object of perception are considered as identical by Aristotle. Thus, in Aristotelian philosophy, the notion of skepticism does not find more space as it is in the philosophy of Descartes. The issue gets complicated by basically considering that the mind acquires knowledge through the method of representation. But by accepting the mind to be a part in the organization of representation, we are portraying the relation of non-identity between the reality and the mind and that ultimately results into the issue of granting assurance about their correspondence to ourselves. Such an assurance limits our skepticism about the capability to produce the exact representation of the reality. Descartes says that if we can discover some thoughts which give us assurance, then we could put aside skepticism and set up a permanent basis on which the knowledge of reality could reside upon.

Rorty's way of dealing with the skepticism of Descartes was somewhat similar to the works of C.S. Peirce, who was the originator of the theory of pragmatism. Peirce had certain reservations against the correspondence framework regarding the elaboration of the mechanism that connects the appearances with metaphysical reality or as it is called the 'thing-in-itself'.

Peirce's understanding that a belief can be deduced from its practical consequences makes him think that the problem of universal skepticism is not something very significant; he believes that anyone can consider it easily if it is accepted as the real matter of life. Peirce tells us that we can completely avoid skepticism if we are able to talk and act in such a manner as if to take the appearances as total illusion and reality as a total mystery. Hence, we find that both Descartes and Peirce stand in two different places regarding their views on skepticism. Peirce believes that the skepticism about which Descartes talks in 'Meditations' stretches doubt to some extreme absurd levels. Peirce view thus appears to us as totally distinct from Rorty's view as it indicates the idea of representation not inevitably unifying with the problem of skepticism unless we

have some doubts regarding the mind's content and its correspondence with the reality.

The arguments put forward by Rorty against realism and representationalism are based on his understanding that the very idea of the application of the notion of representationalism is inherently problematic. He says that if we want to establish a relation of correspondence between the notion of representation and its object, both the representation and the represented object are liable to fulfill the criterion of mirroring each other or as we can simply put it as identical to each other. In *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Rorty puts forward the following line of arguments as an attempt to disregard the notion of representation of reality by language,

> The suggestion that truth, as well as the world, is out there is a legacy of an age in which the world was seen as the creation of a being who had a language of his own. If we cease to attempt to make sense of the idea of such a non-human language, we shall not be tempted to … claim that the world splits itself up, on its initiative, into sentence-shaped chunks called "facts." But if one clings to the notion of self-subsistent facts, it is easy to start capitalizing the word "truth" and treating it as something identical either with God or with the world as God's project. (5)

Rorty asks us to suppose that if the statements of language are exactly like the reality which exists 'out there' and that reality shares the similar character of a language then it can be claimed that the idea of correspondence exists in co-relation with the idea of resemblance. Rorty assumes that reality and language need to be identified to disregard the theories of representationalism and realism. However, his assumption was that the reality must be shaped in the form of sentences, if the sentences have to represent it accurately. We find that representation is not accomplishing the task of mirroring the object as such, we should not consider language to be something which provides a replica of reality. Rather, we should look upon it as the medium through which the reality is communicated to us.

Rorty's criticism of the notion of representation appears to be inspired by the ideas of William James. In the words of James,

> The popular notion is that a true idea must copy its reality. Like other popular views, this one follows the analogy of the most usual experience. Our true ideas of sensible things do indeed copy them. Shut your eyes and think of yonder clock on the wall, and you get just such a true picture or copy of its dial. But your idea of its "works" (unless you are a clockmaker) is much less of a copy, yet it passes muster, for it in no way clashes with the reality. (92)

The words of James make us believe that he inspires Rorty to enquire in to concepts like the mirror, coping, etc. Both James and Rorty utilize the above reasoning to rationalize the aim of language with an approach of instrumental understanding. They both utilize this contention as a method for defending a more instrumentalist understanding of the reason for language. James underlines the similarities between words and their objects with an aim to dissolve the necessity of correspondence and

underscore the significance of utility which is viable and intellectual. James and Rorty also believe that the purpose is to 'coping' up with the reality and not represent or correspond it.

Rorty accepts along with James that the notion of representation of reality is not a mere replica of an object for weakening the level of quality of correspondence and representation. Thus, both of them reject those principles, and have their own particular formulations of truth. Along these lines, in any case, their contentions frequently utilize an especially limited meaning of what is to be considered as representation. We can find many illustrations of representation where they do not depend on whether or not they are identical to the objects. Peirce in "On a New List of Categories" talks about various kinds of representation. Representation or the metaphor of the mind as the mirror is something which Peirce termed as "likeness" (7).

By "likeness", what Peirce meant is that "whose relation to their objects are the mere community in some quality" (7). This connection would incorporate the alleged likeness between the reality and language. Apart from this, Peirce portrays a kind of representation whose connection with its concerned object is an attributed constitution. These are the kind of representations which are credited to objects traditionally in the similar fashion in which symbols are credited or attributed to things. This kind of representation takes into account a type of correspondence among representations and objects which do not suggest any resemblance or in Peirce's terminology 'likeness' among them.

Thus, we find that the framework of language in which it works can be in co-relation with the objects without sharing any relation of identity between them. Rorty's understanding was that the reference theory of the realists is based upon the conformity between the reality and words.

The framework in which representation is composed of, separates reality from framework and makes it more baffling. Correspondence does not have any independent measure as it has always to be based on the style which representation sets up. It, however, does no good to discuss our words relating to objects along with their properties because without these words to characterize them we have no origination of what those words compare and correspond to. This is by all account why Rorty expects that the representationalist and the realist accounts of language need to imagine reality as being molded in sentences.

What we can know is only the appearance of reality and not reality exactly in its being or reality in its actual state of existence if the representation is not identical to it. But the identical relation between reality and its representation appears to be more unlikely. And this reason might have influenced Rorty to consider the theory of realism as unimportant. His dismissal of realism and representationalism is not a superfluous admission with the risk of wariness since skepticism is extremely a significant issue for the representationalist. According to Rorty, realism expects us to know the inherent nature of reality in such a manner which is not possible for us if we need to utilize representation to gain knowledge about reality.

Rorty claims that even for argument's sake if we accept that representationalism can have access to the extra-linguistic reality which can be communicated with the medium of language, then also the problem would remain unsolved as the awareness of such an extra-linguistic reality would never change and it would be representational only. So, Rorty rejects the notion of the extra-linguistic aspect of cognition. He does so while discussing the notion of empiricism where he adopts a critical endeavor to utilize experience, thus, a type of awareness which is extra-linguistic.

Rorty writes that he disagrees with Sellers's notion of 'Myth of the Given' as it is based on the idea that human beings are conscious of experience, and that they are aware of it without the mediation of any language (*PMN* 181). The idea of such a myth is utilized by the empiricists to keep up with an aspect of perception which language aspires to communicate. In many cases, this extra-linguistic aspect gets connected with perception with the goal that we are believed to know about reality in an immediate way. Rorty's thought of abandoning the mind as a mirror of nature metaphor is partially the outcome of this contention.

3. Does Rorty Endorse Coherentism?

Rejection of representationalism by Rorty makes us think whether he is embracing the theory of coherence. The theory of coherence has been accepted by many philosophers as the best option that can be chosen to replace representationalism. The element which connects Rorty with the coherence theory is his abandonment of the notion of foundationalism. Rorty claims that foundationalism is not able to provide a clear distinction between causation and justification. He argues that the way we develop certain beliefs about the external world cannot be undertaken as the justification of such beliefs. A similar argument has been put forward by Wilfrid Sellers also. Sellers opined that epistemology must be dealt with based on logic and rationality. He considers this as he does not believe in any sort of conceptualized awareness. Even if for argument's sake we consider that the conceptualized awareness has some existence, then also it is incapable of providing us with some justification that can ascertain our knowledge. Sellers believes that justification is not a causal idea rather it is a purely logical notion.

The anti-foundational tendency of coherence theory is explicit in its rejection of the idea regarding the structure of the hierarchy involved in justification. According to the coherence theory, justification is simply interconnection of those propositions which are rational and are compatibly integrated. "Metaphorically, coherentism is conceived in terms of web and rebuilding raft at sea which is different from the pyramid or skyscrapers the foundationalist subscribe to" (Pollock and Cruz 115).

The coherentists believe that the justification of a certain belief depends on its relation of compatibility with some other exhaustive set of beliefs. Neither they consider such beliefs to be indubitable, infallible and incorrigible; nor do they accept such beliefs should be inferred from other sets of beliefs which are incorrigible,

infallible and indubitable. Coherentism considers the entire belief system to be the measure of justification. Therefore, it discards the claim of foundationalism regarding the order of hierarchy of justifications in acquiring knowledge.

Coherentists accept that our perceptions are responsible for providing several accounts of beliefs. However, they discard the role of perception in providing justification that could satisfy our knowledge claims. This claim made by the coherence theory is similar to the objection which Rorty raises against foundationalism (Inusah115).

The question is, "Does Rorty endorse coherentism?" Rorty does not uphold coherentism in traditional epistemic sense. The main point of difference between Rorty and epistemic coherentism is their understanding of the notion of truth. Coherentism as an epistemological theory believes in an objective and eternal truth. But Rorty completely rejects the idea of objective truth, Rorty maintains that though coherentism supposes to discard the correspondence theory of truth, yet it follows the same path of correspondence theory by denying that truth is shaped by our history, society, and culture. They believe in the eternality and objectivity of truth. Thus, Rorty rejects traditional coherentism because he states that any effort made by the coherentists to analyze truth would end up in accepting the foundationalist perspective that truth is eternal (Inusah 120).

Instead of coherentism, Rorty adopted the anti-representational approach to knowledge claims. His arguments concerning language are somewhat similar to the arguments which he presents for epistemology. He says that every analysis of language rotates around the periphery of language only. Human beings can't get as far as the world exterior to language. Human beings are only attributed to language, it is only they who can communicate with each other through language, but the world is devoid of any character of the language. The world itself is incapable of providing answers to our queries and hence it is the human being only who can satisfy the queries. Human beings are always surrounded by the language and it is impossible to express their thoughts about the world or to speak anything about the world without using language. To quote Rorty, "there is no way to think about either the world or our purposes except by using the language" (*Consequences of* xix).

Rorty's view here appears to be very strong as opposed to any sort of hopes to provide solutions to the problems of philosophy in accordance with analytic method. He strongly asserts that language can never be taken upon as a mirror of reality; rather he considers it to be a tool. To justify his point, Rorty asks us to look upon language and consider whether it is capable of exactly representing the object existing in the outside world. Language has its limitations and it cannot go beyond that to express the actual nature of reality.

As an anti-representationalist, Rorty gives more attention to the 'causal interaction' between the subject and the object. We have already mentioned that Rorty prefers to use the term 'coping' instead of 'representation'. 'Coping' implies dealing with something that is handled or managing a thing. We have to work in a way so that we can manage the world. Anti-representationalists like Rorty have no

intention to experience the exact states of the world or the world as it exists in itself, they are not interested in analyzing knowledge, representation and their accuracy of represented reality, because they believe that in every assertion of the world we find an indivisible concoction and coexistence between the subject and the object. It further implies that in the act of knowing a thing about the world, we can never be sure which part is contributed by us and which part is contributed by the external world. And thus, it makes no sense to examine the epistemological assumptions about the probability of knowledge, there is no meaning in investigating,

> [S]ince in the model of Rorty there is no distinction between the objects as they are and as they are in themselves, it has no sense to think substantially about the things and consequently Rorty argues for an anti-essential view of the world. (Borospara. 4)

4. Conclusion

After analyzing all these arguments it can be concluded that the 'mirror' through which it is claimed that reality can be known is genuinely questionable. "What exactly is this mirror framed of"? "How can we judge the accuracy of the reflections which mind receives through the mirror"? As every individual has a different perspective to look at the world, so each mirror of each individual's mind should work according to their mental standard. What the mind sees through the mirror is the outcome of an interaction between the individual's mind and the external world. It is on the part of the mediator to determine how clearly and accurately it can represent the object. Each one of us has some traditional, cultural, social, religious, politicalbearings in our minds and so the mirror must be prejudiced by our customs, traditions, culture, society, religion, etc. If we talk about the idea of God, then a person who is Christian would be able to see God through the reflection of the mirror as the Father of the Heaven but not as Lord Ganesha who is a Hindu deity. The mirror burdened with so many things may not accurately represent the reality.

An important point is that the mirror can provide a partial view or as we can say a limited account of reality. It is not capable of grasping the whole nature of reality and this might also have led Rorty to consider that representation cannot provide a correct and accurate picture of reality.

The capability of language in grasping the true nature of reality is always questionable. It is very hard to accept that language can grasp the true nature of reality. We can only use language as the medium of communication and expression and not as something which can describe eternity. For example, if we say that space is infinite, we barely get an idea of the concept of what it means to be infinite, we can never have the exact knowledge of the notion of infinity as it actually exists out there, and hence it can be justified that language can only express and but cannot exactly replicate the world with all its elements existing out there.

Rorty's position based on the arguments in the above pages can be summed up that knowledge arises from the interaction between the subject and the object

and not from a priori rational ideas or sensory elements. Knowledge is the result of the inter-communication between human beings and the world.

Representationalism paves the way for endless disputes. If we accept that we have represented the world in total accuracy then we succumb to a restricted and conceited assertiveness. It also generates the anxiety in human beings that they could not be able to fill the vacuum between the subjective mind and the objective world and which ultimately lead them towards epistemological skepticism.

The notion of representation can be substituted with the notion of the description which intends to enable us to accomplish specific, limited purposes. Instead of focusing on the discovery whether we can know what the world is, we should focus on the vocabularies and the descriptions which would accompany the task of finishing our undertakings.

Rorty's claims, based on the arguments given above, that we are not able to tell anything about the reality which transcends our mind and language. However, Rorty does not completely reject the idea of existence of a reality independent of the subject, instead he says that as we are not capable of going beyond the representations and find out if they are in correlation with the reality as it exists in itself out there,it is better to abandon this idea. Rorty's complete denial of the representational theory is unquestionably a phenomenal reaction to the possibility that we cannot guarantee ourselves that our experience mirrors the reality exactly 'as it is in-itself'.

Rorty was highly influenced by Dewey's works and supported the social perspective of the mirror. In the later works of Rorty, we find the cultural and political implications and motivations, and he placed his philosophy in the context of a socio-political arena. To put it in his own words:

> If we see knowledge as a matter of conversation and social practice, rather than as an attempt to mirror nature, we will not be likely to envisage a meta-practice which will be the critique of all possible forms of social practice. (*PMN* 171)

Rorty believes that coping should be considered to be a practical affair which gives us freedom from the delusion of mind as a 'mirror'.

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An Essay on New Atheism

Bhaskarjit Neog

Abstract:
This essay critically analyzes the theoretical stance of new atheism by presenting it against the backdrop of the history of philosophical atheism. It suggests that this new atheism promotes a form of scientism which not only fails to appreciate the philosophical significance of religion in human life but also grossly undermines its own project by reducing the question of god to a mere matter of provability. The essay also critiques the proponents of new atheism for the manner in which they scientifize morality in their attempt of separating the question of god from morality.

Keywords: New Atheism, God, Scientism, Morality, Religion.

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1. Introduction

Nonbelief or disbelief about the existence of God is a phenomenon that exists across societies and civilizations with a long and distinguished past. Every society has a history or historical figures to fight back the question of God in their own unique way. If Greeks had Diagoras, Epicurus, and Lucretius, Indians too had an illustrious history of denouncing the idea of God with Cārvākas leading from the front. Similarly the Islamic world also had thinkers like Muhammad al-Warraq (7th century), Ibn al-Rawandi (8th century), Al-Razi (8th-9th century), and Abū al-ʿAlāʾ Al-Maʿarrī (10th-11th century) who saw the God-question and the practices related to it with utmost suspicion. Al-Maʿarrī is, in fact, believed to have infamously said that the inhabitants of the earth are "of two sorts: those with brains, but no religion, and those with religion, but no brains."[1] The disdain for religious beliefs and practices is thus nothing new. Good or bad, this has always been a part of the intellectual history of human civilization.

The term atheism has been commonly used for all forms of the denial of metaphysical belief in God or the existence of God-like entity. As a philosophical doctrine it draws our attention not only for its radical claims about God's nonexistence, but also for providing us with intriguing insights about all the issues that coexist with the idea of God. As a popular belief system, it receives exuberant support and attention from people, for it elegantly promises the arrival of secular humanism at the end of our struggle against irrationality and superstitions.

In recent years the popular interest in atheism has taken a new turn with the rise of activities by religious fundamentalists across the globe. Although many hesitate to recognize the 9/11 terror attack as the mark of this new turn, there is no denying the fact that there has been an increasing growth of intellectual exercise on atheism, especially in the Anglo-American societies, after this gruesome tragedy. The kernel of this interest lies in the belief that religion is the root of all societal evils and as a modern society we must abandon it by exposing its fruitlessness. The centre of this newly rejuvenated interest in atheism is a group of writers such as Richard Dawkins (*God Delusion*), Sam Harries (*End of Faith*, *Letter to*, and *Moral Landscape*), Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett, and Michael Onfray; and who have been spearheading a movement by publishing some of the best-selling books in the recent times.[2] Widely known as *new atheists*, a term coined by Gary Wolf in 2006, this group of writers is of the firm opinion that any form of irrationality or superstitious activities arising out of religious beliefs must be vigorously countered, combated, and exposed in front of the public eye. Atheism, for these writers, is not just a mere response to the believer rather a weapon to fight against the beliefs and practices of religious people. But what is new in this New Atheism? How is this form of atheism different from classical atheism? Have they been able to confine themselves within the doctrinal principles of atheism? Or, are they going beyond this by resorting to a dogmatic way of understanding religious beliefs and practices, as many have alleged?

This essay makes an attempt to critically analyse the theoretical position of new atheism by presenting it against the backdrop of the history of philosophical atheism. It suggests that this new atheism promotes a form of scientism which not only fails to understand and appreciate the philosophical significance of religion in human life but also grossly undermines its own project by reducing the question of God to a mere matter of provability. The essay also critiques the new atheists for the manner in which they scientifize morality in their attempt of separating the question of God from our moral outlook.[3] In the first part, the paper analytically unpacks the meaning of atheism and atheistic principles within the broader framework of philosophy of religion. The second part introduces the movement of new atheism and discusses some of the major works produced by its main proponents. It articulates how a form of scientism overshadows their endeavor of ruthlessly attacking religious beliefs, practices and texts in the name of promoting secular humanism. The third section offers a critique of this scientism and makes an appeal for the rescue of the doctrine of philosophical atheism from the hands of scientism. The concluding section rounds up the preceding discussions.

2. Defining Atheism

Although the concept of atheism was primarily developed in the context of monotheistic religions of western societies, it appeared to have stood for different things related to our beliefs depending upon what concept of God we want to invoke in a given situation. If we look up its Greek origin ἄθεος (*atheos*) it basically means the absence of the belief in the existence of God. In Greek "*a*" stands for "without" or "not", and "*theos*" stands for God. An atheist taken in this sense is someone who is without a belief in God, or someone who does not believe that there is God. 'Atheism' here indicates a negative view characterized by the absence of belief in God (Martin 465). George H. Smith says, "[a]n atheist is not primarily a person who believes that God does not exist; rather he does not believe in the existence of God" (9). However, there is another sense where the term 'atheism' might refer to a position of an individual who believes that there is no God or Gods. Roughly speaking, we could name the former the negative sense and the latter the positive sense of atheism. Even though both the senses sound similar, as they seem to mean the same thing, i.e., rejection of god, it is interesting to see how philosophers analytically try to draw a distinction. Part of such attempt is to show why atheism needs to be treated as a thick concept with no explicit dependence on the negation of anything.

Historically speaking the idea of atheism was developed in the context of three major religions – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The main target of any atheistic claims with reference to these traditions is the supreme God who is considered to be an all-powerful being – someone who is understood to be the most morally perfect Being. When applied in the nonwestern non-monotheistic context, where God or Gods may not necessarily refer to such a Supreme Entity, the concept may be a bit misleading. However, this does not mean that within the

framework of western monotheistic religious traditions the concept of atheism has any unanimous understanding. In a narrow sense, although it just refers to the rejection of God, many also endorse a rather broad sense in which atheism appears to stand for quite few things apart from denying the existence of God – such as the denial of after life, denial of super natural entity, the denial of immortal soul, and so on. Nevertheless, it must be noted that even if atheism is often invoked in consonance with such denials, in the strict sense of the term, it does not have any necessary connection with these. One could subscribe to all those beliefs, such as beliefs in after life, super natural entity, immortal soul, and so on, and yet be an atheist by definition.

Thus, even though the term atheism appears to be a straightforward antithesis to theism, there is a huge positive connotation that comes along with the endorsement of an atheistic position. This suggests that atheistic beliefs are not entirely dependent on religious beliefs for their existence. An atheist would continue to make sense even if there is no one to hold any radical theistic claims. One could argue that negative interpretation of atheistic claims is just a contingent historical matter with no strict conceptual ties with atheism proper.

Let us try to understand this with the help of an analogy given by Julian Baggini (8-9). Baggini talks about a story of an old lake called Loch Ness in Scotland. According to the story, many Scottish people believe that Loch Ness is just any other lake with all lake-like characteristics that houses innumerable aquatic creatures. However, at one point of time, for some strange reason some people started developing a belief that a huge monster resides in the Loch Ness. After a point even in the absence of any solid scientific evidence, many of them began to claim that they have seen Loch Ness monster. Interestingly, over a period of time this story of monster started spreading far and wide and the number of believers in the monster substantially grew further. Soon this story ceased to become a rumor and it assumed a standardized narrative for common Scottish people. Now one might ask – is it true that the belief of nonbelievers, who once sincerely treated this as just any other natural lake, is parasitic on the beliefs of those who now consider Loch Ness as a lake of big monster? Or, is it true that the nonbelievers do not have any epistemological status without the reference of the believers? The answer is negative. It can't be so because the beliefs of that minority predate the beliefs of the majority of the present time. The issue here is not of chronology, however. The minority, who believe that Loch Ness is natural, would continue to believe exactly the same way as they do now even if the belief of the majority had never existed. The point is also not really about majority versus minority. It is about how the recognition of the nonbelievers turns out to be after the rise of the believers in that monster. Before this belief came into prominence, there was absolutely no reason to label the general perception of the Loch Ness. But now that the number of believers has gone up, it appears that the original belief about the Loch Ness is actually parasitic on the believers and their beliefs.

What this analogy suggests is that there is absolutely no reason to presume that the essence of atheism is factually grounded in theism and its defenders. Even if theism did not exist, the claims of the atheist would still be making perfect sense. There is absolutely no reason to think that just because theism has become dominant in the present day world, atheism ought to be necessarily defined and determined by only negating the claims of theistic beliefs. Atheistic claim and beliefs have always been the same and they will remain so even in the presence of strong theistic positions.

3. Atheism on the Shoulder of *Four Horsemen*

New atheism is a modern day intellectual exercise by a group of Anglo-American atheist writers and is typically centered on the works of a number of high profile authors such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens, Michael Onfray and others.[4] Together colloquially they are known as the *Four Horsemen.* They call themselves by a number of overlapping identities such as – secularists, skeptics, critical thinkers, agonistics and humanists. Their views are prominently based on a naturalistic explanation of the world with a strong emphasis on the faculty of reason as the only means of understanding human reality. They reject religion and religious beliefs on the grounds that there is no, and cannot be any, sufficient evidence to justify them. They think that religion is not just wrong; it is irrational, pathological, and dangerously harmful. They take a critical stand towards all forms of religion for promoting unscientific views about the world and society. Even if there is no well-thought-out single agenda for them, and they have formally just met once in 2007, together they have been able to make a formidable impact in the popular domain of the intersection of science, philosophy and religion. Most of them write with a remarkable sense of confidence about the insignificance of religious beliefs in contemporary society. All of them exhibit a strong sense of moral concern about the way things unfolded in the last couple of decades in the name of faith – whether it is the rise of Islamic terrorism or the rise of fundamentalist thoughts in certain religious traditions such Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. They draw heavily from natural sciences in both their arguments against theistic beliefs and in their alternative explanation of origin of the world and the universe. According to them, empirical science is the basis for knowledge acquisition since a belief can be epistemically verified only when it is grounded in adequate scientific evidence. For them the idea of God does not make any sense, and thus, there should be no space for any religion and religious practices. Religion must be strongly countered, criticized, and exposed through constant rational argumentations.

Without generalizing it further let us try to be more specific and look at some of the works that this group of writers has produced in last couple of decades. In 2004, Sam Harris, a neuroscientist by training, published a book called *The End of Faith: Religions, Terror and the Future of Reason* where he critically analyzes the clash between faith and reason in the context of the modern world. The book

provides a scathing attack on popular readiness to suspend reason in favour of religious beliefs and practices. Harris claims that he had started writing the book during a period of collective human grief and stupefaction after the September 11, 2001 attacks which killed 2,977 people in the United States of America. Expressing his overall happiness about the book, Peter Singer, an eminent Australian philosopher, comments that the book focuses on a common thread that links Islamic terrorism with the irrationality of all religious faiths. It challenges not only Muslims but Hindus, Jews and Christians as well. Needless to say, the book was in the list of The New York Times Best Sellers for a total of 33 weeks.

Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* is another important book that furthered the objectives of new atheism in a way that gave it a new lease of life. Dawkins, the author of *The Selfish Gene*, contends that natural selection and other allied scientific theories are far better than a God-hypothesis in explaining the nature of the world. He suggests that the supernatural creator does not possibly exist and our ordinary belief in personal god is just a delusion – a delusion which he defines as a persistent false belief without any consistent evidence. With numerous accounts Dawkins explains why one does not need religion in order to be moral and how the roots of religion and morality can be easily explained in purely non-religious terms.

Daniel Dennett is a prominent American philosopher and cognitive scientist who first came into prominence with the publication of *Darwin's Dangerous Ideas* in the mid-nineties. Recognized as one of the four Horsemen, Dennett published another significant book titled *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* in 2006 where he argues that in order to understand its actual nature and future requirements religion needs a strong and rigorous scientific method. Like others, Dennett is also unambiguously straight in suggesting that religion cannot make a coherent case for the existence of any supernatural existence. Religion is itself a natural phenomenon, which was invented by a particular species of large-brained social primates for a variety of reasons. The book in simple terms is an account of the natural history of religion.

Continuing with the similar scientific approach, Victor Stenger published *God: The Failed Hypothesis: How Science Shows that God Does not Exist* – another important addition to the movement of new atheism. Treatment and contents-wise, this work is not entirely different from Dawkins', except the fact that Stenger's work is based on an approach of physics whereas Dawkins' is based on biology. Laying out evidence from particle physics, astrophysics, nuclear physics and quantum mechanics, Stenger shows how the universe appears exactly as it should if there is no creator.

In 2007, Christopher Hitchens, an influential columnist, orator and journalist, published a book with an explicit title *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. The book is a straightforward anti-religious polemic. According to Hitchens, religion is: "Violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism and tribalism and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry,

contemptuous of women and coercive toward children" (56). The book subscribes to this radical anti- religious position by presenting personal stories, documented historical anecdotes, and scathing attacks on selective religious texts. Although the book focuses mainly on the Abrahamic religions, it also makes comments on Hinduism and certain sects of Buddhism. As such the book is not about science. It is an all out attack on religion *per se* with a pompous declaration that the institution of religion is nothing but "a plagiarism of a plagiarism, of a hearsay of a hearsay, of an illusion of an illusion" (280).

Another important book that has made a significant impact is Sam Harris's *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*. As such this book is not really about atheism. But its treatment of morality is grounded in the premise of atheism which has exclusively scientific character. Separating the domain of morality entirely from the rest of the humanistic discourses, Harris claims that the only moral framework worth engaging with is the one where morally good things pertain to increases in the well-being of conscious creatures. He thinks that the question of right and wrong, good or bad can be easily ascertained on the basis of the scientific analysis of empirical facts. He controversially challenges the traditional distinction between "ought" and "is", i.e., Hume's Is-Ought problem, according to which there is no obvious way of coherently moving from descriptive statements to prescriptive ones. Harris thinks that philosophical deliberations may not always give us the accurate understanding of the nature of morality. Moral questions need to be pursued by using the proper methods of science and scientific explanations. In other words, it is only science which can tell us which values are good and how pursuing certain values can lead up to human flourishing.

Is new atheism a philosophical move as often it has been claimed by some of its proponents? One must note that apart from Dennett, none of these writers have had any background in academic philosophy. Nonetheless, most of them seem to have a decent understanding of the philosophical debates and responses, especially with respect to the moral questions. If one were to philosophize the framework of new atheism, roughly speaking we may see three major components in their approach: metaphysical, epistemological and ethical. The metaphysical component is found in their attempt to establish the thesis that there exists no supreme or final reality in the form of God. All that is there is out for our observation and experimentation. The epistemological feature of their approach lies in their stand with respect to the rejection of the religious beliefs. So far as the ethical part is concerned, it is clear that they have two premises to make: first, there exists a universal moral standard which is separated from the domain of religion, and second, the moral dilemmas can be analyzed and sorted out with the help of scientific explanation.

However, this portrayal of new atheism in the lights of philosophical components is too simplistic. As a matter of fact, we do not seem to come across any original philosophical stance in their attempts. Critics maintain that new

atheists offer nothing more than a mere repackaging of age-old philosophical arguments combined with an intolerant, dogmatic and aggressively anti-religious rhetoric. Most of their arguments are too simple and sweeping to bear any philosophical substance. Pigliucci thinks that their attempt is an "odd mishmash of scientific speculation (on the origin of religion), historically badly informed polemic and rehashing of philosophical arguments" (148). Their construal of the so-called God-hypothesis also raises certain questions which cannot be overlooked so easily. The new atheists are not disposed to appreciate the fact that there is no coherent and reasonable way in which the notion of God can possibly be treated a hypothesis in the standard scientific sense of the term. Their approach to the denial of God's existence is dependent on an over demanding notion of science – a notion that is not amenable to the realities of human society. The forceful scientific presentation of the God question is not only non-productive but also unreasonably restrictive to accommodate the insights of our human imagination.

Atheism is a not necessarily a dogmatic position. Across religion and society there have been well-known atheists who engage in rational debate without succumbing to the act of hatred and hostility. Unfortunately, in their writings the new atheists appear to be more dogmatic than that of a religious leader. One of the most unsavory aspects of the most new atheists is their strong prejudices about Islam. Harris dedicates a complete chapter with a title called "The Problem with Islam" in his book *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. Dennett is also not far behind. In *Breaking the Spell*, he makes certain comments about Islam which are no less than that of the language of a populist Islam phobic. He writes: "It is worth recalling that the Arabic word Islam means 'submission'. The idea that Muslims should put the proliferation of Islam ahead of their own interests is built right into the etymology of its name" (186). The same goes with other writers such as Stenger and Harris who have openly expressed their anger and vengeance against Islam. One wonders, with such myopic and biased vision how fairly they will be able to take forward the cause of atheism. One worries that such observations might cause more damage to atheism itself than anything else.

4. Scientism and New Atheism

An important question we need to ask about atheism at this stage is: What is new in the new atheism? How is new atheism different from classical atheism which had dominated the intellectual world of 18th and 19th centuries with a strong legacy rooted in the Ancient Greek thoughts? The response to these questions is likely to be a mixed one. Many believe that there is a considerable continuity between new and old atheism, especially when it comes to raising issues such as violence in the name of religion, incomprehensibility of religious texts, contradictions in textual interpretations, and incongruity with scientific knowledge. In fact, there is also a great deal of similarity insofar as the use of

language in ridiculing religion and religious practice is concerned. The history of atheism suggests that both old and new atheists were equally blunt and aggressive. However, new atheistic treatments have some unique and unparalleled character which may not be found in its classical form. In this paper, I want to focus on one particular aspect, namely the subscription to scientism in their analysis of morality and religion.

Scientism is an effort of extending scientific ideas, methods, practices and attitudes to matters of human social and political concern. Philosophers such as Friedrich Hayek, Karl Popper and in recent times, Hilary Putnam use scientism to describe the dogmatic endorsement of scientific methodology. For them scientism basically reduces of all knowledge to only that which can be measured. If scientism, in simple terms, is an excessive use of science and scientific explanations in social life, then the approach of new atheists may easily be charged with scientism. Let me substantiate this with proper explanation and evidence.

The use of science is pervasive in their writings. Reference to science can be found with every single writer of the new atheism movement. Even if they differ insofar as their focus to specific field is concerned, there is no doubt that they all have a remarkable affinity to modern sciences as most of them have had backgrounds in biological and physical sciences. Given this, the use of science in their explanations is fairly understandable. But whether their use of science is done in a scientific way is an issue that needs to be investigated critically. Here my focus is going to be on their so-called scientific understanding of morality.

Most new atheists, from Dawkins, Dennett, Harris to Hitchens, are relentless in trying to show why it is important to separate the domain of morality form the question of God. Their fight for secular morality is directed at an age-old discourse which suggests that morality has no standing in the absence of a moral law giver. Just like legal law makes no sense without the legislator and judiciary, moral law also cannot assume its operational power bereft of the moral lawgiver – the God. Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov famously said, if God does not exist, everything is permitted. God is the ultimate authority and He knows what is good for humanity. Morality in the hands of God is not only safe but also beneficent for all. Without a metaphysical guarantor, there is no compelling reason for humans to do what is good or right. Thus, God, according to this discourse, is the necessary foundation of morality.

Dissatisfaction with this form of understanding is nothing new in philosophy. That morality has its own standing or autonomy irrespective of whether or not we appropriate the idea of God is a thought that has an illustrious history. The most forceful argument for this position comes from Plato's Socrates. Socrates, in the dialogues called *Euthyphro*, poses a question to the protagonist Euthyphro which may be roughly paraphrased as: Is something good because God loves it, or is it good and that is why God loves it?[5] Although there can be two equally compelling answers to this question – one favoring the first horn and another favoring the second, there is ample explanation to show that it

was actually the second horn of the question which had attracted the Socratic attention. The reason for quoting this old philosophical dialogue is very simple. Philosophers were pretty much well-armed with arguments to show why and how the questions of morality cannot and should not be dependent on the concept of God. For this we do not necessarily need to invoke some scientific explanation. Our application of scientific methods to morality is at best unnecessary, and at worse a mistreatment of the very idea of morality.

Harris' use of science, for instance, is a case in point. He suggests that science can effectively show us why certain moral practices are essentially wrong, for instance, the genital mutilation of young girls – a widely practiced moral norm in certain Africans countries. But in order to understand why it is wrong do we really need to be informed by findings of what MRI scans and other modern technology reveals? Harris thinks that truths of morality need to be related to facts about the well-being of conscious creatures and sciences, especially neuroscience, which is his own field, can easily uncover what such truths are. So instead of consulting Kant, Mill, and Aristotle, to know about what is important for humans, we need to go to science to know the nature of conscious mental states. But is this that simple? If the mental states of conscious beings are the things that ultimately matter morally then how do we prove what is wrong in harming people who are not in their conscious states? How do we show that it is wrong to harm someone who is asleep now? Harris' denial of Hume's doctrine of fact-value distinction is too sloppy. We cannot objectively arrive at a conclusion about values by merely pursuing an empirical scientific explanation. This is because moral facts are of a very different nature than scientific facts, even though both are theory laden. In moral theory it is possible to reach at a consensus about the constituents of moral fact. And this is possible only because of the fact that this is constructed by certain section of humanity which shares a similar world view and understanding. But this is not how scientific facts are explained and ascertained. Their universality is not depended on any agreement of a particular society or people.

The attempt of explaining ethics in scientific terms is not new. More than a century ago, G.E. Moore and his colleagues analytically proved why this is fallacious and why this cannot be done.[6] But the new atheists have been gleefully ignoring all these philosophical literature. Observing this trend Massimo Pigliucci says,

> [I]t seems clear to me that most of the New Atheists (except for the professional philosophers among them) pontificate about philosophy very likely without having read a single professional paper in that field. If they had, they would have no trouble recognizing philosophy as a distinct (and, I maintain, useful) academic discipline from science: read side by side, science and philosophy papers have precious little to do with each other, in terms not just of style, but of structure, scope and range of concerns. (152)

No doubt science has been able to give answers to lots of questions of our daily life. It has made our modern life much easier than what it was before.

Nevertheless this does not mean that we need to bring in science to every sphere of our social life. Science should be left where it suits the best. The domain of religion does not belong to science. Empirical evidence of God's non-existence may play a supportive role in making people dissuade from the domain of religion. But certainly that does not help us build a society that can inculcate secular and humanistic values.

5. Concluding Remarks

Rabbi Jonathan Sack, an influential author, in his *The Great Partnership: Science, Religion and the Search for Meaning*, famously says,

> Atheism deserves better than the new atheists whose methodology consists of criticizing religion without understanding it, quoting texts without contexts, taking exceptions as the rule, confusing folk belief with reflective theology, abusing, mocking, ridiculing, caricaturing, and demonizing religious faith and holding it responsible for the great crimes against humanity. Religion has done harm; I acknowledge that…. But the cure for bad religion is good religion, not no religion, just as the cure for bad science is good science, not the abandonment of science. (11)

These are important lines and they should not be overlooked as mere negative criticism. One must realize that religion is not something that can be banned overnight just because it does not cohere with our scientific knowledge. We have every right to criticize those who are abusing and misusing the normative dimensions of religion by hoodwinking people's emotion. But this surely does not mean that in the name of reason and rationality we have the license to ridicule people's private beliefs and practices. Scientism has hardly done anything good to atheism as a philosophical doctrine. Science is not philosophy and philosophy is also not science. So, any attempt of reducing one in terms of the other is bound to fail irrevocably. New atheism may have got everything that its proponents were looking for – name, fame and recognition as a school of thought. But whether what it has got is right and deserving is something that needs to be questioned for posterity's sake.

Notes

1. See "Introduction" in Al- Maʿarrī.

2. Ayaan Hiresi Ali is often associated with this trend. Ali is a Somalian origin Dutch writer who is known as *Plus one Horse-woman*.

3. Many have accused the new atheists of subscribing to scientism. For more, see Pigliucci, and Kaden and Schmidt-Lux. In this paper, I differ from others as my focus is here mainly on the scientifization of morality.

4. An extended list may also include writers like Michel Onfray, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, A.C. Grayling, Paul Kurtz (*Forbidden Fruit*, and *Science and Religion*) and others. However, in this work I am going to put focus mainly on four – Dennett, Hitchens, Harris, and Dawkins.

5. For a latest insightful discussion on the problem, see Mawson, and Baggett and Walls.

6. Readers interested in this issue may look up Moore's *naturalistic fallacy*; see Moore.

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Socrates's Image of Recollection in the *Meno*

Nilanjan Bhowmick

Abstract:

In Plato's dialogue, *Meno*, Socrates illustrates how all learning is not really learning, but recollection. The illustration comes about by questioning a slave of Meno's regarding a problem in geometry. The slave is asked on what line would the double of a square with a base of two square feet be built. Socrates shows the slave, entirely through questioning, that the double of the square would be built on the diagonal of the square. I want to argue for the following claim: since the location of the diagonal of the square is inside the square, it represents in a very neat way what Socrates wants to establish: that learning is really recollection. What we know is already inside us, just as the answer to the question regarding the line on which the double of a square of two feet is to be built is inside the square. The diagonal represents the recollected truth. That is obvious enough. It is also an image of recollection.

Keywords: Plato's *Meno*, Meno's Paradox, Recollection, Knowledge, Representations of Innateness.

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1. Introduction

In this paper I want to argue for a simple claim. In Plato's dialogue, *Meno*, Socrates illustrates how all learning is not really learning, but recollection. The illustration comes about by questioning a slave of Meno's regarding a problem in geometry. The slave is asked on what line the double of a square with a base of two feet would be built. Socrates shows the slave, entirely through questioning, that the double of the square would be built on the diagonal of the square. The slave understands the answer and agrees with it. Socrates's contention is: the slave does not learn, but recollects. This is apparently because Socrates only asks questions and never asserts anything. For learning, teaching has to take place. One does not teach what another already knows. But Socrates never teaches. Hence, the slave never learns. But the slave recognizes the right answer. Thus, since he does not learn, he must have recollected.

The claim I want to make is this: since the location of the diagonal of the square is *inside* the square, it represents in a very neat way what Socrates wants to establish: that learning is really recollection. What we know is already inside us, just as the answer to the question regarding the line on which the double of a square of four square feet is to be built is *inside the square.* The diagonal represents the recollected truth. That is obvious enough. It is also an *image* of recollection. The location of the diagonal tells us something about the claim that Socrates is making. Socrates's problem is not chosen at random. There is a message in it, pretty much lying on the surface.

Socrates does not say so himself, nor does he hint at it. Socrates does not say: "Look at the diagram, Meno. Look at the location of the diagonal. It is inside the square. Unexpectedly so, for the slave. In the same way, unexpectedly so, for us, and the slave, knowledge lies inside us. All learning is really recollection." But I think the parallel is too neat to be missed. I find it hard to believe that Socrates just thought of any problem at random that came to his mind when he had to establish that all learning is recollection. The problem is carefully chosen. Socrates already thinks that all knowledge is innate. So, he must have already known what examples show us such innateness of knowledge. Hence, the example is not something he thought up right on the spot, just plucked out from whatever he knew of geometry. It is not a coincidence that the answer to the question –on what line can we draw the double of a square with a base of two feet– lies in the diagonal *inside* the square.

2. Meno's Paradox

Let me backtrack a bit. There is a reason why Socrates argues for the innateness of knowledge. Meno has posed the notorious paradox of inquiry after being shown by Socrates that all of Meno's definitions of virtue have fallen short of what virtue really is. Meno is left perplexed. He has no idea what to say. All along he thought that he knew what virtue was, but now he seems to know nothing at all. But he also realizes that Socrates's own position regarding the

priority of definitions may lead to the impossibility of successfully carrying out an inquiry. Socrates's position of the priority of definitions can be stated in the following way: if you want to know any property of X then you must first define what X is.[1] To define X is to know what X is, and once we know what X is, we will know what properties X has. Meno wants to know whether virtue is teachable or whether it comes by practice. Socrates says that whether virtue is teachable or not cannot be known unless we know what virtue is just like we cannot know whether Meno is handsome or not without knowing Meno himself. And, of course, Socrates says he has no idea what virtue is. But he is ready to inquire into it.

Meno poses the following problem for any such inquiry:

> How will you look for it, Socrates, when you do not know at all what it is? How will you aim to search for something you do not know at all? If you should meet with it, how will you know that this is the thing that you did not know?   (Plato, *Meno*   880; 80d)

Meno does have a point.[2] If Socrates does not have any clue about what virtue is, then how can he possibly look for it? Surely, Socrates has no idea what he is looking for. If I do not know what my car keys look like, then it is not clear how I am supposed to look for them. Socrates might have some false beliefs and some true beliefs about virtue, but how would he know they are *about* virtue unless he knew what virtue was? Since Socrates is famous for claiming that he knows nothing, the same paradox swamps other cases of Socratic inquiry: courage, temperance, friendship, piety, justice. Even if Socrates, by chance, comes up against a successful definition of piety or justice, how would he know he had come across the right definition?

Socrates's response is to suggest that Meno's paradox is no paradox. It is merely an *eristic* argument, which means that it is more clever than convincing. According to Socrates, it amounts to the following: if one knows X then one need not inquire into it, and if one does not know X then one cannot inquire into it. Socrates's idea is that this argument is wrong because it presupposes that when we learn something we did not know that thing before. How can we figure out that the eristic argument presupposes this? Mostly, from the answer Socrates thinks is the right one to Meno's Paradox. Socrates thinks that the way to resolve Meno's paradox is to think that we do not learn everything we do *anew*.Commonsensically, learning about X means that we did not know before about those facts that we did learn presently. But Socrates thinks that this commonsensical idea of learning is not right. When we learn, we do not learn something we did not know before, but we actually come to recollect what we already knew, or we come to cognize a truth that was already there in us.[3] From this, we can infer that Socrates thinks that Meno's paradox – and Socrates's reformulation of it – presupposes that when we carry out an inquiry, we do so on the assumption that we are going to learn something new, something we did not know before or something of which we

were not in possession before. This idea, Socrates thinks, is wrong. What is right is to realize that all learning is recollection.

3. The Recollecting Slave

Meno, is, of course, puzzled by this reply. Socrates has to show that learning is indeed recollection. Socrates does so, by showing that a slave of Meno, who knows Greek, but otherwise is unschooled, can, by repeated questioning, reveal that he knows on what line to build the double of a square. It is by no means obvious that the answer to the question asked – on what line should the double of a square with a base of two feet be built – is that it is the diagonal of the said square. Socrates shows this beautifully by eliciting various responses of the slave till the slave gets the right answer.

When the slave does recognize the right answer to be what it is, Socrates does not say that the slave has come to *know* the answer. Rather, Socrates says, the slave has come to have a true belief in mind, or, an opinion which is true, which when properly regimented, will lead to knowledge.

> These opinions have now just been stirred up like a dream, but if he were repeatedly asked these same questions in various ways, you know that in the end his knowledge about these things would be as accurate as anyone's. (Plato, *Meno* 886;85d)

This shows that it is not necessary that what we recollect is always knowledge, but that we can also recollect true beliefs.[4] We do not have strong reasons to hold on to these true beliefs. But when we come to understand the true beliefs as to why they are true, we come to have knowledge. But throughout, the truth lies inside us. All learning may be recollection, but all learning need not always lead to knowledge. The slave – since he will remain a slave – will continue to have the true belief that the double of a square is to be built on its diagonal, but he may not understand a proper geometrical proof for it, connecting it to other truths about squares. On the way to "recollecting" the answer, the slave gives wrong answers. Thus, he entertains false beliefs. Hence he cannot be said to have true opinions on the question asked straightway. The right answer dawns on him finally, but only after rather big leads from Socrates.

We should note that the question asked by Socrates would make anyone think that the answer to it lay outside the square. Surely, the line on which one is to draw the *double* of a square would lie outside the square. One has to extend the base a bit and get the right answer. This is what the slave thinks, and I think just about anyone else would think so too. There is a lesson here being given by Socrates. When we inquire, we think that the answers to our questions have to be sought in our experience, and in a sense that is very natural. Socrates's geometric problem is set up to mimic the initial path of inquiry. We look outside us, just like the slave looks outside the square.

The slave is significantly ignorant of the nature of squares. We can infer this from the fact, that when Socrates asks him whether he recognizes a particular

figure to be a square, the slave says "Yes" but when asked what the area of the square is, the slave has no idea. Indeed, even after illustration, even after Socrates explains how the area has to be figured out, the slave proffers a wrong answer regarding the line on which the double of a square has to be built. We can see this from the fact that even after the slave offers that a square with a base of two feet has an area of four square feet – this, after encouraging hints by Socrates – *and* the fact that the slave knows that the double of a four square feet square is an eight square feet square, *and* the fact that the slave also comes to know that a square with a base of four feet has the size of sixteen square feet, the slave *still* thinks that a line three feet long will be the right one to get a square with a size of eight square feet.   This is hard to believe, as the slave must know that eight is less than nine. All these suggest that the slave is making a best guess and that he is slow in learning even after explicit instruction. It is also possible that out of an excitement of being questioned by Socrates or speaking to Socrates, the slave makes this rather unusual mistake.

The sections where Socrates is asking the slave questions, mimics the sections preceding where Socrates asks Meno to tell him what virtue is. Meno too offers answers, even *after* Socrates explicitly provides him hints and clues, which are off the mark and they get even worse after Socrates's instruction. Thus, initially Meno avers that it is easy to say what virtue is. Men have one virtue, women another, a slave another, a child another, and so on so forth. Virtues are relative to one's stature and position in society, and depend also on how old one is. When Socrates says that he is not looking for what the different virtues are given different stations or occupations in life but just one account of virtue, he helpfully provides various analogies to Meno to help him understand what Socrates is looking for. Meno still goes on to make errors till he ends up in perplexity. Every definition Meno offers is easily seen to be wanting in one respect or another. The same happens to the slave. The slave answers Socrates quite confidently, for, he thinks that the answer is obvious. But he too ends in perplexity. One cannot build the double of a square of a base of two feet by doubling the two feet. That would give us a four feet base. A four feet base would give us a square of sixteen square feet. What we want is a square of eight square feet, since the double of a four square feet square is an eight square feet one. Now the slave realizes that the line on which the double has to be built is shorter than four feet but greater than two feet. So, he thinks, much to one's surprise, that it is a three feet line. But that will not work. That gives is a nine square feet square. We want an eight square feet one. Now, the slave feels lost. He does not know what to do.

The slave thought that the answer clearly lay outside the original square. It would be very unusual to think that it lay inside. Such an idea would never cross one's mind, given the nature of the geometric problem in the first place. In the same way, when we carry out an inquiry into the moral domain, we offer answers that seem to come from our ordinary experience. Our answers tend to be

scattered and have no unity to them. Even after instruction, we falter. It is in the nature of inquiry to lead us onwards and not *inwards*. To study virtue, or piety, or courage, one has to look at the concept itself (for a conceptual definition), or the thing itself (for a real definition).

Socrates's example is thus well chosen. It is an example where the answer naturally seems to lie outside the square, mimicking the nature of ordinary thoughts about morality. When one realizes that the truth lies inside the square, then one understands the nature of learning. This is one good reason to think that the example chosen by Socrates was not at random.

4. The Diagonal and Recollection

How do we come to know that the diagonal of a square with a base of two feet doubles the square? That is, if one draws a square on the diagonal of the original square we get a square twice the size of the original square. To establish this, Socrates takes the square with a two foot base and then adds three more squares to it of the same size, that is, four square feet. Consider the following diagram.
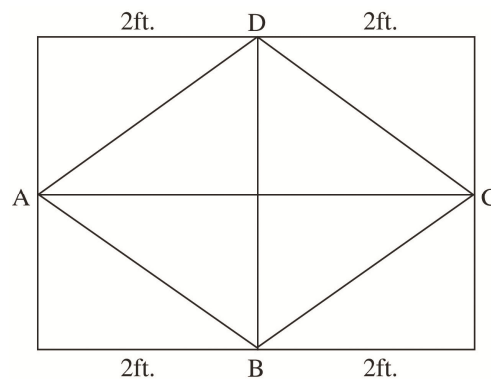
Now, take the diagonal AB. It divides the square whose diagonal it is by half. The square is of four square feet. So, each of the *triangles* is two square feet in size. There are four such diagonals, AB, BC, CD, and AD. Each divides the square whose diagonal it is by half. Each half is two square feet in size (or area). Hence, the square ABCD, consisting of four triangles has an area of eight square feet. That is double the size of the original square of four square feet.

