

(Comments)

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In the early 1940's the American Philosophical Association conducted a self-analysis to determine the condition of philosophy in American universities. The committee that made the study reported finding what they called "a skeleton in the American philosophical closet." This they identified as a difference of opinion as to the nature of philosophy itself. Those who taught philosophy either thought of philosophy in a "Deweyan" or a "Platonic" sense. Professor Prasad agrees that philosophy is so regarded. One he identifies with John Dewey—it aims, he says, to make the world "more significant," "more homelike." The other he associates with S. Radhakrishnan—it holds to the supremacy of a spiritual reality, of self-discipline and service to others. He calls one "the worldly point of view" and the other "the spiritualistic point of view." He insists they both move in the same direction, both claiming that philosophy ought to be practical. Both hold that the locus of practicality of philosophy does not lie in philosophy itself, but in its fruits, i.e., improved social conditions for one, and spiritual betterment (i.e., self-realization) for the other. Professor Prasad accuses both of spending efforts in defending their views of philosophy rather than in actually doing what they claim to do, i.e., making philosophy "practically relevant." He offers an alternative to these two views. This he calls "the logicalistic view." According to the logicalistic view the practical significance of philosophy consists in producing what he calls "conceptual illumination." What is "conceptual illumination"? Professor Prasad explains in two places in his paper. (1) It is a form of drill in which the student learns to unpack the confusions of concepts and to show what concepts would mean when stripped of all confusion. (2) It is the forming of habits (drill again?) of reacting to certain problems, of formulating solutions, and of formulating certain kinds of solutions. And what is "practical relevance"? Professor Prasad says by this he means some noticeable effects in the inner or outer life of the student. I note a curious logic here: practical relevance is the producing of noticeable effects, conceptual illumination is forming of habits of producing noticeable effects, so conceptual illumination is practically relevant.

But conceptual illumination, although in "itself a desirable acquisition," is not enough to produce the practical effects called "moral illumination." "Moral illumination" seems here to be

intrinsically valuable whereas "conceptual illumination" is demoted to the status of extrinsic value. When "conceptual illumination" does not bring about the desired condition of "moral illumination," the fault lies not in conceptual illumination but in "human nature itself." I am not sure what "human nature" means. It seems to be the non-rational which counteracts the rational. Beyond this, I do not know what is accomplished by blaming "human nature" for the ineffectuality of human thinking. Furthermore, in bringing in the notion of moral illumination "I have the feeling that Professor Prasad has some value commitments in mind which he does not identify. He tells us that he intends to keep the term "practical relevance" "evaluatively neutral," yet he refers to "good" philosophy and to influencing overt behaviour in a "desirable" manner.

Finally, I detect in Professor Prasad's claims for the practical relevance of philosophy an assumption of the transfer of training. I might add that I'm bothered by the use of the word "drill" in his paper as I conjure up a class memorizing the rules of the syllogism and a list of fallacies! He says that if a student "subjects himself to *sufficient* drill, he is likely to acquire *at least some* amount of mastery over, or skill in, the use of *certain* concepts." (Italics are mine.) Maybe with all those qualifications I should not be alarmed about the claims for transfer of training. But, on the other hand, if the practical relevance is so unlikely to happen is the drill worth while? No wonder most societies, as Prasad laments, ignore what their philosophers are up to!

Introduction

The distinction between thought and action is a matter of common experience. Thought is exercise of intelligence for the right understanding of facts and action is willed reaction to situations for purposes of securing desired results. While the distinction is obvious and is taken cognizance of by commonsense, that the distinction proceeds from a psychological analysis of human nature into knowing and willing is a discovery of sophisticated commonsense.

While the analysis does not need serious substantiation, it requires considerable reflection to bring out the inter-dependence of the two elements of personality. Thought pursued as an organized endeavour leads to knowledge and action performed with the requisite competence produces results termed good. That success in the pursuit of knowledge requires a certain devotion to that end and all the moral ingredients of such a devotion deserves clear recognition. That discovery of truth is the fruition of a certain discipline in that direction is an important consideration. This is one line of inter-dependence. While knowledge is an achievement of thought, the endeavour after knowledge contains features describable as ethical. In this sense, 'knowing is a function of being'. The second line of inter-dependence can also be clearly marked. The life in pursuit of the good requires a clear awareness of the end pursued and a proper evaluation of the possible means or directions of effort. The choice of the end and the choice of the means are through exercise of due reflection and it is on their basis that a good life of effective activity has to be lived.

It is true that the discipline, however ethical, may not culminate in knowledge. But the discipline prevents the failure that surely follows from an insufficiently purposeful and chaotic intellectual effort. Devotion to truth is not the same as insight but the insight does not emerge in a mind to which truth is a triviality. In the same way, it can be admitted that intellectual clarification of the end and the means therefor does not inevitably produce a life of goodness but the cause of a good life does suffer a setback if confusion befalls the end and the means. Thought is not the soul of goodness but in its absence goodness gets impeded by uncertainties concerning the right goal and right means.