The slave understands the answer. Socrates takes this to mean that the slave has finally recollected – though in a dreamlike manner – the answer to the question.[5] Why recollected, instead of having learnt it by experience? Because the slave had no knowledge of geometry before – no one had taught him. And because Socrates never tells him the answer directly, but merely questions him. The slave does not learn from Socrates either. He infers all on his own that the

diagonal is the right answer. The reason why Socrates thinks this is dreamlike for the slave may be because the slave will forget the truth he has learned as soon as he steps out of the conversation, just like we forget dreams the moment we wake up. Since the slave was not overtly taught, or instructed, but still knew the answer, the only option is to think that he recollected it.

We might think that the step from learning to recollection is too hasty; the slave did not recollect but just inferred from whatever Socrates asked him and drew on the ground. I am not arguing about the merits of the recollection argument here. Even if it is granted that the slave was recollecting and not learning, it is not clear how this answers the original paradox Meno raised. Meno had asked how it was possible to inquire when one did not know what one was inquiring into. It is not of any immediate help to say that we do not learn but we recollect. For, even if we recollect, how do we know we recollected the *right* truth? The answer might lie in the demonstration Socrates gives.

My contention is that the diagonal is an *image* of recollection. Not only does Socrates show that the slave recollects, but the answer itself suggests that when we look for an answer it is useful to look into the nature of the object itself instead of grasping at popular responses. The responses that Meno offers to the question of "What is virtue?" were popular responses, responses with which one is acquainted with in an unthinking manner. For example, one of Meno's responses is that virtue is the wish to have good things and the power to acquire them. That is again a seemingly popular response.[6] The slave too offers responses somewhat unthinkingly. The slave is less to blame than Meno, as he is in any case unschooled, and the question being asked is a geometric one, which even educated people might struggle with. It is only when the slave is made to look inward, inside the square, instead of outwardly extending the base line of the square that he arrives at the right answer.

It should be mentioned that it was not just by merely looking inside the square that the slave "recollected" but also by looking at the four squares drawn up together along with the diagonals touching each other. Essentially, by looking at one square and imagining it multiplied into four – as Socrates shows him –did the slave get the right answer. That is a significant thought experiment. But this does not mean the answer did not lie inside the square. It means that the recollection of the right answer, once we know that easy answers are not getting us anywhere, require the help of the imagination and looking at the same problem from many angles. Since the problem comes from geometry it is thought that Socrates favours knowledge being inherently apriori by nature. This is an incorrect inference to make. Socrates thinks that whatever you know is recollected. But that does not mean that extensive experience of the world, the use of the imagination, conducting experiments, thinking up thought experiments, constructing hypothesis, are not part of what goes on when we recollect. We need experience to help us get to the truth.

To go back to my contention now: the diagonal is the answer to the question posed by Socrates. It lies *inside* the square. This shows how, when we inquire, the answer lies inside us. It is an image of recollection. This is the second reason for thinking that Socrates's choice of the geometric problem was not an arbitrary choice. After all, why did not Socrates choose any other problem from geometry? Why did he not instead ask the slave to tell him what would be the line on which the triple or the quadruple of the square might be built? Socrates could easily have done so. Socrates seems to have had a good acquaintance with geometry. He is immediately ready to show to Meno how the slave recollects. Socrates does not ask Meno to provide some example for which he could then draw the necessary consequences to show that the slave is recollecting. He has a problem ready for the purpose. Only a person fairly confident of his understanding of geometry would do so. If so, Socrates's choice could have been different. If that is the case, the choice Socrates makes reflects purpose on his part. Any other example could easily have shown the truth of recollection. This specific example, therefore, shows something more.

The geometric problem is suited to hand in more ways than one. As I had said above, the geometric problem makes the slave to look outside the square for an answer. This is the same reaction that many have when Socrates questions them. Thus, when Socrates asks Euthyphro what piety is, Euthyphro says that whatever he is doing is pious. This is not even to look at piety but something that is apparently an instance of it. It tells us nothing about what is pious and what is not, not at least given Socrates's requirements of a standard or a definition. When asked further, Euthyphro again and again gives answers that are prevalent in the popular culture. Piety is that which is loved by the gods, or else piety is service to the gods. He does not look at the nature of piety itself, whatever that might be. The same happens to Meno when Socrates questions him about virtue. It is only when we turn away, as the prisoners in the cave do in the *Republic*, from the shadows and try to look at reality that we are going to progress on the path of inquiry. It is only when the slave looks inside the square, and understands the nature of the diagonal and understands what it means to have the same square being attached to itself four times, such that, the diagonals of each make a connecting square that he comes to understand the answer to the question Socrates had asked initially. It is also the case that since this was a problem in geometry, the answer cannot change. Hence, this also shows that the answer lay inside the square not in some contingent sense but necessarily so. This shows, analogically, that all learning is recollection necessarily, not in some contingent sense. After all, it is possible that in some other possible world people do not recollect but learn. Socrates thinks this cannot be the case. Recollection is the only way to learn.

There is the nagging worry that if the geometric figure with the diagonal was a representation of recollection, in the sense that the truth being sought lay inside the square, why did Socrates not say so. After all, in the *Republic*, when Socrates describes the Divided Line (*Republic* 237-239; 510a-511e), he describes what each division of the line represents.[7] So, if Socrates did want to treat the

diagonal as an image of recollection, he should have said so. I agree that Socrates is not explicit about it. I have already mentioned that the choice of the problem initially, and the answer arrived at later, do not appear to be random at all. Also, there are clear reflections of the slave's state with Meno's state, without Socrates's *saying* so. The slave feels perplexed as he fails to give the right answer; this reflects Meno's perplexity. Moreover, Socrates suggests that this perplexity is not a bad state to be in. This is also an indication to Meno not to lose heart in inquiring into virtue even if he feels perplexed. But Socrates does not say so aloud. Meno should be intelligent enough to get the message. Socrates was being quite overt in his hints to Menothough. The analogy of the truth being inside us to the answer to the geometric problem being inside the square is much more subtle.But the subtlety of the analogy being made does not mean that the analogy does not exist or is unconvincing. It is possible that Plato left certain aspects of the Socratic illustration for the reader to figure out. The analogy is also pedagogically useful. Once we see the analogy, we come to reflect more deeply upon the nature of learning and recollection, whereas merely observing the exchange between Socrates and the slave makes us doubt the point that Socrates wants us to accept. There is more to the Socratic example than meets the eye, it seems.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that the answer to the geometric problem that Socrates makes the slave recognize is also an image of recollection. Not only does the slave grasp the true belief, which is inside him, but, analogically, the answer lay all the while inside the square. The slave had been looking outside the square for it in vain. The idea that this analogy is correct is also bolstered by the fact that the slave – and indeed just about anyone else – would think that the answer lay outside the square. Socrates has chosen an example with a perfect pitch, so to speak. It leads the slave to inquire the wrong way, till he finally admits that the answer lay inside the square. Socrates makes Meno admit that the slave had been recollecting.

The dialogue with the slave parallels Meno's failed efforts before to arrive at a definition of virtue and also his perplexity at the failure of his definitions. It also encourages Meno to look away from the popular answers he is giving and look at virtue itself, just like the slave has to look at the square itself and not outside it for an answer to the geometric problem. Indeed, it seems to me that the conversation with the slave also reflects what is to come in the dialogue with Meno later on. Once the slave moves into the background, Meno and Socrates start all over again. But Meno wants to discuss whether virtue is teachable, and not what virtue is. Socrates concedes to this request. In the subsequent discussion, Socrates shows that we may not be able to hold on to the proposition that virtue is knowledge and at best we can just have true beliefs about what is virtue. That is quite similar to the conclusion we had with the slave. The slave has true belief, not knowledge, about the diagonal being the line on which the double of the square

has to be built. In the same way, Meno can have only true beliefs about the nature of virtue, if at all he has access to them. At least in the case of the slave, the slave definitely has a true belief. With Meno we are not even sure of that. But Meno can be said to have grasped the distinction between true belief and knowledge, just as he did when he assented to the slave having true belief but not knowledge.

Notes

1. Hugh Benson (138) divides Socrates's claims into two parts. I have only cited the part that has to do with properties. The two parts of the principle of the Priority of Definition are, (1) If A does not know what F is in itself, then for no particular can it be known that it is X, and (2) If A does not know what F is in itself then A cannot know for any property G, that F-ness is G. Benson shows that there is both good evidence to believe that Socrates does believe in the principle of the Priority of Definition and there appears to be evidence that also goes against the fact that Socrates believes in it. In the *Meno*, Socrates does say, "If I do not know what something is, how could I know what qualities it possesses? Or do you think that someone who does not know at all who Meno is could know whether he is good-looking or rich or well-born, or the opposite of these?" (*Meno* 872; 71b). Thus, here, Socrates clearly cites the second part of the Priority of Definition. That Socrates also believes in (1) above can be seen easily from his reaction to Euthyphro's ideas about piety. When Euthyphro says that piety is whatever he is doing right now (in prosecuting his father), Socrates says that does not tell him what piety is because he does not know what piety is in itself. Meno's paradox is about whether such a stringent notion of priority, presumably (2) above, is helpful in inquiry. It would appear, from the way the dialogue *Meno* ends that Socrates does retain his belief that he is right to hold to the Priority of Definitions.

2. Meno's Paradox of Inquiry has spawned a vast literature. For excellent discussion, see Ebrey. For a discussion of how Meno's paradox had been independently formulated by philosophers in India, see Carpenter and Ganeri.

3. There is an interesting issue regarding what Socrates thinks is recollected when we "learn", that is what are we to understand by the idea that knowledge is innate. According to David Bronstein and Whitney Schwab (392-394), there are three options, (1) Pre-natalism, (2) Condition Innatism, and (3) Content Innatism. Pre-natalism is the view that the soul has knowledge before birth, but loses it when born, and then has to regain what it knew, if it chooses to do so. Condition Innatism is the view that what is innate are cognitive states. So, man is born *knowing* truths. Content Innatism is the view that man is not born knowing truths, but that man is born with the truth, that is the truthful content is there in us, but the knowledge (which would be a cognitive state) of that contentful truth is not there in us. Bronstein and Schwab argue for the view that Socrates adheres to Content Innatism.

4. It should be noted that the word "episteme" as used by Plato need not mean knowledge, but could mean understanding. Whitney Schwab ("Explanation in Meno") argues for this notion. Plato, in the *Meno,* hints at the idea that *episteme* means a true belief with an explanation, where the crux is what an explanation is, and how much of it suffices for us to know, or understand. The kind of explanation Plato wants involves the grasp of Forms, and that suggests that Plato wants to not so much know, but to have a complete understanding of the nature of the object of investigation in question.

5. For a recent discussion of when it can be said that the slave recollects and when not, see Schwab ("Metaphysics of Recollection"). It is at least clear from the *Meno* that Socrates does think that the slave recollects a true belief at the end when the slave realizes the answer, but not that the slave recollects a piece of what he knows. But whether the slave recollects as the questioning goes on is subject to much dispute.

6. Meno knew Gorgias, and it would appear that what Meno says of virtue comes from what Gorgias may have told him. Meno also relies on popular opinion, when questioned by Socrates, as he tends to show a certain aversion to respond with what *he* thinks of the issue. Clearly, his responses are presented as those well-rehearsed by him.

7. The discussion of the Divided Line in the *Republic* (510a-511e) can hardly be said to be a model of clarity. Ironically, Socrates says that the divisions in the Line, four of them, correspond to "relative clarity and obscurity" (*Republic* 237) with the lowest cut representing the least clarity. But there is no clarity amongst commentators regarding the exact states of mind or the nature of the objects represented, especially for the objects, or the mental states, that come above the first division of the line.

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Śaṅkaradeva's Philosophy of Art
in the Light of Indian Poetics

Raghunath Ghosh

Abstract:

Śaṅkaradeva is not only a religious personality but a humanist, social reformer, patriot etc. also. This paper is an attempt to evaluate Śaṅkaradeva as an aesthetician especially in the light of Indian Poetics. The object of his poetic performance is the attainment of *bhakti*, not of liberation which ultimately leads one from partiality to fullness, darkness to light, and untruth to truth. Śaṅkaradeva thinks that he himself, poet or singer finds 'oneness with Absolute' and this phenomenon is called *sahṛdayatva* in *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana. First, Śaṅkaradeva has admitted an identity between listeners or readers with the aesthetic object. The Indian poeticians have admitted a common heart between artists, characters of the literature viz., drama and the connoisseurs, but Śaṅkaradeva has gone one step further and told that these three when associated with the Absolute can give rise to aesthetic joy. Secondly, to him all the objects of art like literature, dance, music etc. are not only meant for mundane joy but for the attainment of *bhakti* also. Śaṅkaradeva categorically and emphatically told in his *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* that the term *kīrtana* means singing of the glories of God. *Kīrtana* consists in the act of singing the praise or proclaiming good qualities of someone or God. For him, music includes vocal and instrumental. *Kīrtana* involves dance also, because dance always accompanies music.

Keywords: *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, *Sahṛdaya*, *Bhakti*, *Śabdabrahma*, *Pratibhā*.

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Śaṅkaradeva is not only a religious personality but a humanist, social reformer, patriot etc. also. This paper is an attempt to evaluate Śaṅkaradeva as an aesthetician especially in the light of Indian Poetics. To him in art one's forgetfulness of ego is highly essential which also indirectly helps him for complete surrender to God (Baruah 39). To him music and art do not consist in individual likes and dislikes, which indirectly hint at the phenomenon of universalisation (*sādhāraṇīkaraṅa* in the words of Abhinavagupta). The object of his poetic performance is the attainment of *bhakti*, not of liberation which ultimately leads one from partiality to fullness, darkness to light, and untruth to truth. Śaṅkaradeva thinks that he himself, poet or singer finds 'oneness with Absolute' and this phenomenon is called *sahṛdayatva* in *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana. In these cases there is some sort of identity between the audience and the object of perception. This notion of identity emerges from having self-involvement *(ekātmatā)* with it. As for example, when an individual perceives a scene in which Duṣyanta enjoys happiness in company of Śakuntalā, he is realizing bliss just as Duṣyanta. For the time being he identifies himself with the character of the drama. Due to this identification (with the hero) the spectator loses individuality and forgets his personal this-worldly matters. This shows the mystic power of the aesthetic pleasure (Viśvanātha 3/12).

Śaṅkaradeva thinks that there is oneness among an artist, poet or a singer which again finds oneness with the Absolute. This oneness enables him to establish harmonious relationship with all things (Baruah 42). The real appreciator of a literature is *sahṛdaya* or connoisseur. The property of being a *sahṛdaya* lies in the fact of being identified with the feeling of the poet. The poet creates a literature, the appreciator realizes it and being *sahṛdaya* or connoisseur he re-creates the same in his own self. Just as fire covers the dry wood, the aesthetic pleasure arising in one's heart covers his whole body. This aesthetic pleasure is produced if the object is appreciated by heart (*hṛdayasamvādī*):

> "*yo 'rthohṛdayasamvādītasyabhāvorasodbhavah*
>
> *Śarīramvyāpyatetenasūṣkamkāṣṭhamivāgninā*"

<div align="right">(Locana with Dhvanyāloka 88)</div>

The appreciators who have stretched their minds' mirror through habit of practicing literature and who have acquired the capability of engrossing themselves with the matter of presentation are called connoisseurs having same state of heart: *"sahṛdayānāmyeṣāmkāvyānuśīlanābhyāsavaśādviśadībhūtemanomukurevarṇanīya-tanmayībhavana-yogyatātesahṛdaya-samvāda-bhājahsahṛdayāh"* (*Locana with Dhvanyāloka* 88). In fact, the term '*sahṛdaya*' means having same state of heart in trio – dramatist, players and spectators. In a drama the motion generated in a

dramatist's mind is transmitted to the dramatic characters which again transmit the same with the audience.

It may be argued why this-worldly pleasure is not considered as aesthetic. In reply, it can be said that this is not an aesthetic pleasure due to lack of its impersonal, disinterested and universal character. When an individual becomes happy at the happiness of the dramatic character, this pleasure does not belong to him (i.e. arising from his personal life) and hence it is impersonal. For this reason he remained untouched with his personal enjoyment, which has got some sort of pathological basis. This pleasure, not arising from the fulfillment of his self-interest, is disinterested and hence non-pathological. In the realm of experience he will find any reason in his personal life so that he can have a feeling of enjoyment. Such type of feeling does not occur in the case of only one individual. It happens so in the case of all individuals. That is why, it is universal. It has been stated earlier that due to complete absorption in the aesthetic pleasure a man forgets his individual love, fear etc. At that time there remains a universal love which is aesthetic pleasure. When a terrific scene is represented, there is enjoyment of aesthetic pleasure called *bhayānaka*. In this case also we generally forget that this fear realized by us belongs to the dramatic character and enjoy the universal character of fear which is free from other barriers like individualistic elements. The generalization called *'sādhāraṇīkṛti'* is the process of idealization through which an individual may go from his personal emotion to the serenity of contemplation of a poetic sentiment. Actually it is observed by us that when a drama or film is enacted or shown in the auditorium, there are persons of diverse taste, status and mood, but it is astonishing to note that all are enjoying the drama or film *equally*. The poet and audience must have capacity of idealization. For this reason a poet can present personal emotion as an impersonal aesthetic pleasure which is enjoyed by others. As this pleasure transcends the limitations of personal interest, it is disinterested universal pleasure. A pleasure which transcends this-worldly interest is surely transcendental and hence, mystic. As this-worldly pleasure arising out of this-worldly affair like the birth of a son, attainment of property etc. is not impersonal, disinterested or universal, it cannot be described as an aesthetic pleasure. Aesthetic pleasure is the emotional mood revealed in a blissful knowledge free from all barriers (*Locana with Dhvanyāloka* 88).

To him music is to cultivate sound in order to feel the Absolute which is also the nature of sound called *Śabdabrahma* as admitted by the Grammarians like Bhartṛhari (Baruah 43). Moreover, like Abhinavagupta Śaṅkaradeva believes that the aesthetic experience can lead to the experience of Brahman which is known as *brahmasvādasahodara* (younger image of the taste of Brahman). The identity *(tādātmyabhāva)* between the listener or reader with the

aesthetic object is essential for aesthetic joy, which is also endorsed by Viśvanātha in his *Sāhityadarpaṇa*.[1] Barua observes:

> We know sometimes designated as *nāda* (sound) or *sabda* (word or logos). So music or literature may be a possible way to have spiritual experience. That aesthetic experience can lead to Brahmānubhava (i.e., experience of Brahman) has been understood by him very well. It is so because he knows that to the listener (*śrotā*) or reader (*pāṭhaka*) delight leads self-absorption in the aesthetic object (*tādātmya-bhāva*). (Baruah 43)

According to Abhinavagupta, an object becomes beautiful when our self gets involved in it. When someone realizes the misery of some character in a piece of literature, he thinks it as though it were his own due to the reflection of his own self there. This view is more firmly rooted in the Upaniṣadic view. The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* says that husband comes to be loved to the wife not because she loves her husband but because she loves her own self etc.: *"navā are patyuḥkāmāyapatihpriyobhavati, ātmanastukāmāyapatihpriyobhavati"* etc. (*Bṛdahāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4/5/321/6; see *Upaniṣad*). One can realize the nature of *Rasa* with the help of bliss arising from the realization of Brahman as accepted by the Advaitins. When an individual's personal desire is transformed into the impersonal aesthetic sentiment, the realization of aesthetic pleasure, universal in character, comes into being. Hence, Abhinavagupta has accepted the process of 'generalization' (*sādhāraṇikaraṇa*) as one of the characteristic features of aesthetic pleasure. Though there is reflection of Brahman in an individual's mind, which is free due to the prominence of *sattvaguṇa*, this pleasure is quantitatively different (but qualitatively same) from the pleasure of Brahman. Hence it is described as a dwarfed image of the taste of Brahman (*Brahmasvādasahodara*).[2]

In fact, one's mind is dominated by the *sattvaguṇa* at the situation of aesthetic relish and hence it is uncontaminated by *Rajah* and *Tamoguṇa*. Due to the prominence of *sattvaguṇa* a person can enjoy the self-knowledge identified with him and hence he is not moved or swayed away by knowledge of other objects *(vedyāntarasparśaśūnya)*. This bliss is the highest possible *ānanda* arising from self-revelation (*svaprakāśānanda*), and it is qualitatively equivalent to the taste of Brahman but not quantitatively. The former is transitory while the latter is ever abiding. That is why; such pleasure is described by Viśvanātha also as *Brahmāsvādasahodara* (i.e. the sibling manifest of the taste of Brahman).[3]

We have earlier remarked that though these theories are discussed in connection with the literary form of art, they can very well be extended to other forms of arts like music, pictorial form of art, dance etc. Hence Rabindranath stated that music does not belong to the singer alone, but to both singer and audience. The former sings it vocally while the audience sings it mentally, and hence there is a correspondence of aesthetic eventuality (*samvāda*): "*Ekak gāyaker nahe to gān, milite habe dui jane/ Ekjan gābe khuliyā galā,*

ārjan gābe mane//" ("Ganbhanga" in *Kathā o Kāhini*). William Radice translates it thus: "The singer alone does not make a song, there has to be someone who hears/ One man peons his throat to sing, the other sings in his mind" (Tagore 198). The same thing is expressed by Śaṅkaradeva when he says that the artist is to create such an atmosphere so that he can endow the audience with the necessary sensibility to enjoy and understand the inner meaning of art; that means, he is to make the audience sympathetic or the receptive connoisseur (Baruah45). It reminds me a theory in Indian poetics where intuitive genius (*pratibhā*) is taken as the root cause of creativity. Such *pratibhā* is of two types – creative *(kārayitrī)*and appreciative *(bhāvayitrī)*. The former remains in a poet or artist while the latter remains in the appreciators. *Pratibhā* remains both in the artist and the connoisseur at the same level to make an artistic communication.

Śaṅkaradeva is of the opinion that there is one word *sura* which denotes both melody and deity. One who is absorbed in music goes to heaven which is called *suraloka*. Baruah observes, "Śaṅkaradeva's ideal of an artist is Kṛṣṇa, the flute player. Nārada, Kṛṣṇa's celestial friend, also takes a *vīṇā* showing his love of music. These episodes prove that musicians can reach heaven easily" (Baruah 44).

<h2 style="text-align:center">II</h2>

Contributions of Śaṅkaradeva

Following are the contributions of Śaṅkaradeva in the field of aesthetics. First, Śaṅkaradeva has admitted an identity between listeners or readers with the aesthetic object. The Indian poeticians have admitted a common heart between artists, characters of the literature viz., drama and the connoisseurs, but Śaṅkaradeva has gone one step further and told that these three when associated with the Absolute can give rise aesthetic joy. To Śaṅkaradeva the real connoisseurhood remains in the Absolute which is manifested in three levels – creator of literature, music etc., persons involved in drama or music and connoisseur. Without divine touch aesthetic relish is not at all possible.

Secondly, to him all the objects of art like literature, dance, music etc. are not only meant for mundane joy but for the attainment of *Bhakti* also. In fact the term *bhakti* is originated from the root *bhañj* meaning to break. The *bhakti* makes our heart broken through emotion towards Lord. That is why *bhakti* makes us surrender to God and act as per will of Him. The primary intention of art is to associate us with *Bhakti*. If the history of Indian art is reviewed carefully, it will be known that the art forms like music, painting and dance were originated in the temple as means of showing our devotion to God. Even the girls dancing with devotion were called *devadāsīs* or servant of God who were artists as well devoted to the deity. Without devotion music and dance are impossible phenomena, which are highlighted by Śaṅkaradeva.

Thirdly, for *Upaniṣad* the transition from untruth to truth, darkness to light and death to immortality *(asatomāsadgamaya, tamasomājyotirgamaya, mṛtyormāamṛtamgamaya)* possible through the knowledge of Brahman, but Śaṅkaradeva adds that this transition is also possible through art. To him the art is the bridge connecting us from mundane world to the transcendental world. In fact, in aesthetic experience there is the disinterested pleasure which is not connected with pathological one. If there is pleasure in our ordinary life, there is an explanation of the same due to having some mundane relationship with the pleasure. But aesthetic joy is such that it is not connected with ordinary objects and hence the experienced joy does not find any justification in the mundane world, but somehow connected with the transcendental world. For this reason, art-experience is described as disinterested by Kant and Abhinavagupta.

Fourthly, no poeticians have clearly mentioned that the principals involved in the literary form of art can be extended to other forms of art like dance, music etc., but indirectly they believe in it. But Śaṅkaradeva categorically and emphatically told in his *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* that the term *kīrtana* means singing the glories of God. *Kīrtana* consists in the act of singing the praise or proclaiming good qualities of someone or God. For him, music includes vocal and instrumental. *Kīrtana* involves dance also, because dance always accompanies music. In *Kīrtana* we find an amalgamation of three things – literature, vocal and instrumental music, dance etc. No Indian aestheticians have directly developed such a theory where such amalgamation is found.

Lastly, Śaṅkaradeva did not mention that between reader or listeners and aesthetic object there is distancing also, because this joy is due to identity between them and also for distancing in the sense that the aesthetic joy is impersonal *(nairvyaktika)*, but not personal. It is a fact that the nature of aesthetic experience is indeterminate in the sense that it is not easy to locate the substratum of the experience. It is not determinable whether it belongs to me or to the other i.e. objects. Viśvanātha captures the uniqueness of the experience by saying– "*Parasyanaparasyetimametinamameti ca/Tadasvadervibhavavadehparicchedonavidyate//*" (Viśvanātha3/12). The activities belong to the dramatic characters *(parasya),* but the present awareness of such activities *(darśanādivyāpāra)* does not belong to them *(naparasyeti)*. On the other hand, the present awareness of the activities performed by the dramatic characters belongs to me *(mameti),* but the real activities do not belong to me *(namameti ca),* as they are performed by the characters in drama. In fact, in such cases there is a self-identity no doubt, but there is self-distancing no less. This part of observation has escaped the notice of Śaṅkaradeva. This might happen due to over emphasis on *Bhakti* in aesthetic joy.

Notes

1. *"Hetutvamśokaharṣādergatebhyolokasamśrayātśokaharaṣādayolokejāyantamnāmalaukikaḥ. Alaukikabhāvatvamprāptebhyahkāvyasamśrayātsukhamsañjāyatetebhyahsarvebhyopītikṣatih"* (Viśvanātha 3/6-7).

2. *"Bhāviteterasetasyabhogoyo'nubhavasmaraṇapratipattibhyovilakṣaṇaeva rajastamorvaicityānubiddhasattvamayanijacitsvabhāvānivṛti-viśrāntilakṣaṇah parabrahmasvādasavidhah"* (*Locana with Dhvanyāloka* 193).

3. *"Sattvodrekādakhanda-svaprakāsānanda-cinmayah// vedyāntara – sparsasunyo brahma-svāda-sahodarah// Lokottara-comatkāra-prānahkaiscitpramātrbhih// Svākāravadabhinnarvenāyamāsvādyaterasah// Rajastamobhyāmasprstammanahsattvamihocyate//"* (Viśvanātha   3/35).

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Feminist Engagements with Menstrual Etiquette
A Socio-Ontological Exposition

Aastha Mishra

Abstract:

Feminist researchers have reviewed various bodily experiences of women with regard to the designated set of standards and codes. Women as menstruating beings keep their menstrual bodies within the boundaries of certain norms and prescribed rules of etiquette. Having pronounced this, it will be elementarily contended in the following paper that menstrual etiquette promotes corporal devaluation and socio-cultural subjugation of women in relation to their feminine bodily experiences. The codes of menstrual etiquette grant a suppressive and subordinate status to a woman's body due to the disciplinary endurance it creates. In this setting, the paper examines the socio-ontological implications of the system of menstrual etiquette by referring to various feminist theories on the female body. More specifically, the notion of *body-for-others*, body as *docile* and body as an *abject* will be considered in order to demonstrate how the disciplinary comportments linked with menstrual etiquette is closely interlaced with the ontological condition of female corporeality. Therefore, there are three fundamental questions that guided this research, they are: 'what is menstrual etiquette and how is it connected to women's corporeal mode of existence?' secondly, 'how can the stature of the female body as *docile* and as an *abject* serve as a superlative approach for investigating women's adherence to the system of menstrual etiquette?' and lastly, 'what does it mean to exist under the authority of menstrual etiquette?' The fundamental objective of the study is to exhibit how the menstrual etiquette is grounded in the socio-ontological condition of the female body.

Keywords: Menstrual Etiquette, Corporeal Feminism,Female Body, Body-for-Others, Abjection.

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1. Introduction: Stating the Issue

Generally speaking, it is maintained that menstruation is a biological process, a socio-culturally stigmatized phenomenon and a disguised personal corporeal experience. However, it is noticed that contemporary academicians and researchers have underlooked the ontological and existentialist underpinnings of menstrual experiences. But the common point that all these descriptions make is that it is a lived bodily experience. Also, ample research has been done on the taboos, stigmas and codes that are associated with the phenomenon of menstruation. There is another crucial set of standards which affect women's menstrual experiences, i.e. the practice of menstrual etiquette. Iris Marion Young in the chapter named "Menstrual Meditations" of her book, *On Female Body Experience: Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays* investigates the idea of menstrual etiquette. She defines this practice: "Menstrual etiquette concerns who can say what to whom about menstruation, what sort of language is appropriate, and what should not be spoken" (111). She further maintains that menstrual etiquette is not solely about restrictions on verbal expressions of menstrual events, but it also influences the overall bodily comportment of menstruating women. Menstrual etiquette fosters a sense of discipline, mainly self-discipline that must be sustained by menstruating women.

While talking about the disciplinary undertakings during menstrual experiences and events, it becomes pivotal to discuss the role of the female body (menstruating body). In this context, as a point of departure, it is suitable to reflect on some salient insights from Foucault's project where he discusses the inter-connections between power relations, sexuality and the body *(Discipline and Punish* 138-142). But a concern arises when we observe a sense of gender neutrality in his work. Therefore, for the sake of clarity and precision, Bartky's feminist position on the subject of body discipline will be considered in order to further analyse the burden of bodily comportment that women as menstruating beings engage in. Moreover, it will be centrally argued that the body as a docile body has the potentiality to serve as an empirical site for investigating menstrual etiquette.

Taking up the subject of menstrual etiquette, it is apparent that the fundamental idea behind this practice is to conceal menstrual experiences in everyday life. Following this, it will be argued that feminist theories on the *body-for-others* status of the female body (investigated by Merleau-Ponty, de Beauvoir and Young) has the potentiality to deliver a fundamental understanding of a menstruating body; furthermore, the status of a female body as *docile* (investigated by Foucault, Bartky and Bobel) and an *abject* (as illustrated by Kristeva, and Douglas) extends an effective framework for construing a corporal conception of menstrual etiquette. As the menstrual blood is considered to be impure, dirty and undesirable in nature, the social order therefore demands that events and experiences related to menstruation remain concealed and certain rules and norms relating to menstrual concealment must be followed. In this frame of reference, it is vitally important to return to Young's theorization of menstrual etiquette as an effort to conceal the phenomenon of

menstruation, thereby, conforming to the rules and directions of the prevailing social systemization. This way, this paper looks at the various ways in which menstrual etiquette that women conform to is intertwined with their corporeality and the ontological position of a menstruating body as a *body-for-others, docile* and *abject*.

In this setting, the questions that shall be addressed in the following pages are:

1. How can we arrive at a socio-ontological understanding of the practice of menstrual etiquette?

2. Why is it a requisite to employ the category of the female body as a point of departure?

3. How does the position of the female body as a *body-for-others*, *docile* and *abject* offer an ontological interpretive paradigm for understanding the practice of menstrual etiquette?

2. Menstrual Etiquette: What it is and What it is Not?

Iris Marion Young explores the ontological and phenomenological implications of menstrual experiences. She centrally reflects upon a personal and inter-personal understanding of women's experiences as menstruating beings. Additionally, Young writes that female bodily experiences such as menstruation involve reflections on certain formalities and etiquettes which cogitate about the existing social order. In this tone, one of the most salient subjects that Young tackles in her work is the notion of menstrual etiquette.

Young refers to the insights of an independent feminist researcher named Sophie Laws who defines menstrual etiquette as rules governing social interactions, negotiating the material manifestations and cultural meanings of menstruation. In simpler terms, the set of rules that reign over the idea of menstrual etiquette focus on controlling and guiding the behaviour of menstruating beings (women in this context). Menstrual etiquette confirms that women as menstruating beings conceal their menstrual events and remain compressed within the confines of the menstrual closet.[1] Young argues that the concept of menstrual etiquette can be best understood by comparing it to the idea of menstrual taboos. British anthropologist, Mary Douglas, defined taboo as:

> A spontaneous coding practice which sets up a vocabulary of spatial limits and physical and verbal signals to hedge around vulnerable relations. It threatens specific dangers if the code is not respected. Some of the dangers which follow on taboo-breaking spread harm indiscriminately on contact. Feared contagion extends the danger of a broken taboo to the whole community. (xiii)

From the above discussion, it is now comprehensible that menstrual taboos are institutionalised practices. In exploration of the rules that govern menstrual taboos, it is evident that these rules aim at maintaining a determined order. Furthermore, Douglas discusses the conditions that foster and support the prevalence of taboos related to menstruation. In this context, she analyses the concept of purity and

impurity in order to explicate the value of the menstrual blood. She defines the idea of dirt and impurity as "rejected elements of ordered systems" (102). It is essential to compare the concept of purity and impurity in order to contemplate on taboos related to menstruation, especially, taboos attached with menstruating women. Menstrual blood is considered as polluting and impure as it has the capacity to pollute (make impure) persons who discharge it (women in this frame of reference) and others who come in contact with them. Douglas observes that effective menstrual codes, menstrual taboos and customs lead to the marginalization of women. Douglas specifically demonstrates the connection between the practice of coding and menstrual taboos that are sustained towards women. While discussing codes, Douglas centrally emphasises the role played by certain symbols, beliefs, customs and rituals towards the fabrication of taboos surrounding menstruation.

According to Douglas, one needs to sharply comprehend the conditions and presumptions that create, promote and conserve menstrual taboos. As she defines menstrual taboo as a discursive idea which has a socio-cultural essence, in this case, unlike other taboos, menstrual taboos reflect upon the divide between men-women and the tensions that rigid gendered beliefs and norms create. Physical differences between men and women which exist on the basis of sexual/bodily pollution are manifested in taboos related to menstruation. It is essential to mention that it is the nature or quality of blood that plays a cardinal role in assigning a dirty, impure or forbidden stature to the menstruating bodies of women. There also exist certain pollution beliefs that entail bodily/sexual pollution which delineate the disparate and hierarchical relation between men and women. She explains:

> There are beliefs that each sex is a danger to the other through contact with sexual fluids. According to other beliefs, only one sex is endangered by contact with the other, usually males from females, but sometimes the reverse. Such patterns of sexual danger can be seen to express symmetry or hierarchy. (4)

Menstrual taboos, therefore, portray a sense of sexualised difference between men and women in terms of their corporal reality. Let us briefly consider the case of pregnancy in order to understand the position of a female body in the face of the sexual differences that subsist. Even though feminist thinkers such as Young, Douglas and Kristeva who have deeply explored women's corporeal flows, yet they have not extensively explored the relation between pregnancy and the bodily flows that are experienced during that condition. Elizabeth Grosz captures this link by discussing various "modes of seepage". Grosz maintains that "bodily fluids that are excreted from a female body have different indices of control, disgust and revulsion. There is a kind of hierarchy of propriety governing these fluids" (195). She writes that fluids that are excreted during and after pregnancy in instances such as vomiting, breaking of water bags, flow of milk etcetera generate feelings of horror and disgust in the mind of the outsiders and places a pregnant woman's subjectivity at the border of their existence. One way for understanding the social standing of pregnant bodies is to

consider the notion of abject/abjection (a detailed explanation of this concept has been carried out in the last section). By applying Kristeva's notion of abjection, Grosz assesses pregnant corporeal flows by discovering that the status of pregnant embodiment and the stigmas attached to it denote abjection towards the signs of sexual difference (193). Pregnant women tend to harm and threaten the normal order and system as they occupy a borderline state. A sense of sexual danger is caused in relation to this phenomenon because of two central reasons, first, because a pregnant body breaks the default boundaries and second, because they cause a threat to the rational, mainly masculine public world. A whole range of socio-cultural taboos and stigmas accentuate if we examine both the phenomenon of menstruation and pregnancy under the category of pollution, dirt, impurity, danger and abject.

Returning to the central theme of the paper, we may now feel that the idea of menstrual etiquette is almost identical with the idea of menstrual taboo. However, it is important to mark that a concentrated reading of the theories surrounding menstrual taboo conveys the areas of dissimilarity between taboos and etiquettes related to menstruation. The question that follows from here is, 'how is menstrual etiquette different from menstrual taboo?'

This question can be best answered by alluding to Young's position on the notion of menstrual etiquette. As discussed earlier, menstrual taboos have socio-cultural connotations which exhibit social relations and highlight the various customs and rituals that are associated with certain societies or social practices. Contrary to this, menstrual etiquette implies the presence of a set of unwritten rules that govern the everyday activities of menstruating women. The rules of etiquette demand that women conceal the signs of menstruation and further engage in specific disciplinary enactments. Therefore, menstruation is made more *private* under the system of menstrual etiquette.

The most simplistic understanding of the idea of menstrual etiquette can be uncovered through the following examples: Women are expected to observe menstrual etiquette by keeping silent about their menstrual experiences, by keeping a check on their clothes in order to confirm that it is stain-free, by hiding the purchase of sanitary wear, by storing and using it secretly, etcetera. Hence, menstrual etiquette is plainly related to concealment, silence and surveillance.

In order to obtain a clearer understanding of the concept of menstrual etiquette, Young makes a comparative analysis of the idea of menstrual taboo and the idea of menstrual etiquette. She detects two chief differences between menstrual etiquette and menstrual taboo. They are:

(1) Difference in the nature of rules: The foundation of the rules that reinforce menstrual taboos are spiritual and metaphysical in nature. The notion of menstrual taboo structurally intents to make sharpened distinction between the sacred and profane (112). On the other hand, rules that govern menstrual etiquette are associated with a sense of mannerism and behavioural ethics. Young writes about this difference: "[E]tiquette involves a micromanagement of behaviour, whereas taboos invoke major

fault lines of the social system" (112). Menstrual etiquette, therefore constrains behaviour around menstrual events.

(2) Difference in terms of behavioural patterns: Menstrual taboo is more of a universal/public regime, on the other hand, menstrual etiquette is a private affair. Menstrual taboos view behaviour from a socio-cultural front by evoking fault lines of the social system. When there are menstrual taboos, the whole woman must be confined to, closeted, or kept away from certain people, processes or substances (Young 112). Contrary to this, menstrual etiquette revolves around the idea of self-discipline where the subject (menstruating woman) works on her ability to control and manage her actions and words. Additionally, this disciplinary practice also ensures that the actions which are undertaken must comply with the preceding socio-ethical system. About this disciplinary burden, I quote Young:

> Menstrual etiquette creates an emotional and disciplinary burden for girls and women. By the repeated enforcement of these rules of etiquette, we girls and women know that we are shameful, not because of anything that we have done, but just by being what we are. (112)

It can now be maintained that taboos surrounding menstruation and etiquettes that are followed by women during menstrual experiences are of two divergent regimes. Additionally, menstrual etiquette fosters a disciplinary burden for women and this burden further composes a docile or obedient body. To conclude this section, it can now be capitulated that menstrual etiquette incorporates an awareness of disciplinary burden (self-discipline, mainly) along with explicit emotional freight.

3. Women, the Menstruating Body and Menstrual Etiquette

Having reviewed Young's articulation of menstrual etiquette, the questions that emerge are: 'what does menstrual etiquette convey about women's lives and the nature of their bodily existence?' and secondly, 'how does the body serve as a medium for the cultivation of authoritative and dominating sensitivities and emotions related to menstrual etiquette?'

As menstrual etiquette is related to one of the forms of female bodily experiences/events, in this light it is essential to consider the category of body as an opening point. It is now a necessity to briefly review the category of body along feminist lines. In order to do so, I shall refer to Elizabeth Grosz's categorization of the female body. Grosz in her book, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* examines the female body under three branches, namely, the egalitarian approach to body, the social constructivist approach to body and the sexual difference approach to body. She places feminist thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Wollstonecraft and some others under the first category which discusses the egalitarian designation of understanding the connection between women and their body. She writes about this model, "they have accepted patriarchal and misogynistic assumptions about the female body as somehow more natural, less detached, more engaged with and directly related to its 'objects' than male bodies" (15). In simpler terms, the exponents

of egalitarian feminism have analysed the female body in light of the pre-established patriarchal field of vision and the uniform speculations that have been made by the conventional masculinist discernment of the female body. The second group of feminist thinkers includes the social constructivists such as Julia Kristeva, Michael Foucault, Nancy Chodorow (*Reproduction*, and *Feminism*) and few others. These theorists have explored the female body as a product of social pursuits and charges that instil meaning to women's bodies. And lastly, the sexual difference account of the female body was advanced by feminists like Luce Irigaray (*An Ethics*, and "This Sex"), Judith Butler (*Gender Trouble*, and *Bodies that Matter*), Monique Wittig and few others. The body under this categorization is understood as being interwoven with systems of meaning, signification and representation (Grosz 18). In simple terms, the body is not merely understood in terms of its lived aspect, meaning the way a body is represented and signified in a particular cultural background.

The question that follows is, 'what does menstrual etiquette exude about the nature of a female body (menstrual body in this context)?' To be precise and clear, I shall examine the status of the female body by employing the idea of *body-for-other* and the idea of a *docile body*. It is important to assess a menstrual body under the lens of a *body-for-other* and a *docile body* as this would help us understand the origin, locus and demands of the rules that govern menstrual etiquette.[2]

4. Menstrual Body and the Other

As discussed in the first section, the most fundamental presumption attached to etiquettes followed during menstruation is that these etiquettes characterize women's self-disciplined actions and attitudes which are executed under the regulations and injunctions of certain set of norms. One norm which is related to women's corporeal existence is a norm that models the female menstruating body as a *body-for-others*.[3] In order to further understand this status of *body-for-others*, let us begin with, a famous existential phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's renowned book *Phenomenology of Perception* where he distinctly floats the idea of *being-in-the-world* which he further recognises to be the fundamental essence of human beings. Moreover, he investigates this existential structure of human beings as being-in-the-world by further alluding to the category of body. Specifically, he does so by offering a unified account of a biological and cultural interpretation of the human body. In his phenomenological investigation, he stresses the elementary role of a body as lived, emphasising the position of the body as a conscious subject or the perceiving subject. As such, he explains the phenomenology of perception and lived body by emphasising the significance of an individual's lived relationship with place. Thus, in this book, Merleau-Ponty explicitly claims that body is a vehicle of being in the world (84).

Merleau-Ponty's exposition of the notion of the lived body owes much to Edmund Husserl's theory of intentional phenomenology. Specifically, according to him, the nature of a lived body can be best understood by considering the intentionality of consciousness in the body. Thus, body is allotted the status of an

intentional entity. It is essential to note that understanding body along the scheme of intentionality highlights two things about the ontological implications attached with the idea of a lived body, namely: (1) a sense of bodily consciousness, (2) an openness towards the other and (3) a sense of directedness towards the environment. The idea of a lived body entails that there exists a mind-body unity and we tend to act and experience under a lived relationship in a specific situation. Therefore, according to him, body is about existing as a body for others and a lived reality. For Merleau-Ponty, lived body is a meaningful reality. This way, Merleau-Ponty's theory of lived experience throws ample light on inquiries relating to bodily experiences and states. He maintains that our relation with the world is not merely subject-object relationship, instead, it is about a lived experience.

Following his project, many feminist thinkers got involved in assessing female bodily experiences and conditions emphasising the unification of both biological and socio-cultural aspects related to the body. Talking specifically of menstruating bodies, it is maintained that a sense of alienation and devaluation is experienced by the women subjects. Returning to a feminist explication of the *body-for-other* approach, de Beauvoir's idea of lived body draws an important parallelism with Merleau-Ponty's idea of lived body. Following Merleau-Ponty's path, de Beauvoir writes that a lived body is "not a thing, it is a situation: it is my grasp on the world" (46). Specifically, she has widely explored the idea of alienation of women from their bodies and the sense of oppression that can be identified in relation to certain feminine bodily experiences and processes.[4] For instance, she addresses the bodily experiences of women during menarche, pregnancy, menopause and various similar aspects of anatomy which have been conceived as locus for women's detachment and estrangement from their bodies. A menstruating female body serves as a substructure of policing and control which ultimately confers her body the position of the *body-for-others*. This status of woman's body as *body-for-others* is an outcome of the internalization process which women become involved in. I quote de Beauvoir in this frame of reference:

> It is during her periods that she feels her body most painfully as an obscure, alien thing; it is indeed, the prey of a stubborn and foreign life that each month constructs and then tears down a cradle within it; each month all things are made ready for a child and then aborted in the crimson flow. Woman, like man, is her body; but her body is something other than herself. (29)

Now, there is a significant question that surfaces in this background, which is: 'how can we understand the idea of lived body in the context of the practice of menstrual etiquette?' Before addressing this question, it is required that we understand the relation between Monty's and Young's conception of the lived body. Similar to Merleau-Ponty, Young recognises the concept of lived body as being infused with certain meaning and this meaning is not merely based on biological facts but is an amalgamation of physical body and the body in a particular situation. The physical body lives in a specific socio-cultural context with a sense of openness to the other.

The difference between Young and Merleau-Ponty lies in the fact that Young offers a refined version of the phenomenology of a lived body by theorizing it in light of the different stages of a woman's life, specifically. In simple terms, she explicitly reviews the theory of lived body by considering the category of sexual difference between the two sexes. In her book, *Throwing Like a Girl*, Young explores the essential modalities of female embodiment, feminine comportment, feminine activities and attitudes in order to comprehend the difference between experiences of men and women and their bodily lived experiences. Another line of difference between Merleau-Ponty and Young can be traced when Young addresses the transcendence-immanence debate and further claims that Merleau-Ponty has examined the idea of a lived body without highlighting the sexual differences that prevail. Merleau-Ponty predominantly considers lived body as a transcendence that moves out from the body in its immanence in an open and unbroken directness upon the world in action. But, Young claims that in the context of a female body, it mainly lives as a thing which is rooted in immanence.[5]

Coming back to the practice of menstrual etiquette, Young has demonstrated an interrelation between the implicit rules of menstrual etiquette and its influence on the behaviour of menstruating women (this idea of feminine bodily comportment shall be explicitly explored in the next sub-section). As mentioned earlier, menstruating bodies are considered as different from the normal/default types of bodies; and this difference is not merely biological, but there are certain socio-cultural conditions that fabricate this differentiation. Mary Douglas argues that the rules of etiquette are constructed in order to maintain the existing social and moral order. In simple terms, these rules are guided by an external determinant and are further directed towards the other. About the social structure, she writes: "many ideas about sexual dangers are better interpreted as symbols of the relation between parts of society, as mirroring designs of hierarchy or symmetry which apply in the larger social system" (52).

Talking about, menstruation, the disciplinary measures that menstruating women follow as repeated upholders of etiquettes related to menstruation are directed towards one core goal which is to conceal or cover the facts of their menstruation. For instance, few efforts towards this concealment include the following: ""Look at the back of my skirt, is anything showing?" "Here, take my sweater and tie it around your waist, I'll walk behind you." "Can you pass me a tampon in your algebra book?" We dwell in the delicious space of shared secrets and protect one another from ridicule" (Young 112). These examples from Young's work highlight the fact that menstruating women observe a specific form of mannerism and self-disciplinary measures, thereby conforming to the system of menstrual etiquette. Also, before directly discussing the idea of menstrual etiquette, in a sub-section prior to that which inquires into the notion of menstrual etiquette, in her book, Young deliberates on the idea of menstrual closet which she borrows from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's discourse on closet experiences. It is in this context that Young tackles the notion of the normal and default body. She explains:

> The message that a menstruating woman is perfectly normal entails that she hides the signs of her menstruation. The normal body, the default body, the body that everybody is assumed to be, is a body not bleeding from the vagina. Thus, to be normal and to be taken as normal, the menstruating woman must not speak about her bleeding and must conceal evidence of it. The message that the menstruating woman is normal makes her deviant, a deviance that each month puts her on the other side of a fear of disorder, or the subversion of what is right and proper. (107)

Moreover, this sense of subversion and segregation enables women to further develop feelings of passivity, inferiority and docility. Following from this, in my interrogation, Foucault and Bartky's account on the docile body can now be employed in order to uncover the unseen forms of power and domination that subsume within the practice of menstrual etiquette.

5. Menstrual Etiquette in light of the Notion of a Docile Body

The question that follows from this exposition is, 'how can we understand the system of menstrual etiquette by apprehending it as a disciplinary practice relating to the *docile* status of women's bodies?' In order to answer this question, I will firstly draw on Michael Foucault's conception of bodily disciplinary practices and secondly, engage with Sandra Lee Bartky's feminist illustration of the same. Foucault in his book, *Discipline and Punish* emphasizes the centrality of power relations and its influence on various bodily practices and experiences. About the role of discipline, he writes: "discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (170). This sense of discipline advances from certain norms and rules that an individual abides by within a social arrangement. Additionally, Foucault coined the term *biopower* in order to make explicit the relation between power and the habitual/disciplined daily practices which individuals engage in as a result of dominant social system. According to him, biopower operates on our bodies and exercises control through the self-disciplinary activities which we execute. The application of Foucault's conception of biopower will help us illustrate the way certain self-disciplinary practices lead to the production of the idea of "docile bodies". About the creation of docile bodies, Foucault writes that a docile body is pliable, capable of being manipulated, shaped and trained (135-136).

Coming back to the primary subject of this paper i.e. menstrual etiquette, it can be said that a closer analysis of the idea of menstrual etiquette harmonizes with the Foucauldian conception of docility. Foucault introduces the notion of panoptic discipline which centres around the idea of *self-surveillance* and this sense of self-surveillance is created by continual social systems. It is within the system of panoptic discipline that the idea of docility/docile body gets actualised.