These elementary considerations must be carried into the wider fields of cultural interpretation. Knowledge built up through intellectual discipline is embodied in the sciences and philosophy and they together may be construed as signifying 'Theory' in the theme we are discussing. Life as lived in the sphere of individual conduct and social institutions does constitute what is named 'Practice' in our theme. It is necessary to note the distinctiveness of each before we could enter into further discussion concerning them. Theory aims at truth and practice is for realizing worthwhile ends in life collectively describable as 'the good'. In other words, theory and practice relate to two of the ultimate values of life, truth and goodness. That there should be an apparent or real conflict between these two values needs an explanation. It is possible to define truth in such a manner so as to include within it all the integrity, uprightness, the ideal of being in conformity with the law of our being, which goodness signifies. It is possible to define the moral value of goodness in such a manner as to appropriate truth or knowledge as one of the elements within goodness. Truth is something that 'ought to be' and as such it is comprehended within the larger concept of 'the good'. If the two values, truth and goodness, are understood in this comprehensive manner, the possibility of conflict or even distinction between them is eliminated. But the context of thought that permits such a conflict and distinction is one in which truth and goodness are assigned restricted meanings. Truth means, in this context, strictly the intellectual apprehension of reality and goodness means the realization of the ideal of life through practical endeavour by way of volition and action.

Representative Historical Positions in Western Thought

While such is the general background for the consideration of theory and practice in philosophy, the problems involved get formulated in the course of some interesting and representative historical positions.

The problem of relating theory and practice acquires real seriousness and magnitude in a philosophical inquiry into them. Philosophy, in a certain sense, seeks ultimate and all-comprehensive truth in the field of pure theory and attempts a definition of ultimate goodness when it examines the values of life. While truth at a lower level may be considered apart from other concerns of man and the smaller good things of life can be pursued without reference to truth, when the highest truth and the supreme good are considered, the question of their inter-relation becomes an inevitable issue. It is in this sense that the problem is of paramount interest for philosophy.

(a) In the western tradition it is customary to regard the spirit of ancient Greece as predominantly intellectual, while the Hebrew tradition as exemplified in Judaism and Christianity is judged to be dominantly practical and ethical. This contrast of Hellenic and Hebrew attitudes to life is what we have learnt from accredited interpreters of European culture.

(b) Within the philosophical thought of Greece itself differences or emphasis arise between two of the leading thinkers of Greece. Plato, who places the philosophical spirit at the highest possible level, exalts the philosophers who return to the affairs of men for purposes of working out the collective elevation of the community. The contemplative ideal of the philosopher is made to culminate in the ethical exertions of the statesman. This is one indubitable strand in the message of the *Republic*.

Aristotle, on the other hand, in spite of his repeated bias in favour of the concrete, the particular and the mundane, places the contemplative ideal of the philosopher higher than the ideal of moral activity. This lapse, as lapse we should call it in the light of his general predilection, is reflected in the Aristotelian conception of God, who is engaged in eternal contemplation of Himself. The initial avoidance of transcendence and abstraction in the philosophy of Aristotle works out a strange nemesis and his final thought on what he regarded as ultimate turns out to be vastly more abstract than the most abstract imagination of Plato. The difference is conspicuous and has been noted by all interpreters of Greek thought.

(c) In Christianity itself the contrast between the contemplation of God and active service of God is vividly presented. The great story of Martha and Mary illustrates this contrast and the moral of that story seems to place the ideal of contemplative devotion above that of active service. The controversy in the Christian tradition concerning justification by works and justification by faith perpetuates the contrast. The difference between the intellectualist philosophy of Christianity formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas and voluntarist version championed by Dun Scotus continues the inherited dualism.

(d) In modern philosophy the great ethical system of Spinoza is an imposing advocacy of the intellectual love of God. For Kant understanding yields only phenomenal truth and speculative theology is riddled with contradictions. The theoretical nature of man alienates him from the Real. Only practical reason as embodied in moral life puts him in communion with reality as it is in itself. Hegel's Absolute Idea transcends the moral sphere and philosophy understood as the absolute consciousness returning to itself in the Notion is the goal of the spirit's voyage of self-discovery. The absolutist stand is repeated in the Anglo-Hegelian inclusion of goodness in the realm of appearances. Bosanquet saw in the Bergsonian emphasis on time,

in the pragmatist exaltation of pluralism and change and even in the dynamic idealism of Croce the over-rating of the moral point of view as against the religious. Schopenhauer upheld the ontological primacy of will and argued for its eradication through art and morality for redemption from life whose characteristic essence for him was suffering. This exaltation of will is repeated by Nietzsche in a way peculiarly his own. Both Bergson and William James see the intellect as a tool of action with the difference that Bergson posits an intuitive contemplation at once non-practical and non-intellectual. Deussen, devoted to both Vedānta and the Kant-Schopenhauer tradition, envisaged the union of Vedāntic speculation and Christian morality as a consummation to be wished for. In recent philosophical systems in which neither the concept of Absolute Reality nor that of the Ultimate Good find a place, the controversy is naturally done away with. Echoes of the old battle are audible in the Existentialist denunciation of intellectualism. Marxism is more interested in changing reality than in understanding it, while Freudianism prescribes the supersession of the pleasure principle by the reality principle. Not much is to be gained by way of solution from analytical philosophy to whose super-scholasticism the entire issue along with many other traditional problems of philosophy may appear a pseudo problem.