To be specific, I shall now consider Foucault's theory of panoptic discipline that was incorporated by Bartky in order to explicate how an internalised panoptic discipline influences young women's attitudes and behaviours. She writes: "In contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the

consciousness of most women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment in order to argue that societies create docile bodies" (149). It is because of this process of internalization that women start to self-police and manage their bodies in order to avoid the public spectacle of bleeding femininity. Roberts and Waters further connect this practice of self-policing with the notion of self-objectification. According to them, these affairs of self-objectification and self-policing leads to the intensification of stigmas and stereotypes related to menstruation. Therefore, both Bartky, and Roberts and Waters view this idea of panoptic male gaze in light of the objectification practices which it fosters (see Bartky; Roberts and Waters). Menstrual discourses entail concealment and menstruating women are expected to follow etiquettes of menstruation which fortify the importance of concealment. This system of etiquette demands that women hide the signs of their menstrual episode from the patriarchal world that values the male-body. In this connection, I would like to give an example relating to menstrual leakages and the management burden that it bears. Menstrual leakages are associated with a kind of announcement or revelation of their menstrual experience. Menstrual blood "announce to the world that women are not men, cannot be men, and as so cannot exist in the world as men do" (MacDonald 345-46). It is true from one perspective that blood is considered to be polluting and impure and a menstruating body is regarded as a source of pollution. But this perspective emphasises the socio-cultural and religious meanings attached with menstruation and a menstruating body. In addition to this view, the potency of menstrual etiquette also lies in the directive demands of creating a balance between a menstruating body and the socio-cultural situation that prevails. Therefore, this balancing act communicates a lot about the existing power dynamics.

In order to exhibit the relation between the idea of a docile body and menstrual etiquette, we may now refer to Radical Feminist, Chris Bobel's position in her book named, *New Blood: Third Wave Feminism and the Politics of Menstruation.* Here, Bobel writes:

> In the case of menstruation, the problem is its very existence; the solution is to render the process invisible by containing the menstruating body, or increasingly, eliminating it altogether through cycle-stopping contraception, that is menstrual suppression. We can theorise this containment using Foucault's central contributions, that of the "docile body," a theoretical construct that allows us to conceptualize the internalization of certain cultural priorities fundamental to the maintenance of the both seen and unseen power structures. (33-34)

It can be discerned that Bobel evidently echoes Foucault's description of docility as he even shed light on the relationship between docility and the subsisting structural power patterns. About the power structure, Foucault writes that the acts of self-discipline underlay the mechanics of power which further sustain them. Bobel argues in a Foucauldian tone that women as menstruators act as docile beings, but she doesn't examine docility in terms of passivity, instead the nature of a docile menstruating body further produces an active body upon which disciplinary practices

get embodied. A menstruating body acquires the status of docility in an active way indicates two things, first, a docile body is active in regard to the actions that are other-directed, referring to the fact that women as menstruators both physically and verbally actualise this panoptic discipline in response to the power structures that foster such regimes and second, docile bodies as active also entails the act of self-policing. Moreover, it is essential to remark that as a third wave feminist, Bobel doesn't explicitly explore the notion of menstrual etiquette, rather she provides a detailed theoretical analysis of menstruation pertaining to the realm of menstrual activism. She centrally examines how the prevailing codes and norms relating to menstruation could be challenged and changed by engaging in social, academic and media interactions. Therefore, the codes that define menstrual etiquette operate in light of a socio-political exposition of a menstruating body which considers its docile nature and further sustains the dominant social order.

Bobel additionally asserts that feminists like Young, Kristeva and Douglas have evidently excluded the experiences of non-menstruators like men, transsexual, transgender and even some women who don't menstruate. She further writes that codes attached to menstruation are solely women-centric due to the existence of the idea of sexed body in a social structure (Bobel 156-157). Bobel, belonging to the contemporary third wave of feminism attempts to include all the members of a society in order to strike a conversation on the matter by emphasising the role of significant others who do not menstruate but contribute towards the construction of norms and codes pertaining to the phenomenon of menstruation.

Returning to Young's position, I quote her in this context:

> [F]rom our earliest awareness of menstruation until the day we stop, we are mindful of the imperative to conceal our menstrual process. We follow a multitude of practical rules. Do not discuss your menstruation…leave no bloodstains on the floor, towels, sheets, or chairs. Make sure that your bloody flow does not visibly leak through your clothes, and do not let the outline of a sanitary pad show. (106-07)

These instances that Young talks about reinforce and maintain a certain status quo. It is essential to note that Young doesn't address the concept of docility explicitly when she explores the phenomenon of menstruation and menstrual etiquette largely. But, I would like to argue that the menstrual codes that are mentioned in the above cited excerpt call attention to the docile situation of the menstrual body. For instance, as Foucault's notion of panoptic discipline explains how this sense of self-discipline consequentially grants a docile status to the body. In a similar line, when Young talks about the rules of etiquette in the subsequent paragraph, she in a way elucidates how a menstruating woman acts as a docile body when she embodies self-discipline and self-surveillance attuned to the demands of the external world. Therefore, due to the subsisting norms and codes which are structurally contingent on menstruators create docile bodies or in simple terms bodies that highlight the dominant nature of the social structure.

Therefore, the findings from the theories on corporeal feminism which ranged from Beauvoir, Grosz, Young, Foucault, Bobel, suggest that the notion of menstrual etiquette can be comprehensively assessed by employing the category of the *menstrual body*. Understanding menstrual etiquette under the parable of *docility* and *body-for-others* aspect of women's corporeality suitably articulates the management of behaviour and actions menstruating women must put through. Since a menstruating body is rendered docile by specific disciplinary discourses, I consider this aspect of menstruation as a foundation for understanding the operations of menstrual etiquette. Thus, by aligning my investigation with the feminist theories of the body, I aim at shedding light on the authoritative and dominating nature of the practice of menstrual etiquette which is related to one of the bodily experiences of women, i.e. menstruation.

6. Exploring Ontological Potentials of Menstrual Etiquette in Light of the Idea of Abjection

Menstruators are seen as abject if the menstrual codes and rules are not followed. In this section, I aim to acknowledge Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection/abject as an interpretive strategy in order to recognise the ontological potentials of the notion of menstrual etiquette in relation to a menstrual body. The questions that follow are: 'What does the notion of an abject signify about the ontological position of women by the appropriate practices involved in managing (disciplining) their menstrual episodes in their daily lives?' Two cardinal themes that shall be explored here are: at a foundational level, the dichotomy of *subject-object* will be discussed and secondly, the notion of *abject*. Predominantly, menstrual etiquette and its relation to the phenomenon of *abjection* of a menstrual body shall be exhibited in the following section. Before directly inquiring into Kristeva's idea of an *abject,* I would like to mention that even though Kristeva categorically belongs to the branch semiotics and psychoanalysis, but she begins her study within a phenomenological and ontological organization. Therefore, we observe a re-position from a sociological and psychological comprehension into a more ontological register.

As discussed in the previous two sections, women as menstruating beings are expected to follow a host of etiquette rules that conduct their attitudes, actions and words. It is to an extent true that these rules of etiquette give an utterance to women's social-cultural position. Yet, it is important to delve into another profound interpretation of the system of menstrual etiquette which accords with the ontological arrangement of women. It is coherent that menstrual etiquette is performed by menstruating women in correspondence with the ontological status of their menstruating body as discrete, abnormal, and non-conforming to the standard. It is due to this orientation that women anticipate their state of being as an *abject*. Consequently, what women end up doing is self-disciplining, assessing and regulating their menstruating bodies. But, the interesting part to note is that this aspect of self-discipline is motivated by the conscious presence of *other*.[6]

In this setting, in order to delve into an ontological explication of menstrual etiquette, as a beginning point, I shall deliberate over the existentialist thought of Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir's discourse on the menstrual experiences of women lays claim to be employed as a point of departure for examining the ontological undertones of menstrual etiquette because of two central reasons: firstly, de Beauvoir explicitly discusses the ontological truth of women's existence as *body-for-others* and secondly, she explores the status of women as an *object*. Beauvoir's depiction of the relation between a woman and her body is not her biological condition *per se*, and none of the female experiences such as menarche, menstruation, pregnancy and menopause have an immanent significance related to negativity or positivity. Instead, the relation between a woman and her body is influenced by the social and cultural institutions that prevail. This way, according to de Beauvoir, the disabilities of embodiment or the negative emotions which are attached to female embodiment are not simply an upshot of biology; it rather denotes the ascendancy of social, existential and ontological state of affairs that direct woman's bodily attitudes and experiences. About the body, Beauvoir writes that it is an essential condition for human existence and equally occupies the status of an object and a subject. However, this common existential pattern does not prevail in a male-dominated or patriarchal social structure. Meaning, women ultimately settle with the status of an *object*.

In her monumental work, *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir examines this condition of a woman's being beginning with childhood, she writes: a girl is taught to act as "a passive object…an inert given object" (72). Furthermore, she addresses the condition of teen-aged girls who have entered puberty by explaining how the body at this stage becomes a locus of shame, fear, embarrassment and horror. It is in this reference that she discusses the phenomenon of menstruation and the socio-existential implications that it carries. Also, she makes it clear that the above-mentioned negative emotions of shame, disgust and fear are not only internally driven, but emerge as a consequence of the presence of the *other*.

Young makes a similar point while discussing menstrual etiquette, she writes: "By the enforcement of these rules of etiquette, we girls and women know that we are shameful, not because of anything that we have done, but just by being what we are" (112). Through this excerpt, Young documents the relation between the rules of menstruation and the ontological situation and grade of women as menstrual beings. Moreover, she briefly brings to light the unvoiced relation between the status of women as an abject and the phenomenon of menstruation. She writes:

> As menstruators, women threaten psychic security systems because female processes challenge the distinctions between inside and outside, solid and fluid self-identical and changing. Both men and women experience menstruation as abject or monstrous, because both harbor anxieties about dissolution of self and merging with the ghost of a mother. One way of holding this anxiety at bay is to separate the feminine from the clean and proper masculine. Thus, either menstruating women must be separated from others, especially men, and isolated in a distinct space; or women may

> be allowed to roam free among men but must keep signs of their
> menstruation hidden. In either case, women every month carry the burden
> of abjection, the monstrous, the stigma of birth and death, as a practical
> and enforced shame…. If a woman wishes to walk among men while she
> bleeds, if she wishes to lay claim to the rights and privileges of a solid self
> who stands forth and achieves, then she had better keep her private fluidity
> secret. Thus she must observe the practices of the menstrual
> etiquette.(111)

In the above mentioned quote, Young partially discusses the notion of menstrual abjection in order to further explicate the oppressive undertones within the system of menstrual etiquette. Menstruation enters the sphere of abjection in three ways: firstly, by broadening the gap between the menstrual body and the self that experiences it and mainly by risking identity and stability; secondly, by defying all borders and social margins; and lastly, as it evokes displeasure and horror.

For a detailed analysis of a menstrual body as an abject, it is crucial to understandably review Kristeva's theory of abjection as she provides an extensive research on this theme. According to Kristeva, abject/abjection "is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (3). The status of abjection is not organic or biological, but is defined by influence it has on the prevailing system and order. Kristeva further explains how the maternal body (which she discusses as a menstruating and a lactating body) becomes an abject in light of the socio-cultural meanings attached to the excretions that flow from a female body. At this point it is important to emphasize that when a women experiences menstruation, this experience also acts as a way through which women realise their status as an abject which is related to being impure, messy and disgusting. She further maintains that because of their experiences as an abject body, that the mechanism of menstrual etiquette comes to actuality under which menstruators (women subjects) are obliged to follow the prescribed menstrual rules and orders for the sake of hiding/concealing their menstrual episode.

The question which follows from this discussion is, 'how does the notion of abjection/the body as abject conserve the practice of menstrual etiquette?' In order to understand the answer to this question, I shall bring in the idea of impurity and dirt that was conceptualised by Douglas and further argue how Kristeva's notion of abject is drawn on Douglas's account. The concept of impurity and dirt as explored by Douglas seeks to elucidate a claim that the socio-cultural beliefs related to menstruation are not simply intrinsic properties or attributes. In the book *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz writes about Douglas, "dirt for her, is that which is not in its proper place, that which upsets and befuddles the order" (192). In simple terms, dirt communicates the unrealised threat and disturbance of the prevailing social system. Additionally, it is required that we recognize how Douglas uses the notion of *matter out of place* to further explicate the corporeal implications attached with the regiment of menstrual etiquette (Douglas 35). Douglas describes the idea of *matter out of place* as

something which is out of context and has the potency to cause danger or contaminate others. She explains how discomfort, abasement and all other negative feelings with regard to menstrual blood is an outcome of this idea of *matter out of place*. Girls and women embrace this dictum and start to manage their bodies in such a way that they do not bring about their menstrual experiences out of its context.

Similarly, according to Kristeva, bodily functions and activities that are related to impurity and dirt are abject not simply because it is inherently dirty, fragmented or polluted but because it becomes offensive to our sensibilities as they do not comply with the social order. Her central intention is to demonstrate the role of abjection in arguing that all female bodies are essentially abject due to the deep-rooted social and cultural engagements. As mentioned earlier, Kristeva's work on abjection considers the intimate relation between the lived body of women and the specific social and cultural system where order is imposed, in this light, impurity or dirt signifies a sense of threat that could be caused to the social and cultural systems and disturb the subsisting order. It is therefore, a body which fails to maintain the socio-cultural hierarchy and does not conform to the demands and desires of a heterosexual structuring of male desire.

To be specific, the maternal body is a locus for abjection because of the prevalence of patriarchal and misogynistic state of affairs. The term patriarchal abjection is used because the abject is not simply associated with impurity and dirt, instead, an abject denotes something which disrupts the social order and also operates as a psychological safeguard (Kristeva 136). Therefore, in order to maintain and follow the prevailing order that recognizes the importance of a normal/default body, women abide to the system of menstrual closet and mould their behaviour in terms of the rules of menstrual etiquette (Young 109-110). Moreover, the abject experience of women plays a significant role in oppressing women by fostering the practice of menstrual etiquette.

Furthermore, the idea of abjection and its relation to the practice of menstrual etiquette highlights the corporeal status of a woman's body as a social body. Kristeva's preliminary speculation is that a female body can never be completely free from abjection. Grosz writes about Kristeva:

> Kristeva is each time discussing the constitution of a proper social body, the processes of sorting, segregating, and demarcating the body so as to conform to but not exceed cultural expectations (excessiveness in itself pushes the question of the limit for the order which it exceeds). (193)

Talking specifically about the abject in light of patriarchal ideals, MacDonald argues that when women allude to the set of etiquette norms pertaining to menstruation, this sense of control is directly linked to the devalued status of a female body in a patriarchal setting. She writes: "concealing our blood makes it easier to approximate the masculine ideal of the closed body, to appear in control and less obviously *other*" (347). This idea of control and concealment of a menstrual body as a representational strategy consequentially grants the status of an abject to it. In this sense, in

MacDonald's terms, leaky bodies fail to correspond to the accustomed and established position of a body.

Talking of the social connotations of an abject body, Douglas suggests that "the body is a symbol of society" (115). For Douglas, this idea of connecting a menstruating body to the social symbolic system indicates two things about the abject: first, taboos and stigmas attached with menstruation are concerned with the maintenance of the social order, and second, the powers and sanctions that have been ascribed to the existing social structure are materialised on the body. Kristeva's interpretation of the relation between abjection and the social structure falls in with Douglas' disquisition. She postulates that viewing a menstruating body as polluted and impure acts as an obstacle to the social order. The notion of menstrual etiquette may be understood under Kristeva's scheme of "subjective structurations" (Kristeva 111). By bringing in the idea of subjective structurations, she aims to arrive at a socio-structural reading of pollution and impurity which further paves a way for understanding abjection as a result of endangered and weak subjectivity. We can now understand the practice of menstrual etiquette in light of Kristeva's account of a *structuralo-functionalist* narration of the practice. Menstruating women follow the rules of menstrual etiquette corresponding to the phenomenon of abjection which is conceived as a response to the socio-symbolic system that uncovers not only the nature of the social order but also exposes the nature of female subjectivity. The socio-ontological meaning affixed to the enactment of the rules of etiquette can be in a way scrutinized by employing the theme of abjection. In this context, Kristeva marks that abjection both summons and annihilates the subject that experiences it (12). During menstruation, women are expected to maintain the social order by dealing appropriately with the menstrual blood and the overall event of menstruation. A menstruating body is considered to be a protruding plot of pollution and impurity because of which women are compelled to abide by a range of rules of etiquette in order to control and hide the event of menstruation. Douglas adds to this by exploring the role of patriarchy towards positioning a menstruating body as impure, inferior and irrational. According to her, the control and management practices attached to the event of menstruation is designed to keep the patriarchal structures in place for a simple fact that by being attentive to the system of etiquettes related to menstruation, during their experiences of menstruation, women tend to perform in accord with a male ideal. In Kristeva's voice, we can say that the status of women as an abject reminds them that their bodies do not pertain to the categorization of a normal or default body as prescribed by the prevailing patriarchal structure. Menstrual etiquette conveys the implicit meanings attached with the bodily life of women as menstruating beings; and by further considering abjection as a method for exploring the psychical and individual significance of menstruation, we shall be able to gain deeper insights on the status of a female corporeal existence. Therefore, when we examine menstrual etiquette in light of the idea of the abject, we will be able to understand menstrual etiquette as social and ontological phenomenon.

All the feminist thinkers that have been discussed in the paper address the connection between the lived experience of a female menstruating body and the socio-ontological meanings that are attached to it. Therefore, menstrual etiquette for menstruators (women in this context) is a medium through which women are concerned about creating a harmony between their bodily experiences and their lived ontological condition/status.

7. Conclusion

Menstruation is not merely a biological phenomenon; instead, it is a matter of corporeal and ontological understanding. The central questions that were answered in the paper revolve around the practice of menstrual etiquette by considering the category of a female body (menstruating body in this context) with special emphasis on the status of the female body as a *body-for-others*, *docile* and *abject*. Mainly, it was exhibited how women's adherence to menstrual etiquette stands grounded in their lived socio-ontological condition. It was at large uncovered that menstrual etiquette as a disciplinary regime can be exhaustively comprehended by appraising the wide range of perspectives on the menstruating body as offered by the feminist thinkers. This way, the paper does not offer or support an essentialist or biological account of feminist literature by examining the system of menstruation and the tradition of etiquette that it stimulates. Instead, the central objective of this paper is to re-think menstrual etiquette in a more comprehensive and exhaustive way by offering insights from theories of corporeal feminism with special emphasis on the lived body experience of the female body.

Notes

1. Young argues that menstrual closet is a space under which women as menstruators enter in order to adhere to the oppressive process of concealment and abjection of menstruation. This is mainly a metaphor that Young uses for further exploring the oppressions attached to abjection and shame.

2. The idea of a 'docile body' shall be employed in this frame of reference in order to understand the socio-cultural and lived dimensions associated with the construction and codification of the female body.

3. For the sake of clarity and precision, I shall explicitly deliberate over this aspect of female corporeality in order to further evince the parallelism between a menstruating body and the etiquettes that circumscribe.

4. One such bodily process is menstruation, which is also the focal point of this paper.

5. In the article "Female Freedom: Can the Female Body be Emancipated?", Johanna Oksala writes that in a patriarchal set up, men get the power to act as an autonomous individual who is able to transcend the immanence of the body. On the other hand, the status of women stands to differ, as it is maintained that they are not autonomous agents who act, rather are acted upon. Therefore, women are defined and influenced by the absoluteness of man (view that de Beauvoir holds).

6. The *body-for-others* aspect of the female body has been discussed in the second section.

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Nature's Rhythm in Ancient Cosmologies

Vijay Dinkar Bodas

Abstract:

Cosmology is an ancient subject matter of the discipline of Philosophy, though today it is largely being taken over by Science and is becoming a sub-discipline of Physics. Philosophers mostly are keeping themselves away from current discourse of cosmology as complexity and data in Cosmology grow by leaps and bounds with satellites and Astrophysics. Most Cosmologies and their metaphysical bases were related to religions in ancient times. Nature's rhythm dominated as the theme in Cosmologies of the yore. The ancient Cosmologies also define time contiguously with the rhythm of nature. These two aspects are reviewed in this paper, giving significantly short emphasis on the religious metaphysics. It is an attempt to uncover ideas about time and rhythm in ancient Cosmologies to be able to connect them with modern scientific ideas of symmetry (mathematics) and time in Physics. The Cosmologies of the West, of India and of China are visited to achieve this end. Time counting system in each of those is explored.

Keywords: Cosmological Argument, Tao, Yin Yang, *Kālām* Argument, *Falsāfā* Argument.

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1. Introduction

Ancient cosmologies arise from religions. Most, if not all, contain a view on time. Abrahamic, Vedic, Buddhist, Jaina, Sikh and Tao Cosmologies are reviewed here, keeping track of their vision in regard to time and indicative model about beginning and end in terms of age of the universe. There are two distinguishable views, linear and cyclic natural rhythm, temporal or not. Static Universe, Endless universe, Cyclic universe are all visible in the variety of these ancient cosmological viewpoints. Associated baggage of religious metaphysics is not reiterated here, except for the case of Abrahamics where some of it is presented mainly owing to its links to their view of time.

2. Abrahamic and Greeko-Roman View

Abarahamic religions share Cosmological argument that was essentially formulated by Arab Islamists and then borrowed by medieval Christians (Thilly 196-197). Ancient Greek ideas were added as layers in between, by both Islamists and medieval Christians though Ancient Greek ideas in entirety are not present in any of the segments of the argument below.
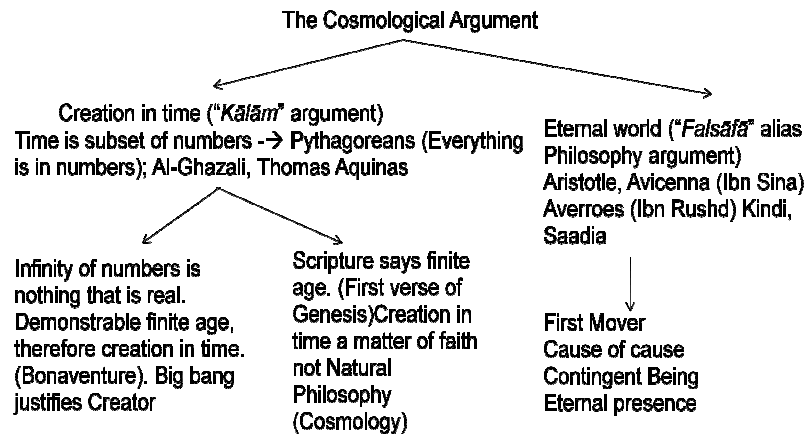
Figure: 1 (Source: Author)

2.1 Incompleteness of *Kālām* Cosmological Argument

Endless future (Al-Ghazali 54): the *Kalām* argument as it stands does not end in *Qayāmat* or Apocalypse. The Apocalyptic end is a separate section in the scriptures but no one likes the mention of end of life. This is why cosmologies that have metaphysical basis in *Kalām* argument do not have inbuilt feature of *Qayāmat* or Apocalypse. Pope Pius XII referred the Big bang theory of today's science as a form of *Kalām* argument (Sorondo XXVII-XXVIII). Though, it could indeed be argued that the apocalypse is implicit in the sense that it is stated in the primal books outside of the *Kalām* argument.

Kalām argument has an inconsistency in a sense that the logic is backward, i.e., it is hindsight. Outcome of creation exists and hence the creator must. This is not a teleological reasoning, though it may look like one. The reason for that is the world that exists is an ongoing evolving entity; we have no justification to say it is the telos of creation. The *Kalām* argument is also a case of infinite causal regress, Causation ends in God; as much as its counterpart cosmological argument is.

Use of infinity to define finitude is evident in Bonaventure's support of *Kalām* argument (Craig 105). While it may certainly be true that infinity is nothing real, nevertheless using it in logic is the use of a paradoxical statement in logic, for such use of infinity introduces many of its paradoxical properties in the argument. Examples being adding a one to infinity is still an infinity etc. It is best to avoid using infinity's paradoxical nature in defense of anything to prevent giving absurd proofs like one equals zero. It is certainly not the case that infinity is not usable, but the type of infinity usage must be such that it is removable while leaving the structure of logic that was built using it unaltered. If not, then such usage leads to *Reductio ad absurdum* and this type of usage eliminates Bonaventure's defense of *Kalām* argument (Craig 105).

Interestingly, *Kalām* argument does not define uniqueness and hence oneness of God. Cause of cause can be one, but if that cause has no ontological definition then its basis object cannot be unique except for the grammar of the singular in the objectively undefined self referential metaphysical statement Cause of cause. Essentially, this type of argument is a self referential example of liar's paradox combined with *argumentum ad passiones*.

2.2 Incompleteness of *Falsāfā* (Philosophy) Argument

First mover and Cause of cause both leads to infinite regress. Contingent being implies existence of necessary Being, again a Being cannot be ontologically demonstrated (Kant 459-470). The *implication requirement* as well as *necessity of what* remains a question, throwing into doubt any involvement of logic in the *falsāfā* assertion. There is nothing to prove that the present nonliving world can or cannot exist in eternity, hence eternal presence of Being is a contradiction in terms (see Himma). Further, once again very interestingly, *falsāfā* argument does not establish uniqueness of and hence oneness of God, essentially because it appears to have established nothing at all as far as logic is concerned. Al-Ghazali may have called Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Al-Farābi's names by his statement *the incoherence of Philosophers* (see Al-Ghazali) but it indeed is a self referential term as well, because Ghazali himself was a Philosopher par excellence. Al-Ghazali knew his own limitations sufficiently well. The problem is his name calling converted the debate and questioning on that subject in that civilization to each side calling the other names, for example Ibn Rushd responded in kind to Al-Ghazali as *incoherence of incoherence* (see Averroes). India has seen such type of a long debate between

Buddhists and Vedic religion. In India it flowered into a merged unified entity, vividly expressed poetically as *Nirvāṇa* or *Ātma Śatakam* by *Ādi-Śaṅkara*. It is an entirely new school of Philosophy called *Advaita Vedānta*, and by its virtue India became Crypto Buddhist.

As already mentioned, *Kālām* argument was elaborated by Pope Pius XII to be a version of Big Bang. In science, Big bang is based on Friedmann-Lamaître-Robertson-Walker (FLRW) metric and therefore circularly, the Big bang is in the justification of *Kālām* argument of current apologists (Pope Pius XII; for an extensive elaboration, see Tanzella-Nitti). Philosophically, this is the Derrida deconstruction (see Derrida) of Big bang. Social science of deconstruction certainly does not apply to Mathematics of Big Bang. But as its deconstruction, it can be asserted to have been an epistemic basis used by priest Scientist Lamaître. On the other hand, temporality flows from *Falsāfā* argument in the sense that contingent beings require that eternal being must exist. This is using the observation of temporality to justify eternality.

3. *Vēdic* Cosmology

Vēdic Cosmology does not attempt to justify God. Four of its six *Darśana*s (Philosophies) do not require God for them to be operative. The remarkable differences of Vedic cosmology from Abrahamic cosmology are:

1. Its use of cyclic time as against linear time of Abrahamics.

2. Its cyclic creation, destruction and recreation in eternity.

3. Its clear definition of year intervals that is consistently derivable from Sidereal moon month. Giving a numerical proof (see Table below) that the calendar of this cosmology is Lunar, based on sidereal moon month, though this Cosmology seems to be a part of what is believed to be the inexact and fictional *Purāṇa*.

4. *Vēdic* Cosmology is a "cyclic cosmology", with time scales approaching those in modern science (Sagan 213-214).

	Sidereal moon Years	Sidereal moon Months	Days	Cycle Lengths
Bramhā	3.1104E+14	1.152E+13		Equal haves of it repeat, half of it has no creation
Kalpa	4320000000	160000000		14 *Manvantara* and fifteen *sandhyā* fit into one of two halves in *Bramhā* cycle
Sandhi	1728000	64000		Gap zone

Manvantara	306720000	11360000		set of 71 *Caturyuga* followed by a gap of 64000 moon months repeat
Caturyuga	4320000	160000		Total of all four *yuga* below
Satya	1728000	64000		Day and night cycle
Tretā	1296000	48000		Day and night cycle
Dwāpar	864000	32000		Day and night cycle
Kali	432000	16000		Day and night cycle
Sidereal Moon month		1	27	

Table: 1 (Source: Author)

Sidereal moon month could be one interpretation of the basis of *Vēdic* cosmology but it could as well be related to feminine hormonal cycle, further correlating linguistically to the synonyms *Prithvī, Bhūmi, Avanī,* or *Elā* being of female gender and regarded as *Jananī, Laxmī,* or *Adimāyā*. This rhythm correlative thought is a shared ethos of *Vēdic* cosmology and Chinese way of correlating, a process that considerably deepens and widens in the Chinese thought (see Henderson).

4. Buddhist Cosmology

Buddhist Cosmology defines its unit in allegorical tales for example in one instance Cabbage seeds to be filled in a cube of side sixteen kilometers, one seed added to it every hundred years (Busswell 183-187). The basis of counting of these hundred years is not defined; it could be taken to be average life span of man because Buddhist religious metaphysics defines average life span of current humans to be 100 years. However various other *kappā*s have different kinds of beings than humans, having entirely different life spans. This lack of consistent life spans between *kappā's* makes hundred year average life span unusable as a counting measure. This requires introducing an assumption that this "hundred year seed addition interval" is not life span but is counted in sidereal moon month based Lunar years, as in *Vēdic* cosmology. This allows a consistent computation and conversion to an estimate of astronomical years as follows:

Bulk density of cabbage seeds: 0.73 gm/cc (Jadhav et al. 1163-1171)

Volume of the cubic pit: 16x16x16=4096 km3

Weight of cabbage seeds: 2.99008×10^{15} Kg

Average Weight of one cabbage seed: 3.95 gm (see "Cabbage")

Therefore,

One *Mahākappā*= 7.56982×10^{22} years

One *Antarkappā*= 2.95696×10^{20} years

The cycle of Buddhist cosmology is then shown as:

Age name	Is age of	*Antarkappas*	Remark
Mahākappā		256	
Samvattākappā	Dissolution of universe	64	
Samvattāthāikappā	Dissolved state	64	Emptiness
Vivattākappā	Evolution of universe	64	
Vivattāthāikappā	Evolved universe	64	Steady functional state of universe
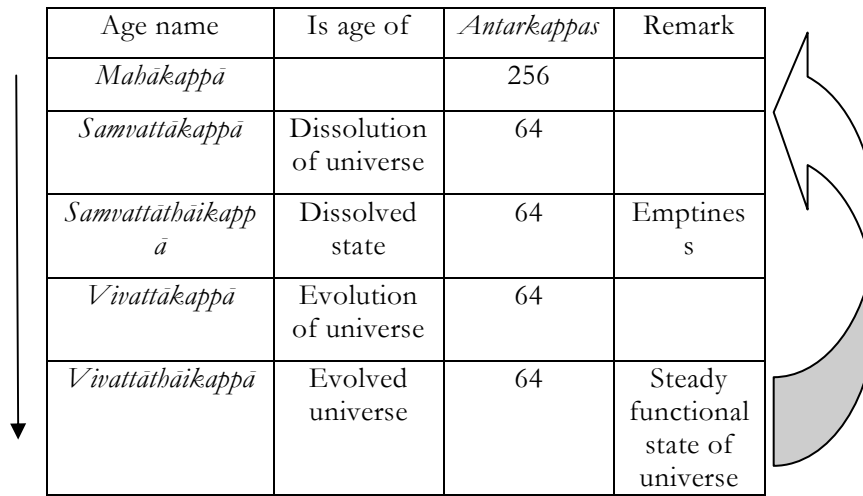
Table: 2 (Source: Author)

The Buddhist Cosmology is cyclic in nature like the Vedic one. The conclusions are as below:

Vēdic Cosmology table shown above did not count *Bramhā* lull in creation in the cycle time, Buddhist cycle counts that as emptiness. The cycle defines a start and an end points in time similar to Vedic cosmology, but this is a problematic definition as we shall see after discussing third of the Indian cyclic cosmologies of the Jainas.

The space part is defined in religious metaphysics in terms of mount Meru, distance measures, geographies along with biology and caste system including differing average human life span in various eons (*Kappā* in Pāli, *Kalpa* in Sanskrit). A noteworthy feature of Buddhist Cosmology is its correlative equivalence to Psychology. The classifications of cycles and various realms under its spatial description have an element of analogy with states of mind. We shall see a similar trend but relating to other bio rhythms in Taosim in the subsequent part of this document.

5. The Jaina Cosmology

Name of phase of cycle of time	Duration of phase of cycle of time	State
SuśamāSuśamā	400 Trillion *Sagaropamās*	State of perfect happiness
Suśamā	300 Trillion *Sagaropamās*	
SuśamāDuḥśamā	200 Trillion *Sagaropamās*	
DuḥśamāSuśamā	100 Trillion *Sagaropamās*	
DuḥśamāDuḥśamā	21000 years	
Duḥśamā	21000 years	Opposite of perfect happiness

Utsarpini

Perfect unhappiness

Perfect unhappiness

Avsarpini

Table: 3 (Source: Author)

The Jaina Cosmology is cyclic, with *Utsarpini* as upswing half cycle and *Avsarpini* as downswing half cycle. Each has six phases. Most interesting feature of the Jaina cosmology is that it defines the large number as 10^{194}. One *Palyopamā* is countless years. A *Palyopamā* is greater than 10^{194}. *Sagaropamā* is 10 quadrillion *Palyopamā*. With these number definitions, the cycle has no meaning because of the definition of *Palyopamā* as countless years. Considering "countless years" in the definition, this view is of a static universe with no beginning or end (Jain 21-28).

The use of countless time leading to an implication of static universe is not the only remarkable feature of Jaina Cosmology that is interesting. In Jaina Cosmology two reversal states are defined, one of perfection and the other of imperfection and the universe is said to cycle between these two pole positions. This concept is an attempt to define what marks the end of cycles. This aspect has its closest sounding connect with Modern Cosmological riddle of entropy and arrow of time. If entropy were constantly rising and time only moving forward then was the starting point a zero entropy point? It would then need to be point of infinite energy and its opposite would be point of no energy. If a cyclicality is claimed how does one convert one into the other to make a new beginning? If instead of energy the entropy were interpreted as a measure of order, the zero entropy state is that of perfect order and maximal entropy state of perfect disorder. For the next cycle to begin after one ends, somehow the state of highest order must equate itself with that of highest disorder. This reasoning is also not defendable on another ground that there

cannot be a special starting and ending point defined on a circle. Defining special points is a violation of founding principle of theory of relativity. Jaina Cosmology seems to solve this riddle by changing the direction of movement from order to disorder. However that in scientific terms would imply shifting of arrow of time and entropy in opposite directions. In the Universe we live in this is empirically impossible.

6. Sikh Cosmology

In words of Guru Arjan "*Kai bārpasariopasarsadāsadāikakānkār*" (*Sri Guru* 276), that is, "many a time you have projected this creation, yet you always remained the only formless one" ("Cosmology" para. 4).

This is a cyclic cosmology; it also has the lull of creation we observed in previous cyclic cosmologies. This lull is stated by Guru Nanak (*Sri Guru* 1035).

7. Cyclic Nature's Rhythm Cosmological Outlook in China

Chinese Cosmology is unique in its approach in the sense that it does not attempt to mark a start or an end of time but merely draws correspendences (Henderson 1) between body, body politic and heavenly bodies. These correspondences may be numerological, anatomical, psychological and moral between man and heavens. They are taken to justify special place of man, thereby forming a triad of heavens, earth and man.

An abstract of these correspondences is tabulated below:

Natural occurrence	Correspondence
9 Layers of Heaven (Huai nan Tzu)	9 orifices in body
4 seasons for 12 months	4 limbs for 12 large joints
12 months for 360 days	12 minor limbs for 360 smaller joints
Head resembles heaven	Feet resemble earth
Heaven has four seasons, five phases, 9 sections, 366 days	4 limbs, five viscera, 9 orifices, 366 joints
Heaven has wind, rain, cold and heat	Gall bladder is cloudy, lungs are pneumatic, liver is windy, kidneys are rainy, spleens is thunderous. Organs correspond with heaven and earth. Heart is sovereign. Eyes and ears and sun and moon, blood and pneuma are

	wind and rain
Tung Chung Shu: Spring, fall, winter and summer	Moods delight, anger, grief and joy
Cold and heat	Delight and anger
Day and night	Opening and closing of eyes
Winter and Summer	Strength and weakness
"Yin and Yang"	Grief and joy
Space and time	Calculations and deliberations of mind
Groups of 5 in Han Wu Shing comsology: 5 planets, seasons, directions, colours, musical tones, 5 sagely emperors, 5 viscera, 5 orifices, 5 animals, 5 grains, 5 reserviors about 62 sets of fives.	

Table: 4 (Source: Henderson)

Heraclitus' unity of opposites appears as Yin Yang, a close parallel to *Sāṁkhya Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. Triplets of Pythagoras and Indian concepts (*Satva, Rājas, Tāmas; Ādhidaivik, Adhi Bhautik and Ādhyātmik; Vāta, Kapha and Pitta*) appear as triads, *Pancamahābhuta* (Fire, Water, Earth, Space, Wind) appear as 62 sets of fives in Han Wu Shing cosmology, exemplified by five planets, seasons, directions, colours, musical tones, sagely emperors, viscera, orifices, animals, grains, reserviors. This numerological bent in Chinese cosmology became many versions in an attempt to evolve the Chinese luni-solar calender finally ending up in nearly 365¼ days that includes a concept similar to *Adhik māsam* of Indian Luni solar calender. This calender is as below.

7.1 The Chinese Calender

Five Complementary "*Yin Yang*" pairs that form ten celestial stems

"*Jia: Yang*" or growing wood (Lung)	"*Yi: Yin*" or cutting wood (Large Intestine)
"*Bing Yang*" or natural fire (Spleen)	"*Ding: Yin*" or artifical fire (Heart)
"*Wu: Yang*" or plane earth (Pericardium, Stomach)	"*Ji: Yin*" or earthenware (Small Intestine, Liver)
"*Geng: Yang*" or plane metal (Bladder)	"*Xin: Yin*" or wrought metal (Kidney)
"*Ren: Yang*" or flowing water ("San Jio")	"*Gui: Yin*" or still water (Gall Bladder)
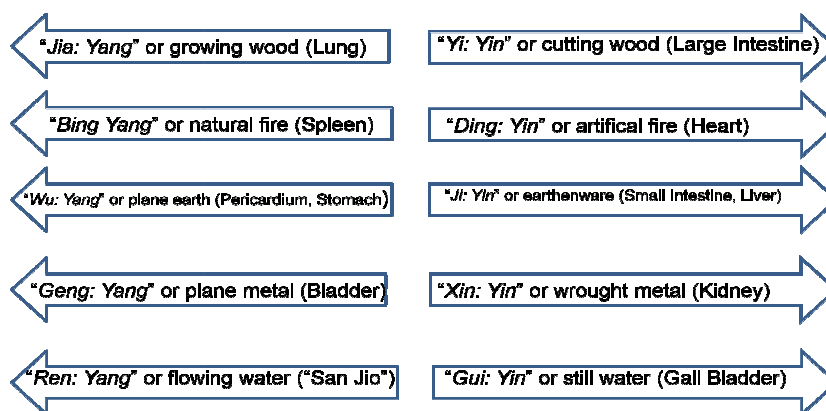
Table: 5 (Source: Twicken "Part One")

12 Animals, 12 Zodiac names

"*Zi*"	Rat
"*Chou*"	Ox
"*Yin*"	Tiger
"*Mao*"	Rabbit
"*Chen*"	Dragon
"*Si*"	Snake
"*Wu*"	Horse
"*Wei*"	Sheep
"*Shen*"	Monkey
"*Yu*"	Rooster
"*Xu*"	Dog
"*Hai*"	Pig

Table: 6(Source: Twicken "Part One")

Two entries from Table of complementary pairs are paired with two entries from Table of animal names and zodiac signs to form the name of a Chinese calendric year, frequently heard as year of snake, year of dog etc. This

naming system gives rise to the following number of years before the year naming cycle goes one full circle to restart: 12C2-4C2=66-6=60. This is thus a sexaginary cycle. The formula of permutations and combinations used above was not arrived at by Chinese, they seem to have just resorted to taking things as they come. The cosmologists in China went through several trial and erros before the Chinese calander was finally made to match 365 and one fourth day in a year.

The correlation of organs in the *Yin Yang* celestial stems chart forms the basis of Chinese medicine of accupuncture (*Yang* or exterior treatment), chemotherapy (*Yin* or interior treatment)

8. Decay Times of Various Subatomic Particles

As a matter of keeping a perspective when dealing with large Cosmological numbers, it is interesting to visit decay times in particle Physics.

Particle	Half life	Comment
Proton	10^{32} solar years	A baryon composed of two up quarks and a down quark. It is regarded as stable due to baryon conservation alias symmetry. This symmetry is said to break in Grand Unification Theories(GUT) leading to decay. Different GUT's predict different half life for protoins.
Electron	66×10^{27} solar years	
Free neutron	15 minutes, solar time	Converts to a proton, electron and an antineutrino. There are two neutrons fast and slow in reactor physics, the fast neutrons are likely to convert more quickly than slow neutrons.
Photon	10^{18} solar years	

Table: 7 (Source: "Proton")

9. To Conclude

The *Kālām* and *Falsāfā* Cosmological arguments have nearly nothing going for them as Cosmologies to allow keeping them afloat. They also seem to be scripturally inconsistent, by not accounting for the Apocalypse part of scriptures. The fact is, they were not formulated as Cosmologies but as proof of existence of one God, Cosmology being an incidental instrumental part of that activity.

From all the four Indian origin Cyclic Cosmologies some conclusions can be derived. They appear to share a common ethos, differences are not material. It is likely that a politically created rather than an ideological division separates them from each other. It indicates that *Vēdic-non-Vēdic*, *Āstik-Nāstik* distinctions made in Indian Philosophy may not have existed when these ideas were formulated. The common thread running in cyclic Cosmologies is nature's rhythm. The Vedic and Buddhist cosmologies define time using visible material objects. Jaina cosmology extends time counter to nearly never ending thereby practically switching off the cycle whereas Sikh cosmology leaves calendared time definition un-spelt.

Nature's rhythm in Chinese cyclic cosmologies appears as if it is somewhat remotely related to Physics of time, but nevertheless it does form the underlying basis at the root of Chinese calendar, medicine, acupuncture (see Twicken) and even ancient Chinese administration and bureaucracy etc.

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Book Review

Kant's Metaphysical Exposition of the Concept of Space: *An Exegetical and Critical Study* by Kumudranjan Goswami

Kalyankumar Bagchi

A Plea for an Excuse:

In writing this review, I have often spoken my mind. I think I need not apologize for that. In writing a review on a work on philosophy, a student of Philosophy – such as I am (even in retirement) – responds with his point of view. He affiliates himself to his compeer – in the present case, Professor Kumudranjan Goswami. Readers of Professor Goswami's work and my review will, I hope, find out that we belong to the same geñre of thinking. Perhaps our training in Philosophy at the University of Calcutta has something to do with that.

A concept which, *like* speculative or metaphysical concepts is widest in *comprehensiveness* but *unlike* metaphysical concepts is discriminative of the experienced contextualities of space, is Kant's concept of Space as 'containing manifold'. In virtue of this, Space (with 'S' capitalized) can comprehend all modes of Space (e.g. contiguity, distance etc.). Seldom does one come across a book on Kant in which the author straightforwardly delves deep into this concept which helps Kant built his metaphysics of experience and the student is helped to view Kant's metaphysics of experience with its subtleties.

The present writer Professor Kumudranjan Goswami is an exception in this regard. Making his way through the woods of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Prolegomena*, *Dissertations* and Kant's different essays, specially his 1768 essay "On the First Ground of the Distinction of the Regions of Space", Professor Goswami comes to fix on the concept in question. Goswami has indeed gripped the heart of

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Kant's Metaphysics of Experience. He has untangled the web of statements or observations and exegetical constructions made by the many Kant-interpreters – vast as the literature on Kant is – and the reader gets a clear, uncluttered statement of Kant's epistemological doctrine of space as i) *a priori intuition*, as ii) the necessary *condition* of our knowledge of the world, as iii) *individuating* objects and as iv) 'Unmediated' presentation– *contra* concepts which emerge through mediation of experienced objects (Chapter 9; p. 11). The student of Kant is helped thereby to put out of his way the various empiricist and rationalist (especially Leibnizian) alternatives to Kant's doctrine of space (as *a priori* intuition) and to envisage a faithful Kant – exegesis or constructive Kant's – interpretation. She gets in her hands a book in which Kant's epistemological doctrine of space is elaborated out in five clear 'space arguments' (as Goswami calls them and rightly so). She comes to be equipped with the positives and the negatives of Kant's epistemology of Space. She can then envisage

1) Kant's 'Metaphysical' *but* non-ontological – 'exposition' of Space (*contra* Gottfried Martin),

2) Kant's a priorism of Space *minus* (a) Leibnizian Rationalism and (b) Leibniz's logical theory, and

3) Kant's doctrine of 'individuation' of objects in Space against empiricism.

Here, Goswami's observations in support of Kant are worth noting, viz.

> Since sensible objects cannot be represented as involved in a certain kind of relations or order (say, of mutual externality and adjacency) unless they are individuated, that is, represented as different (as numerically different, to be more precise) and since they cannot be individuated, represented as numerically different, unless they are represented as in different places, the idea of Space is already presupposed in the representation of an order of sensible objects, and so cannot without circularity be derived empirically from such an order. (69-70)

The foregoing (sketchy) remarks form the outline of Goswami's interpretation of Kant's doctrine of Space. An exhaustive statement of this interpretation is needed. First, then to what Goswami calls the 'metaphysical exposition' of Space. Against Gottfried Martin, Goswami points out – and that rightly – that Kant's exposition of Space is not an enquiry into the nature of Space. Kant's task in the exposition is epistemological – it is enquiry into Space as condition of *our* knowledge of Objects (as side by side with one another adjacent to or distinct from one another, as discriminated from one another and so on). Here, as Goswami (8) points out against Shrader, one has to make a distinction between the 'application' of the idea of Space in the empirical context (as adjacent to or distant from one another, as discriminated from one another and so on) and its 'status' which is a priori.

Goswami's analysis of the 'metaphysical' exposition 'of Space may be

divided into three parts. The first part obviates any Speculative exposition of Space. The second part distinguishes between the procedures of the Metaphysical and Transcendental Expositions of Space. In the third part of his analysis, Goswami guards against any attempt – made mainly by those who interpret Kant's theory of Space *in terms of a methodology of the Science of Geometry* to derive the rationale of synthetic a priori propositions on Space *from* Geometry instead of establishing their anteriority to Geometry – a task which Goswami seeks to accomplish. He would *not* allow Geometry to be the arbiter for determining the justification of synthetic a priori propositions about Space. I think he is right here in opposing any undermining of the philosophical or epistemological theory of Space to the Geometrical understanding of Space. The task of understanding figures in Space, postulates and axioms thereto is not the task of exploration into the concept of Space as framework of understanding objects of sense-experience. *Given* Geometry, the philosopher may still make his enquiry into Space. Geometrical figures are, after all, given in Space – may be they are symbolized, but the fact remains that those symbols are spatialised. Or, the philosopher can go on observing that Geometrical imagination is nothing if not spatialised. And, then, his question remains, viz., 'What is Space?'

Following Goswami, let us have an overview of Kant's 'metaphysical' exposition. First, Kant thinks, observes Goswami, that the general question of "what Space is such that light upon it cannot be obtained until after an exposition of the concept of Space" (2). That is to say, the apparently ontological or metaphysical question 'what is Space?' is entangled with the 'exposition' of Space. 'Exposition' of the concept of Space makes clear what the 'nature' and 'status' of the concept of Space is. Goswami observes that this way of stating what the nature of Space is leaves a lacuna which may be exploited by Martin who is in favour of a metaphysical interpretation of Space. Here Goswami would reply that the 'exposition' of the concept of space makes clear what the nature and status of the 'representation' of Space is. As he writes, the ontological problem of what Space is 'depends for its consideration on an *antecedent* discussion of the epistemological problem of how Space is originally represented'.[1] By original representation of Space, Kant means to say that the representation is not derived from any other concept but is formative of experience or the necessary condition of it, it is a priori and intuitive.[2] So Space is not derived from experience and it is the necessary condition of experience; it is a priori and intuitive. It is the underived concept applicable to all experience.

Here it is necessary to attend to Goswami's important observation against Shrader. Shrader observes about the 'categories' of Kant's conception, 'The categories are contingent though necessary… they are contingently necessary. They are necessary as conditions of the possibility of experience and contingent only for possible experience'.[3]

An interlude here: A philosopher bred in the Kantian atmosphere would

wonder at Shrader's expression that categories are 'contingent only for possible experience'. Could Shrader imagine a world beyond possible experience?

Back to Goswami vs Shrader: Goswami points out that one has to distinguish the *status* of concepts from their *application* to experience. Space applies to experience but is not, on that account, empirical. When one speaks of the necessity of Space (in relation to experience), one is concerned with its status and not with its application. As Kant points out in the very beginning of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, 'All knowledge begins with experience but all knowledge is not derived from experience'. Space is not derived from experience and yet is applicable to all experience. But 'all experience' or 'all knowledge' is not an empirically derived notion (as, e.g., Hume would derive it from 'impressions of sense').

The imaginative novelty of Kant's thought lies in his conception of 'all knowledge' as an intuitive notion, a notion based on Space as intuition and *not* as empirical concept. There is, for Kant, an *immediate seeing* of all contexts or *any* context of experience through Space. Space stratifies itself in each contexts of experience, in each Spaces (so to speak), each *regions* or *each fields of experience. One whole Space* is intuited, i.e. non-mediationally apprehended in knowledge, whatever may be its context. The *Space-concept captures indifferent contexts of experience – intuitively.* So the representation of Space, it may be said, encapsulates all spaces, as fields discriminating objects (e.g. as side by side one another, adjacent, distant and so on). Space is the comprehensive framework of experience in so far as it is, as *intuition*, pervasive of *experience* and as *a priori*, pervasive of *all experience.*

After explaining Kant's Metaphysical Exposition of Space Goswami turns to the philosopher. The present reviewer is inclined to agree with Goswami that the Transcendental Exposition has the 'same aim' as that of the 'Metaphysical Exposition', viz., that of establishing that the representation of Space is a priori and intuitive. Goswami observes that the reason why he has selected the metaphysical exposition for his special study is that it is the 'more important' of the two.

Why/How is it 'more important'? The author refers to the 'procedural difference' of the Transcendental Exposition from that of the 'Metaphysical exposition'. The Metaphysical exposition seeks to establish that the representation of Space is a priori intuition. The *style* of the Transcendental Exposition is different. It is of the form, viz., 'Unless Space is a priori intuition, Geometry as a body of synthetic a priori judgments would founder'. It appears that the Metaphysical exposition is analytic exposition, i.e., unraveling of the 'representation' of Space. It is in-depth analytic of Space in which its pervasiveness of experience is unraveled, its overview of the discriminated objects of experience (as adjacent, distant, up, down etc.) is presented.

Contrasted to the 'metaphysical' 'exposition, the 'transcendental' exposition is not analytic of experience but logical in procedure: it is of the form of the

Modus Tollens: 'Unless Space is a priori intuition, Geometry would not be founded as a science'. However there *appears* to be a qualification, if one goes by Kant's text. *Kant himself*, in the 'Transcendental Exposition', tries to justify the view that the representation of Space is a priori intuition by reference to the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments in Geometry. So, it seems, that, on the one hand, the 'metaphysical' exposition claims, *independently*, that the representation of Space is a priori intuition *and* on the other, the view that the representation of Space is a priori intuition is justified by reference to the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments in Geometry. Lovejoy, Goswami points out, observes that there is a vicious circle in Kant's thought in the present context.

I shall *first* refer to Goswami's observations in the present context. Then, secondly, I shall place his observations *in a larger context.* In so far as I can do so, I give credit to *Goswami's larger point of view:* it appears to me that Goswami's *philosophical point of view overreaches his interpretative task.*

With reference to the problem raised by Lovejoy, viz., the problem of vicious circle, Goswami observes – rightly according to me – "Kant's *general* problem in the critique is 'How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?' A special form of this problem is how synthetic judgments a priori are possible in Geometry" (5; emphasis added). That is to say, it is *not* from his understanding of the science of Geometry (as a body of synthetic a priori judgments) that Kant goes on to establish his philosophical theory that the representation of the Space is a priori intuition: independently of Geometry, Kant has conceived his philosophical theory that Space is a priori intuition.

Goswami has made it clear that the *philosophical task* of 'metaphysical' exposition' of Space cannot be *reduced* to the task of constructing the science of Geometry as a body of synthetic a priori judgments on Space. He would, it seems to me, part company with anyone conceiving the relation between the 'Transcendental Exposition' and Geometry conceived as a body of synthetic a priori judgments in the form of any 'Modus Tollens' such as 'Unless there are synthetic a priori judgments on Space, Geometry is impossible' ('Unless P, then not Q'). Here Geometry seems to be the arbiter in determining the admissibility of synthetic a priori judgments. But Geometry is just *a* science which cannot have any bearing on the *general* problem of Kant's (or on the solution to the problem) theory of knowledge that Kant raised in respect of *any* body of science, Geometry included, viz., 'How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?' Kant would certainly credit the metaphysicians of antiquity down to his days with having an inkling of this problem – this 'general' problem. But then to Kant they did not have the resources whereby the speculative concepts of metaphysics – undoubtedly breathing an atmosphere of imaginative generality which sciences, region-relative as they are, are not concerned with – can be concretised, translated for the human intellect – 'human, all too human' intellect. A priorities of Reason have to be concretised. For Kant, Space (and Time) presents intuitive picture, so

to speak, of the a priori concepts which metaphysics arrogated to itself.

Back now to Goswami's marking the 'general' problem ('How are synthetic, judgments a priori possible?') of metaphysics off scientific enterprises. May I venture to add that Goswami would advance to a general thesis – i.e., more general than the limited task of understanding the role of synthetic a priori judgments in Geometry – according to which the *Epistemology of Space* is distinct from any *Science of Space*, such as Geometry is. A reflective-*cum*-retrospective study may be made with regard to Geometry or, for that matter, any science. Such a study would be called and justifiably so – 'epistemology' of say Geometry/Physics/Mathematics/Physical Geography/Social Science(s)/History and so on and on. But field epistemologies – such as these epistemologies would be – are not worth the status of *Epistemology* or *Theory of Knowledge* (*not* theories of knowledge – bodies like Physics, Mathematics etc.) which enquiries into the necessary condition of knowledge i.e., the representation of Space as a priori intuition. Epistemology is the generalized theory of knowledge, not relativized to any field of knowledge.

Goswami's insight into Epistemology as the generalized theory of knowledge is remarkable. Equipped with Goswami's exegesis on Kant, a student would have the warrant to observe that *Science of Knowledge* is not *Knowledge of Science* (e.g. Geometry, Physics, Geography etc.). A lurking suspicion, however, remains, viz., How can Space ('S' capitalized) stratify itself, so to say, how into the contexts of experience in their variety? How can the Metaphysics (so to speak) of Space differentiate itself into Physics of Space (so to speak)? An example from Geometry may be our pathfinder here. I shall begin with an example drawn from the primary instructions given in classes in Geometry.

I ask myself 'what does the teacher of Geometry do and what does he not do in giving instructions to his pupil(s)?' The teacher begins by drawing a triangle. That is to say he *figures* a triangle to teach his pupil(s) that 'A triangle is a plane figure bounded by three straight lines and having three angles'. Does he draw *all* triangles? In the answer to this is implicit Kant's view of triangles/any triangle and, what is more, Kant's view of Space as a priori intuition. What gives the teacher warrant to proceed from a triangle (granted that a triangle or any triangle can be drawn) to all triangles? Does he, really, proceed? This is a question not for the teacher but for the philosopher Kant (and for his competent interpreter Professor Goswami).

Can it be said that the teacher's procedure (supposedly, for we shall see that no procedure as such is involved in what the teacher does for his pupil) from (supposedly, again) drawing a triangle to (supposedly, again) all (supposedly, once more) triangles is inductive? And if it is induction, is it enumerative? Evidently, the teacher does not – so too his pupil does not – *count* triangles one after another. Is it then a passage from 'triangularity', supposedly a feature of a triangle to 'triangularity', supposedly a universal?

But granted that 'triangularity', spotted in one triangle (say, in the triangle drawn) need any further advance be made to 'triangularity', supposedly a general concept? The question, if any, of warrant (of passage) troubles (if at all) the philosopher Kant, not the teacher as such. If induction is bypassed (so to speak) by the philosopher in his encounter (for a time, though) with the question of warrant, he would immediately strike at the very notion of 'passage from a triangle to all triangles'. What is more, he would have nothing to do with any notion or idea of 'triangularity' and nothing also with anything like 'universal' triangle. We can imagine him observing '*my* teacher draws a figure on the board, calls it 'Triangle', tells me what he wants to do about it. He does not talk of any notion of triangle. Then I see (as a pupil – a budding philosopher) that there is no passage – in Geometry – from a triangle to all triangles, not again any mediation – through anything that may be called 'Triangle' to Triangles in their severalty. Enlightenment has dawned on me (the budding philosopher). For me now a triangle is any triangle and any triangle is all triangles. What is more important, since I am not given to Inductive thinking or enumerative thinking, for me, the incipient Kant, the expression all Triangles is but Triangle. I intuit (a distinctive Kantian idiom) – what may be called indifferently all triangles.

And when I intuit triangle/triangles, I intuit Space in which triangle (triangles) is figured. I intuit any triangle; any space indifferently infinite contexts of Space which are given intuitively *from* which no derivation of 'concept' of Space can be made, just because all *Spaces*, all contexts of space are given in intuition. For me no notion of class of Space is involved here, no passage from members of a class to the class in general (if this notion can be made any sense of) no intuitive induction as generalisation in Nyāya is sometimes interpreted to be. There is for me no generalisation or universalisation, neither interpretation of an individual Triangle just because I do not proceed here from countable individuals to any class. There is here a direct seeing of Space as the framework of any individual to be known. For Kant, whatever is given (whatever is not to be understood as any entity) is given in Space. Space itself is given infinitely or indefinitely, occasion-independently i.e. independent of any occasion of experiencing. The occasion-independence of Space-*cum*-its occasion differentiating or discriminating is just its indefinite or infinite intuitive givenness.

Once more, Professor Goswami gives evidence of philosophical exegesis which combines scholarship with construction. On pages 15-16 of his work, Goswami refers to Ivor Leclerc who distinguishes between "the 17th century term *spatium* which meant locus" and Kant understands of Space as "Der Raum as meaning totality of the order of places." We can form the general concept of space from our perceptions of spaces. But the general concept of space empirically derived as it is not Space or the whole of spaces that is not concept but intuition. As we have pointed out, Space for Kant is not a class concept derived from perceptions of spaces. From 'spaces' i.e. 'places' we can form the

general concept of space, but Space as intuition is in advance of the empirical concept of space.

To my mind, Goswami's observations in the context of the discussion of (any) given in relation to Space as the (non-mediationally given) framework of what is given to be known carve out a new path in the understanding of what is occasionally, i.e. empirically given. The immediate intuitive givenness of Space offsets the interpretation of Space in Newtonian terms as the absolute framework of knowledge of Nature: for Kant, it is the framework that is given, intuited. For a theory of *knowledge*, as Kant's is, as distinct from a scientific theory of nature, as Newton's is, what is given for knowledge must be intuited in a framework that is itself '*intuited'a priorily* as discriminating givens indefinitely. Kant's Theory of knowledge or epistemology distances itself at one remove from any theory of science, Newton's included, and from the empiricism of 'impressions' conceived as framework – independent. Nor again, is the framework of space a pragmatic concept (remember C.I. Lewis on 'pragmatic a priori') that is *workable* in organizing knowledge in contexts. Being intuitively given, it has no pragmatic orientation. It is no 'operational a priori', as Felix Kaufmann would have it.

Again – this is related to discussions still current on Kant's notion of synthetic a priori – let us recall Einstein's observations against Kant that Geometry, in so far as it is a priori, is not synthetic and in so far as it is synthetic, it is not a priori. Following Goswami on Kant, a student of Kant would insist that Space is a priori as 'form' of what is given (in sense) and that it is synthetic in relation to the 'manifold' of sense in as much as, to quote Paton, "a certain degree of form is attained in sense."

To guard against a misinterpretation of what Kant calls 'intuition', Goswami refers to Hintikka's interpretation of Kant's notion of 'intuition'. He quotes Hintikka: "Kant's notion of 'intuition' is not very far from what we call a singular term." Goswami rightly protests against such conflating of 'concept' and 'intuition'. Writes he, "a singular term… refers to an object but such a term is not the linguistic expression of a Kantian intuition, but of 'concept'." Goswami's argument against Hintikka may be stated thus: 'An intuition is not a concept. But a singular term is a concept. Intuition is not a singular term'. Or again, A singular representation is after all representation. So it is a *concept*, but intuition is not a concept. Hence Space (as intuition) is not a singular representation.

The importance of Space as encapsulating all 'contexts' of space has been brought into clear relief by Professor Goswami. On page number 228 of his book, he writes "Our awareness of one whole space must somehow be an intuition." Proceeding farther, he writes "The intuition of one whole space is the ultimate presupposition of even the general concept of spatiality." Again, Kant "does not deny that there is a general concept of spatiality, but only maintains the primacy of the intuition of space over this general concept." In this context, Goswami quotes Paton: "His (Kant's) argument seems to be 1) that one common mark of

many different spaces is that they are necessarily limited and 2) the intuition of Space is necessarily limited. The intuition of space as necessarily limited presupposes a pure intuition of one all-embracing Space. Hence our concept of spatiality presupposes a pure intuition of one all-embracing Space."

I think that in order to get things clear, one has to make here a distinction between *psychological-cum-*historical considerations that may go to the formation of a concept and noetic considerations to which Kant the epistemologist gave precedence, relating to understanding the status of a concept. It is admittedly a fact– there is no doubt about it that we know what is space from distance, contiguity, size, parts or areas of Space. On this basis, the empiricist may claim that the notion of space is derived from sense-experience. *But Kant would reply that the historical origin of a concept for one belongs to the psychological history of one. This, i.e., the psychological origin of a concept cannot have any bearing on the status of Space.* Facts of psychology have to be accorded 'meaning'. How can one claim that from the perception of size, shape, distance, contiguity etc. one knows space? *Is it not the other way round for the epistemologist?* Size, shape etc. are, it is granted, modes of space. But is it a fact of one's biography or autobiography that size, shape etc. are *modes* of Space? Is 'modes of space' just a fact of nature recorded in one's psychological history? In recognizing that they *are* modes of Space, does not one *interpret* them? And in interpreting them, does not one *station oneself* in a point of view that is distinct from one's history of recording size, shape etc. as facts of nature?

I must give a credit to Goswami here. At one stroke he removes the empiricism of space by highlighting the distinction of Space as a priori intuition from the concept of space empirically derived from size, shape etc. But then empiricism seems to make its appearance through the backdoor. Suppose the empiricist holds on to his forte and urges against Kant 'One can form the concept of Space (with 'S' capitalized) by seeing parts of space'. I am wonderstruck by Goswami's mastery of Kant's thought relevant to the present context of confronting the empiricist. He *just bumps on the Kantian text* that and that only matters, viz., 'Space and Time in all their parts are intuitions, and are therefore with the manifold they contain, singular'. Mark the words 'the manifold they contain…'. Space contains spaces that are *not* raw data but are 'manifold'.

We need at this point to go back to the example of triangle for the pupil. *Apparently* he rises up to the idea of triangle from his perception of triangles. To Kant, he can do so because space contains manifold, it encapsulates *all/any* triangle and that again because Space is, with the manifold it contains, singular. And because it is a priori intuition, it is discriminative of differences in our space perceptions and helps us perceive 'similar and equal spaces outside one another'.

The central concept of the Metaphysical Exposition of space, then, is the concept of space as containing 'manifold in all its parts'. Because Space *contains* manifold it encapsulates *all* spaces, *all* triangles in our example. And again because it is 'with the manifold it contains, it is singular'. Would Goswami agree if I venture to add that Kant's

theory of Space can combine all spaces because of its central idea of Space which is two-fold, viz., 'containing' manifold and, with, the manifold? Containing manifold, it is Space and with the manifold, Space contains part spaces. Arrogating (so to say) the manifold to itself, Space is a priori and yet differentiated into parts, it is a priori singular. Quite to the point, Kant marks himself off Leibniz as well as he does so from the empiricists.

While the empiricist seeks to derive Space from experience of spatial discriminations, e.g., nearness, distance, side by side etc. and thus fails to see that Space itself is the framework in which the discriminations are to be plotted, Leibniz recognizes no other distinctions among things than that which is made through notions (*Begriffe*) and refuses to allow any way of representation distinct from this, such as intuition (*Ansehaung*) and more especially intuition a priori. So while on the one hand, the empiricist seeks to derive the idea of Space from experience of spatial discriminations, the Leibnizian waters down discriminations or differences to 'distinctions'. But 'distinction' is not 'difference'– a lesson Kant bequethed to us much earlier than the Neo-Hegelians like Bradley, Bosanquet et al.

Leibniz, however, merits an extended discussion. From Kant's point of view, Leibniz's principle of 'Identity of Indiscernible Differences' reduces the numerical differences of monads to 'qualitative' distinctions. Kant points out that Leibniz's logic, in which the 'subjects' of judgments 'contain' the concepts of monads, resolves the individualities of monads to their qualitative 'distinctions', not 'differences'. At bottom Leibniz's is an attempt to whittle down the spatial differences of monads. To Kant, *if their spatial differences are ignored, their individuation is ignored.* And what cannot be 'individuated' cannot be said to be 'known'. Resolving the apparent – according to Leibniz – differences of monads into 'concepts' would amount to 'conceptualizing' them. But concepts present things with their generalities, not individualities. Leibniz, as Russell and other commentators on his thought have pointed out, is the precursor of the subject-predicate theory of judgments according to which all judgments are analytic. The subject of analytic judgment 'contains' the 'concept' of the monad about which the judgment is made.

We now go to attend to a kind of considerations which have been raised, in different forms, about the Kantian a priorities. The question is 'Are they necessary'? This question springs from the suspicion that they may be denied any role in experience formation – without affecting intelligible philosophical understanding of experience (and knowledge). It was in 1966 that Koerner raised the question (*Journal of Philosophy*, 1966 issue) if the Kantian a priorities are unique, and adequate and comprehensive (Koerner's article was entitled 'The impossibility of Transcendental Deduction').

Let us see what the question whether Space is necessary boils down to. We need bypass the broad question whether the Kantian a priorities in general are

necessary, adequate and comprehensive in the interest of our present discussion of Space. What does it matter if Space is *not* necessary in the sense 'necessary' is understood in logic? Would the Kantian attempt to understand experience be frustrated if Space is not necessary i.e., not logically necessary? It would *not* be frustrated. Far from Kant's attempt to do what he would in the present context of understanding the formation of experience, a Kantian would frustrate the very attempt to raise the question against him. If 'necessary' is understood as 'formally' or 'logically' necessary, then the Kantian's reply would be that his opponent raises a question which has no relevance in the present context in as much as the context is that of understanding Space in its experience-orientation. We should attend to how Professor Goswami treats the question of 'necessity' of Space. He refers to what he calls Kant's 'Second Space Argument' in the present context. Two parts of the argument should be clearly distinguished. First, Kant writes *'Der Raumisteinenotwendigevorstellurg a priori die aussern Anschaungenzumgrundeheisst'.* It is necessary representation and it is priori. Secondly Kant writes in the same context, that we can never (*sicheinmals*) represent to ourselves the absence of space (*Kein Raum*).

From these two observations, it appears (of course, only appears) that Space is necessary because we can never represent to ourselves the absence of space. Does it not appear here that the 'necessity' in question is taken to be psychological? Indeed, advocates of 'psychological necessity' (in respect of the relation between two occurrences witnessed in perception) argue as follows:

1) 'A' is perceived together with 'B'.

2) Whenever 'A' is perceived, ' B' is perceived,

    a) There is no perception of 'A' which is not together with the perception of 'B'.

3) So one (i.e. the perceiver) can never 'represent to myself' (Kantian idiom) the occurrence of 'A'–perception without the occurrence of 'B'–perception.

4) Therefore A is 'necessarily' connected with B.

It is clear here that (4) is reducible to (3). Philosophically speaking, for psychological empiricists 'deduction' is 'reduction': deducing one concept from another concept is: i) first, translating so to speak concepts to perceptions and ii) secondly, reducing the later perception to the earlier one. If 'psychological necessity' of Space is all that Kant would support, he would undermine the concept of Space itself, i.e., contradict himself.

Goswami sifts through writings of Kant and on Kant and then rightly comes to the conclusion that 'necessity' of Space means the objective ground of the possibility of experience. First, he refers to what Kant says about 'necessity' (i.e., 'necessary concept') in the present context. Kant defines a necessary concept as what "yields" (Goswami 7) 'an objective ground of the possibility of

experience'.   And just because space is 'necessary representation' and as such yields 'an objective ground of the possibility of experience', its necessity is not psychological. We can imagine Kant argue as follows in the present context.

1) A 'necessary concept' 'yields' 'the objective ground of the possibility of experience'.

2) A psychologically necessary concept cannot help one distinguish between objective experience and subjective experience. Hence,

3) Space is not a psychologically necessary concept.

And further according to Kant – this is very important – it is only within 'a scheme of objective experience' that we can make distinction between objective experience and subjective experience. A scheme in which, supposedly, the concept of Space 'has no work to do' is not 'intelligible', as Goswami observes. At the root of the admissibility of the necessity Space concept is then 'intelligibility'. We can negate the necessity of the concept only on pain of losing intelligibility. Intelligibility demands a scheme within which – and within which only – 'subjective' experience and 'objective' experience can be distinguished. 'No Space-concept, no scheme, no distinction between subjective experience and objective experience, no intelligibility'. May we not add 'no intelligibility, no talk'? Such rich crop is our yield after reading Professor Goswami on Kant.

The foregoing considerations rule out non-spatial experience as 'not intelligible'. Hence, philosophical theories in which the role of Space as intuition, and, as thus the ground of experience, is ignored come to be ruled out in Kant's philosophy. Such theories are those of Leibniz's which conceptualizes Space or of Hegel's which 'intellectualizes' what is given in Space or of Strawson's 'purely auditory' non-Spatial world. But cannot the insistence upon the 'necessity' of the Kantian Scheme in which Space (as a priori intuition) yields the 'objective ground of the possibility of experience' be encountered by imagining a supra-human intelligence which does not operate with a scheme in which Space is a 'necessary' concept? In God's intelligence, the devout would insist, intuition is incorporated. His is 'creative' intuition which – should we say, – emanates from his intelligence. 'Intelligibility', then, it would appear, strikes a new dimension God's mind, distinct from intelligence for humans. Can we humans not imagine such scheme of God's mind?

The straightforward reply from the point of view of the humans would be 'No, we cannot'. Imagination, for humans, can be stretched, e.g. in fantasies and fairy tales; but to the end of the chapter, it remains fastened to the ground, – here, the framework for which Space   yields the objective ground of necessity of the scheme with which humans operate. We can imagine only the analogue of what we have seen (as Strawson points out). Even (supposedly)   *God's* thinking of our thinking would be but *our* thinking of God's thinking of our thinking. The other encounters of Goswami's with different philosophers follow mainly his interpretation of the metaphysical exposition of Space which I have tried to   delineate.

The End

To come now to the end of this review – of whatever worth it is. Goswami does not need plaudits. He stands on himself. Yet, writing this review has been for me, as it would be for any reviewer, amply rewarding. Here is one who knows how to write a philosophic exegesis that must subordinate scholarship to philosophic insight.

Goswami, Kumudranjan. *Kant's Metaphysical Exposition of the Concept of Space: An Exegetical and Critical Study.* Maha Bodhi Book Agency, 2017, pp. 333, ISBN: 978-93-84721-94-7 (Hardback).

Notes

1. 'A priorities' was a favorite expression of my teacher, the late professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya. Of course, he would go to the length of 'idealizing' 'a priorities'. In this connection, Nicolai Hartmann was his favourite thinker.

2. That epistemology is not theory of science is my observation in my paper "Kant and the Idea of Epistemology" in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*,1982.

3. That the relation between the Kantian a priorities (Space, Time and Categories) and our knowledge and experience cannot be stated in the form of any 'Modus Tollens' is my contention in my paper "In-depth Dimension of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason:* Epistemology" in *Gauhati University Journal of Philosophy*, vol.2, 2017, pp. 1-10.

Style Sheet

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Single or two authors:

Hatfield, Gary. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Descartes and the Meditations*. Routledge, 2003.

Caro, Mario De, and David Macarthur. "The Nature of Naturalism." *Naturalism in Question*, edited by Caro and Macarthur, Harvard UP, 2004, pp. 1-17.

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K. Satchidananda Murty's
Approach to Indian Philosophy

P. Kᴇsᴀvᴀ Kᴜᴍᴀʀ

Introduction

K. Satchidananda Murty is a philosopher, rationalist, humanist, and modern liberal thinker of contemporary times. He is a peasant philosopher representing the non-brāhmanical tradition of the Telugu society. He is an advaitin of different kind. His engagement with advaita is more social than metaphysical and logical. His contribution to philosophy is remarkable in general and his approach to Indian philosophy is significant in particular. He is critical about dominant brāhmanical constructions of Indian philosophy. At the same time, his approach has marked difference with other alternative approaches of Indian philosophy. The alternative approaches represented by M.N. Roy and Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya are critical about Indian philosophy from a Marxist and Indian materialistic/humanistic view points. In mainstream philosophy these kinds of approaches are either ignored or marginalized, and sometimes in academics deliberate silence about these positions is maintained. Murty's approach seems to be still a discussing point since it has a potential to mediate both *brāhmanical* and Marxist/materialistic approaches of Indian philosophy. He is the internal critic of dominant Indian philosophical tradition. He tries to retain the core of Indian philosophy. At the same time he is critical about distortions of Indian philosophy made by *brahmanical* class. He represent the anger of *Śūdra* intellectuals, who are a victims of caste system. In the dominant philosophical discourse, the scholars of elite have mostly maintained silence about the issue of caste. Murty made it a point to discuss about caste in his own way under the influence of anti-Brahmin

movement of Telugu society. His reading of Indian philosophy
provides the counter discourses of *brahmanism*. In other words,
he provides new meaning to Hinduism in particular and Indian
philosophy in general. He succeeded in this regard through his
philosophical method. His philosophical approach is rationalistic,
historical, humanistic and hermeneutic. His philosophical method
and the alternative constructions of Indian philosophy is evident
in his early writings, *Evolution of Indian Philosophy (*1952), *Hin-
duism and Its Development* (1947), *The Indian Spirit* (1965) and
the later writing *Philosophy in India (1985)*.

Murty observed that different conceptions of philosophy pre-
vailed in India at different times, and at times found more than
one conception of Indian philosophy existing simultaneously.
He categorized these conceptions broadly into three: *anvīkṣikī,
darśana* and *Laukika* or *popular philosophy*. He prefers the first
one. According to him, "philosophy is rational, critical and illumi-
nating review of the contents of theology, economics, and political
science and also the right instrument and foundation of all action
and duty, which helps one achieve intellectual balance and insight
as well as linguistic clarity and behavioral competence".[1] He fur-
ther believes that social and economic conditions and personality
of an author plays an important role in understanding philosoph-
ical ideas. In his own words, "not only is it necessary to study
any theory in relation to the socio-economic structure in which it
arises, but also it is necessary to pay attention to the character and
personality of the man who puts it forth."[2] Interestingly, he also
acknowledges that "geographical conditions affect the thought."[3]
Indian philosophy has evolved from a blending of heterogeneous
stocks from time immemorial. In this way he refutes the puritan/
exclusive idea of Aryan culture and philosophy.

The philosophical ideas are presented ahistorically by dom-
inant tradition. They gave more importance to principles than
locating ideas in socio-cultural practices. But Murty is not only
considering the evolution of ideas historically but also fascinated
by historical method. The historical approach to ideas is evident
in his writings on Indian philosophy.[4] His historical approach is
different from Marxists' economic reductionism, though he ac-

knowledges Marxist approach in principle. In addition to social conditions, he believes that geographical conditions shape the ideas. He further considers that one's own psychological position and personality plays a role in presentation of ideas. As he maintains that under the influence of psychology, it attempted to briefly trace the development of philosophy in India in relation to socio-political conditions. It held that while, on the one hand, every thinker and philosophy are the products of their social milieu, and every man's theories and beliefs are also influenced by his character, upbringing, personality and unconscious motives; on the other hand, thinking and knowledge influence and shape social organization and economic conditions. It also made it clear that psychological and sociological conditioning of thinking and knowledge, while not irrelevant to their validity, does not determine it. It considered a clear distinction between philosophy and religion as the necessary point of departure for a history of philosophy.[5] His historical approach to ideas is to a great extent close to Hegelian method.

Murty is critical about dominant stereotype conceptions of philosophy and also the way philosophical ideas were presented to public. According to these histories, it was not possible to know when exactly the principal 'systems' began, how and under what influences they were originally formulated and through what successive stages they passed. Murty argues that no attempt has been made by our scholars to formulate a theory of philosophical development in India with the exception of M.N. Roy (Materialism), Chattopadhyaya (*Indian Philosophy: A Popular Introduction*), Rahul Sankrityayan (*Darśan Digdarśan*), K Damodaran (*Indian Thought: A Critical Study*) and Pandit Sukhlalji (*Indian Philosophy*). His work *Evolution of Philosophy in India* is in this line of thought. He categorically say, "These are the few works which adopted a non-stereotyped approach to the development of Indian philosophy, but which have not received much attention in Indian universities."[6]

It is observed that *brahmanical*/dominant writings on Indian philosophy have been carried by certain myths and dogmas.[7] In-

dian philosophy is essentially spiritual is one of the myths. The myth of Indian spirituality has been questioned by M.N. Roy and Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya by arguing in favour of Indian materialism. They had demonstrated that religious and idealistic perspectives in early Indian philosophy were in fact a minority, rather than being dominant. They showed that the major schools of Indian philosophy – Sāṃkhya, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika were essentially materialistic philosophies. They thus stressed that these philosophical writings, together with those associated with *Lokāyata* - the philosophy of people, were in their critique of religious conceptions and rituals and in their defence of the reality of material world, essentially characterized by secularism, a rationalistic logic and science.[8] The method adopted by these thinkers is rationalistic and scientific. Murty's admiration for M.N. Roy could be seen in his early work, *The Evolution of Philosophy in India*.

M.N. Roy (1887-1954) is one of the important contemporary Indian philosophers belonging to an alternative tradition against dominant tradition of Indian philosophy. He believes that no philosophical advancement is possible unless we get rid of orthodox religious ideas and theological dogmas. He is critical about the identification of philosophy with religion and theology. According to him, faith in supernatural does not permit the search for the causes of natural phenomena in nature itself. Therefore, rejection of orthodox religious ideas and theological dogmas is the pre-condition for philosophy. The function of philosophy is to coordinate the entire body of scientific knowledge into a comprehensive theory of nature and life. While Roy opposed the glorification of India's so-called spiritual heritage, he favored a rational and critical study of ancient Indian philosophy. He unequivocally rejected the religious mode of thinking and advocated a scientific outlook and a secular morality. He believed that science would ultimately liquidate religion. M.N. Roy was a strong supporter of materialist philosophy. According to Roy, strictly speaking, materialism is "the only philosophy possible," because it represents the knowledge of nature as it really exists—knowledge acquired through the contemplation, observation and investigation of nature itself. According to Roy,

"the long process of the development of naturalist, rationalist, skeptic, agnostic and materialist thought in ancient India found culmination in the Cārvāka system of philosophy, which can be compared with Greek epicureanism, and as such is to be appreciated as the positive outcome of the intellectual culture of India."[9]

In his *Evolution of Indian Philosophy,* Murty too considers philosophy as a rational and comprehensive understanding of nature. He finds Cārvāka and early Śāṃkhya as the only rational philosophical systems. In his later writings such as *Hinduism and Its Development*, the idea of spiritual democracy of Upaniṣads is the central concept of Hinduism. In *The Indian Spirit*, he evaluates Indian ethics and culture based on humanistic approach. On commenting on his earlier position taken up in *Evolution of Philosophy in India* he say, "Now, of course, I would neither be able to agree with a number of its presuppositions and conclusions, nor wholly endorse its approach, method and treatment of thinkers and systems."[10]

The dominant writings on Indian Philosophy have not debated about caste though caste conditions the philosophical thinking and everyday life activities in India. Murty is sensitive to social reality in exploring the Indian philosophical traditions. He is critical about the *brahmanical* exposition of Indian philosophy. Historically, we find three positions are related to caste in Indian academic writings. The traditionalists strongly support caste system in their writings. The scholars such as Ambedkar probed Indian philosophy from the point of annihilation of caste. The social reformers and thinkers such as Gandhi critically appreciate caste system. Strategically, the leaders of reform argue that core philosophy of Hinduism doesn't have sanctity for the practice of untouchability. Murty on several occasions brings the role played by caste in the writings of Indian philosophy. We may place Murty in between Ambedkar and Gandhi on the issue of caste. He time and again expresses his anger against *brahmanical* supremacy. Being a member of upward mobile and land owning peasant community, he offers new interpretation for caste and Hinduism rather than negating these institutions.

Murty maintains that early in the history of Hindu social organization, the four castes were linked up with four recognizably distinct socio-economic functions in the then existing state of society. For some time at least environment and scrupulous care to train a child in conformity with his supposed *svabhāva* compensated for degradation of the original spiritual ideal. In the end however, the hereditary principle alone triumphed and the caste system, which still survives in deliquescence, based on hereditary specialization, hierarchic organization and a mutual exclusion of castes through compulsory prohibition of interdining and intermarriages, came into vogue. As Murty puts forward a view that "caste system that has been existing now for centuries in no way corresponds to the *cāturvarṇa* described by the scriptures; it is almost a caricature of the spiritual ideal which once inspired the classification of all men into four types, based on their qualities and work, as determined by their *svabhāvas*."[11] He further argues that the power of the theory of brāhminical supremacy to tame people was first discovered by the patrimonial Hindu kingdoms. Ultimately, he argues that Hinduism or its scriptures do not have any role for the contemporary inhuman social practice of caste system. So, Murty favours Hinduism that doesn't have sanctity for oppressive and exploitative caste system.

Murty argues that only in the theory of *brāhmanical* books we find *brāhmaṇa* supremacy, but that was a dream which never came true, except in the decadent days of India. From his historical observation, Murty concludes "that it was not caste, but power and money, the princes and generals and the merchants, that ruled India."[12] It is clear that Murty is critical about *brāhmanical* supremacy to an extent, while at the some time he upholds classic Hinduism. The thinkers of alternative philosophical stream such as Ambedkar attacks Hinduism on the question of equality and social justice and for its invariable relation with caste system. Murty considers that oppression and exploitation in the name of caste system is a later phenomenon and originally the division of caste was determined by ones qualities and *svabhāva*.

In the academic field, the studies on Indian philosophy are silent about the issue of caste. The alternative approaches against dominant writings of Indian philosophy too have also not directly addressed the problem of caste. They tried to interpret Indian philosophy from materialistic, naturalistic and Marxists point of view. There is no philosophical attempt to understand Indian social reality from the standpoint of caste. In this context, Murty's anti-*brāhmanical* approach has its importance at least in making the issue of caste as problematic in academic readings of Indian philosophy.

As against the western dominance, the social elite of early twentieth century powerfully established their culture, religion, philosophy and history as a common tradition of India. They had not only established their subjective continuity with 'glorious past' by selective invocation, but also successfully marginalized other knowledge systems of Indian society. The knowledge production is in tune with the political interests of this group. Murty is critical about the canonization of Indian philosophy at academic level. This may be attributed to the institutionalization of Indian philosophy by *brahmin* scholars. It is evident that these brāhmanical writings are culturally and socially blind to certain styles of doing philosophy.[13] The dominant discourse of Indian philosophy revolves around the Sanskrit texts as the only source of Indian philosophy. But one may find the philosophical churning in the religious and philosophical texts of vernacular languages. As Murty says "it is prejudice to think that only works written in Sanskrit, Pāli, Ardha Māgadhi or Prakrit should be considered as having philosophical value, or that only works which pertain to the six *darśanas*, the Buddhist schools, Jainism and Lokāyata could be philosophical."[14] Murty's approach to Indian philosophy demands us to take note of diverse philosophical ideas of nation that have even contemporary relevance. Murty forcefully argues that "the academic world has to consider the importance of the philosophical ideas expressed in Dravidian, Apabramsa and modern Indo-Aryan languages in writing the history of Indian philosophy. In fact these having permeated various religio-philosophical beliefs

and practices continue to dominate them in their contemporary forms."[15] Murty goes on to say, "These are not treated as rigorous or hardcore philosophy, but so is not much of what is found in the famous books on Indian philosophy by S.N. Dasgupta and S. Radhakrishnan, or in the works of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Iqbal and others, which are studied as 'contemporary philosophy' in Indian Universities."[16] Murty evaluated the collections on contemporary Indian philosophy from mid thirties to mid seventies. He finds four major collections in this regard, including his own collection titled *Current Trends in Indian philosophy*.[17] The first book on Contemporary Indian Philosophy was compiled by S. Radhakrishnan and J.H. Muirhead in the year 1936. This volume included thirteen essays of this time and further included eleven younger philosophers in the next edition of the volume in 1952.[18] Murty commenting on the collection of Radhakrishnan, observe, that there was not a single atheist or materialist among its twenty five contributors, all of them except seven were predominantly influenced by Advaita Vedānta, and nineteen of them were idealists of some sort or other. In the subsequent collections on contemporary Indian philosophy, Margaret Chatterjee and N.K. Devaraja's were included. Murty observed that no materialist or Marxist finds a place in this collection. Murty's work, *Current Trends in Indian Philosophy* has marked difference with other writings on the subject, in its approach. Among its twenty-two contributors there are an economist trying to understand the philosophical task, four humanists, a Marxist, an empirical atheistic dualist. It has an essay by D.D. Kosambi, the Marxist scholar and an essay on M.N. Roy. There is no doubt that K. Sachidananda Murty's and K. Ramakrishna Rao's edited book, '*Current Trends in Indian Philosophy*' (1972) is radically different from earlier works and they made an attempt to provide new vision in capturing contemporary trends of Indian philosophy. They believed that social and political circumstances as well as legal and other institutions will influence the origins, shaping and growth of ideas. This is the time of influencing the radical politics in Telugu society. Moreover these thinkers belong to non-brāhmin

community. As they mentioned in their introduction, philosophy in modern India is closely related to politics and social conditions and these later have been shaped by the new material conditions of existence that arose in modern India. He identified the political situation in modern India and mentioned about the communists, socialists parallel to nationalist movement under the leadership of Gandhi. The post independent India under Nehru made some progress but failed in bringing the revolution and a radically new society. A 'dichotomy between ideals and reality' and a 'combination of radicalism in principle and conservativism in practice' has been 'woven into the fabric of Indian political life.'[19]

Murty questions the very approach taken by academic scholars in recognizing/excluding and institutionalizing the contemporary Indian philosophers, as well as the classical Indian philosophers. As he says, "it is difficult to identify the criterion by which the inclusion and exclusion of thinkers was made in these books. For example, Narayana Guru, J. Krishnamurti, B.R. Ambedkar and some others are not in any way less important than many of those included in these six books, and some included deserved inclusion in more than one book."[20] We may see the continuation of this institutionalized approach from late seventies to recent times.[21] It is clear that Murty exposed the hegemonic institutionalization of Indian philosophy for excluding the philosophers with alternative thinking such as Ambedkar and Narayana Guru in the academic books of contemporary philosophy. This reveals that his vision of Indian philosophy is emphasized on plurality, rationality, and modernity.

In *Evolution of Indian Philosophy* (1952), one may find Murty's approach to Indian philosophy in a subtle way. He argues that it is necessary to see whether a system of philosophy is in harmony with known facts. Unfortunately no history of Indian philosophy proceeds in this way. Further he believes that criticism is a test for consistency of particular philosophical systems. Murty, observes that usually histories of Indian philosophy have ignored criticism. To interpret is not to appreciate rationally. Criticism which tests the consistency of the logic of a particular system of

philosophy appreciates it rationally. He considers that to approach a philosophical system critically, is to appreciate it rationally. He argues that the entire Indian philosophy except that of Cārvākas and early Sāṃkhya consists of dogmas and that knowledge which is claimed to have been got in an extraordinary way and which is, and will never be verifiable in the ordinary way. According to him, Cārvākas and early Sāṃkhya system are strictly qualified as philosophy in Indian philosophical systems. Except this we don't have any Indian philosophy exclusively based on reason. According to Murty, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā and Yoga have no right to be classed as systems of philosophy though ancient Hindus might have done so. He was even critical about Buddhism and Jainism for their emphasis of *bodhi* and *kevala jñāna*. Pūrva Mīmāṃsā is scriptural exegesis of the ritual portion. In the earlier stages of intellectual development, systematic thought and belief overlap. The point of departure for a history of philosophy is the distinction between the two. No history of Indian philosophy has done this so far. He points out another defect with traditional approaches of history of Indian philosophy that they confuse religion with philosophy, though the two are not identified. He equates this approach with scholasticism of western thought. The characteristic of both scholasticism and Indian philosophy is to systematize and rationalize religious dogma. Further, Murty contends that none of the scientific advances impel the Indian philosophers to make some creative efforts towards new cosmologies.[22]

In *Hinduism and Its Development* (1947), one may find counter discourse within Hinduism, rather negating the Hinduism. Murty provides new meaning for religion in general and Hinduism in particular. He attributes all progressive elements to Hinduism by assimilating the other. On the one hand, he is critical about *brahmanical* priestly class for monopolizing religion and making Hinduism as their profession, and means of livelihood and for keeping emphasis on performance of rituals and contemplation of sacrifice. He is critical of this kind of Hinduism which becomes mechanical, external and formalistic. On the other hand, he argues Hinduism is mainly concerned with ultimate reality, which

is manifested in different forms. Religion is viewed as righteous living, and a practice of *dharma*, which means the inner law of one's own being. He evaluates Hinduism from a rationalistic and ethical point of view. He is critical of degenerated Hinduism, which upholds the caste inequalities. He considers the true spirit of Hinduism in Upaniṣads and *Bhagvad Gītā* and finds its continuity in Buddhism. Upaniṣads are essentially movements which were intended to free the individual from the shackles of external authority and the bonds of excessive convention. Their goal is the merging of the individual consciousness in the universal consciousness. Murty identifies that the establishment of spiritual democracy was the ideal of Upaniṣads. But the idealistic approach of Upaniṣads did not make them blind to the world. They did not preach the unreality and negation of this world. Murty considers the philosophy of Upaniṣads forms the bedrock of Hinduism. He further argues that idealism of Upaniṣads culminated in Gautama Buddha. He considers that *Bhagavad Gītā* and Buddhism are the movements of the same spiritual re-emphasis and revival which took place as a reaction against ritualistic religion. Both *Gītā* and Buddha laugh at the idea of '*supreme by birth*'; and both care very little for authority of the Vedas. The difference is that, Buddha asks us not to think of transcendental reality and corrupt our brain, where as *Gītā* asserts the existence of such reality.

As Buddha attacked superstition and priestcraft and condemned metaphysical web spinning and theological codifying, His appeal was logical and his emphasis was on ethics. According to Murty Buddha's teaching was nothing but the popularization of Upaniṣadic ideal of spiritual democracy. The cardinal tenets preached by Buddha are the same that have been preached by the Upaniṣads; and Buddhism merely represents a revival of the Upaniṣadic spiritualism and as such constitutes a new development of Hinduism, suitable for that age. Murty finds no difference between Upaniṣadic and Buddhist teachings, he also finds similarities in the religious aspects of the Gītā and the Mahāyāna. Further, he makes an interesting observation that probably Buddha was the forerunner of not only Gandhi but also Marx. Thus, Murty's doc-

trine represents a desirable synthesis of Gandhian Idealism and Marxian materialism. Murty views continuity of the Upaniṣadic wisdom in Śaṅkara with regenerating the spirit of Hinduism at national level. As he explained Śaṅkara was the first who advocated national unity of India and the religious unity of Hinduism. He saw around him diverse currents of thought which attempted disintegration of India's and Hinduism's harmony. His mission was to synthesize these diverse currents and build up a unity of outlook out of that diversity. Śaṅkara represents the recreation of the forgotten body of knowledge found in the Upaniṣads.

Murty argues that the undue emphasis on the spiritual made succeeding generations forget the material aspects of India's culture. The emphasis of the Buddha on *sangha* and the emphasis of *Gītā* on *karma* were forgotten. The west due to its exclusive emphasis on the material culture has neglected the spiritual. Totality is a combination of matter and spirit, the eternal and momentary. The blind rejection of the west by India would make India lifeless. On the other hand, a complete imitation of the west will make her lose her soul. Either way lies unnecessary danger. The spirit of the age is represented by the west. India has much to learn from it − its technology, scientific method and industrial advancement. But the west is also in need of learning much and its advances in technology will give little comfort if it does not learn the deeper lessons of life from India. Murty's projection of Indian philosophy and its negotiation with the west provides new meaning to Indian philosophy.

The Indian Spirit (1965), as introduced by Murty, is a humanistic approach to Indian culture. This book assumes that it is a philosophical task to understand a culture, and scrutinize, justify and criticize the ideas, attitudes and cosmologies implicit or explicit in it. It attempts to do this not only by positively indicating certain Indian notions about the nature of things and events, but also removing *asambhavanas* and *viparītabhāvanās* regarding the Indian mentality, found mostly in some western writings. Some of such ideas are: Indians have no conception of history, no awareness of personal god, and no sense of human dignity. They are oth-

er worldly, fatalistic, passive and uninterested in the pleasure of the senses, material wellbeing, and progress. In this work Murty constructs Indian philosophy from its source of culture, ethics, and politics. His approach is humanistic in this regard. Through this work, he makes an attempt to overcome the remark that Indian philosophy does not include socio-political philosophy. He tries to open up the socio cultural space behind the grand philosophical ideas and ideals of India. Through this work, Murty engaged himself in defending the Indian philosophy by countering the misconceptions of Western understanding of Indian philosophy. One may find valorization of Indian philosophy. By doing so, he develops its philosophy from democratic foundations against dominant *brahmanical* construction of Indian philosophy. In this way he negotiates with dominant conceptions of both western and Indian conceptions about Indian philosophy.

Murty has reconstructed Indian philosophy from the social context of Telugu society. Telugu society is a bedrock of many philosophical ideas and social struggles. Murty is a product of Telugu society influenced by anti-*brāhmanical*, *hetuvāda* (rationalist), *nāstika* (atheistic), Royist movement (humanistic) and communist movements directly or indirectly. We may see in Murty, the journey of a Śūdra peasant community Kamma from a non-*brāhmin* movement to a land owning ruling community in Telugu society. Anger against *brāhmanism* is obviously the outcome of marginalization of this *Śūdra* community in intellectual space. At the same time, as an upward mobile, landowning and aspiring ruling community, the Telugu scholars uphold and adopt the Hindu cultural tradition to suit its interests rather than negating it. In this backdrop, we may observe that Murty's approach to Indian philosophy seems to be radical in his book *Evolution of Indian Philosophy*, which is written in early 1950s.This book provides an alternative approach to Indian philosophy against the dominant idealistic/brāhmanical/spiritual tradition, in the line of Marxist/materialistic approaches of M.N. Roy and Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya. He considers philosophical ideas are product of socio-economic conditions. He considers philosophy as ratio-

nal criticism and evaluates philosophical ideas historically. In his later writings, we may find change in his philosophical position and the methodology in dealing with Indian philosophy. In *Evolution of Indian Philosophy*, we find Murty as a radical critic of dominant constructions of Indian philosophy. In *Hinduism and Its Development*, he viewed the alternatives to dominant philosophy as integral to Hinduism through a method of assimilation. In *The Indian Spirit,* he defends the Indian philosophy against stereotype notions. It is observed that the tone of Murty differs in each of these texts. But he had an attempt to reconstruct Indian philosophy in a rationalistic and humanistic way. Murty declares that he changed his position. We may say that he broadened the canvas of Indian philosophy and adopted new language to articulate his views on Indian philosophy. In *Hinduism and Its Development,* Murty adopted inclusive approach as he projected Hinduism as assimilation of various philosophies at their given historical times. In that sense even he included Buddhism as a continuation or part of Hinduism. There may be a danger in this inclusive approach as it does not acknowledge the difference and change. There is no doubt that philosophy in India will flourish further by continuing with Hinduism rather than assimilating other religions. Viewing from contemporary social movements, one may charge Murty with diluting their impact. Murty's intention might be to celebrate Indian philosophy and Hinduism on egalitarian value system. His philosophical scheme allows a homogeneous presentation of Hinduism. But this this belies the prevailing theory and practice of Hinduism.

In *The Indian Spirit* he took the defense of Indian philosophy against the notions of western and traditional *pundits* of India. However, he did not totally deviate from the core assumptions about Indian philosophy. This changing position may be observed in *Hinduism and Its Development*, *The Indian Spirit* and consequent writings. Though he engaged with Hinduism, Vedas, Advaita Vedānta as central to Indian philosophy against Indian materialism, we may find alternative reading of Vedānta from the social claims of non-brāhmins. His view on *brāhmanical* philosophy

shares to some extent the non-brāhmin thinkers such as Tripu-raneni Ramaswamy Choudhary, Jyothibha Phule, Ramaswamy Periyar and Narayana Guru, rather than the thinkers inspired by Marxism. The thinkers of non-*brāhmin* traditions have concentrated their energies on attacking the supremacy of *brāhmanism* rather than Hinduism. There is no doubt that his philosophical approach against dominant brahmanical approach provided a ground for later political movements of the oppressed. But at the same time, we may find thinkers like Ambedkar, who took this argument further by critically evaluating Hinduism, and reconstructed Indian philosophy on strong philosophical foundations.

Notes and References

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2. Satchidananda Murty, K., *Evolution of Indian Philosophy*, New Delhi: DK print world, 2007 (revised ed.), p. 23.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 30

4. Satchidananda Murty, K., (Ed.) *Readings in Indian History, Politics and Philosophy*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967. Murty's interest in historical approach of philosophical ideas could be seen in this compilation.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 49

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7. 'Three Myths about Indian Philosophy in Indian Philosophy. A *Counter Respective* by Daya Krishna, and Dogmas of Indian Philosophy in *Philosphical Essays* by S.N. Dasgupta

8. Brain Morris, *Religion and Anthropology*, A *Critical Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 113

9. Roy, M.N., *Materialism*, Delhi: Ajanta Publications, p. 94

10. Satchidananda Murty, K., *Philosophy in India*, op. cit., p. 99

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197

12. Satchidananda Murty, K., *The Indian Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 14-15

13. The prominent texts of Indian philosophy are Surendranath Dasgupta's *History of Indian Philosophy* in five volumes, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's *History of Indian Philosophy* in two volumes, C.D. Sharma's *Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Puligandla's *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy*, Jadunath Sinha's *Indian Philosophy*, P. Nagaraja Rao's *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Hiriyanna's *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* P.T. Raju's *Structural Depths of Indian Philosophy* J.N. Mohanty's '*Classical Indian Philosophy*, An Introductory Text, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought*: An Essay on the nature of Indian philosophical thinking, and Daya Krishna's '*Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective*.

14. *The Indian Spirit,* op. cit., p. 91

15. Murty argues Alvars and Nayanars 6th century *bhakti* movement, *Śaivasidhāntins*, *Sangam* poets of Tamil society, *Sahajiya* and *Siddhas* (*Saraha*) of 7th to 11th century eastern Bihar and northern Bengal, *vacanas* of Allamprabhu and Basava of 12th century and Sarvajna (18th century) of Karnataka, Vemana and Potuluri Veerabrahmendraswamy of Andhra, Mukundaraja, *natha* yogi (12th century), Chakradhara (13th century), Jnaneswara (13th century), Ramadas (17th century) Tukaram (17th century) of Maharastra., Lalla Yogisvari (14th century) Kashmir, Kabir (15th century), Swami Ramananda of North India, Bhima Bhoi of Mahima Dharma of Orissa, have expressed their philosophical views in vernacular languages and these views are not considered in history of philosophy and demands for their inclusion.

16. *The Indian Spirit*, op. cit., p. 91

17. The major writings that are on contemporary Indian philosophy include, S. Radhakrishnan and J.H. Muirhead; K. Sachidananda Murty and K. Ramakrishna Rao; Margaret Chatterjee; N.K. Devaraja

18. S. Radhakrishnan and J.H. Muirhead, *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (New York: MacMillan, 1936, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1952)

19. Satchidananda Murty. K. and Ramakrishna Rao, K. *Current Trends in Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. xii

20. *Ibid*., p. 101

21. Raghurama Raju's work on Indian philosophy (*Debates in Indian Philosophy − Classical, Colonial and Contemporary*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) is a recent one. This book even tries to read difference between Gandhi and V.D. Savarkar, but does not have place for Ambedkar. Further Raju does not take into consideration materialistic and Marxist traditions of India

22. Satchidananda Murty, K., *Evolution of Indian Philosophy*, New Delhi: DK Printworld, 2007.