The Problem in Indian Thought

The distinction between the way of action and the way of contemplation emerges in Indian philosophy in the period of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads proclaim the goal of life to be something transcending mere secular welfare and the possession of the good things of life. The ideal of spiritual freedom as the Supreme Good comes to be clearly presented in the Upaniṣads. But, according to them, the ideal is realizable only through the knowledge of Ultimate Reality. Knowledge is not for its own sake but for the sake of perfection. Thus an axiological appropriation of knowledge takes place. At the same time the supreme end of life is maintained to be realizable only by knowledge of the Supreme Reality. In this process of the axiological exaltation of the contemplative mode of life, the earlier Vedic religion, consisting of the active devotion to the gods by way of actions, ritualistic and ethical, *iṣṭāpūrta*, for purposes of happiness on earth and Heaven is superseded. Hence the traditional distinction between the *karma-kāṇḍa* and *jñāna-kāṇḍa*. Even the Vedic thought in its culminating period, even before the emergence of the Upaniṣads, lays down the principle. The *Puruṣa sūkta* proclaims

*vedāhametaiṃ puruṣaṃ mahānām, ādityavarṇaṃ tamaṣaḥ parastāt.
tamevaṃ vidvānamṛta iha bhavati, nānyaḥ pañthā vidyate ayanāya.*

The proposition that knowledge of Ultimate Reality is the road to salvation is part of almost every school of Indian philosophy.

Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Nyāya are unambiguous on the point. This emphasis on *jñāna* reaches utmost emphasis in the philosophy of Śaṅkara. The other point of view, upholding the superior role of *karma*, is advocated by only one school of thought, namely, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. Even in that system the position is not emphatic and clear, as the system seems to have hardly concerned itself with the ideal of the Supreme Good in its earlier phases and even the later thinkers like Kumārila provide for the supplementation of *karma-mīmāṃsā* with *vedānta-niṣevana*. But the action-oriented trend is represented in the school on the whole.

We have a slightly different atmosphere in Buddhist thought. It is on record that the Buddha paid no need to speculative metaphysics and admitted only as much of philosophical thinking as was necessary for the supreme task of eradicating suffering. It is true that in his analysis of the cause of suffering and in his formulation of the noble eight-fold way the intellectual element is taken into account. *Avidyā* is the root-cause of suffering and *sāmyag-dṛṣṭi*, *samyak-smṛti* and *samyak-samādhi* are essential steps in the way towards *nirvāṇa*. But the understanding and contemplation are of the nature of practical reason and are harnessed to the programme of ethical emancipation. In the Hīnayāna phase of Buddhism this ethical orientation dominates and in Mahāyāna we have a reversion to popular religious devotion on the one hand and to high abstractions of dialectical metaphysics on the other. The ideal of individual *nirvāṇa* comes to be replaced by the vision of collective salvation. On the whole, authentic Buddhism in its uniqueness is predominantly an ethical idealism permitting only as much of metaphysics as was required to repel metaphysical systems that would annul the way of *dharma* promulgated by the Buddha. We have an old verse affirming the essence of Jainism:

*āsravo bhavahetuḥ syātsaṃvaro mokṣakāraṇam |
itīyamārhatī dṛṣṭiranyadasyāḥ prapañcanam ||*

Bondage and liberation are matters of primary concern. Conquest of self by matter is bondage and arrest of this process through austerity and self-control is the way to liberation. Such is the substance of Jainism. The practical and ethical direction of the system of Jaina thought is brought out in this assertion. No departure from this central principle has taken place in the course of the long evolution of Jaina thought.

The position of Śaṅkara must be viewed against this historical background of Indian thought. There is no doubt that he makes ample provision for ethical practice as a preparatory discipline in spiritual life. *Niṣkāma-karma* as taught in the *Gītā* is incorporated into Advaita in this sense. Suresvara seems to provide a place for even *kāmya karma* in the scheme of *sādhana* as propounded in *Naiṣkarmya-*

siddhi. Liberation is not something eschatological for Advaita. It is a state of blessedness attainable here and now. One who has attained this state sets an ethical example to mankind and he practises goodness as a matter of natural spontaneity and not in obedience to the moral law. So much is clear. Spiritual life as a life of action gets this much of undisputed recognition.

The question of the greatest importance, of course, concerns the nature of bondage and the means that could effectuate release. For the standpoint under consideration time, matter and plurality are ultimately unreal. The only reality without a second is the pure, non-temporal and non-dual spirit. Human bondage arises as a result of positing as real what is not real. Hence the presence of the non-self obscuring the sole reality of the self is the fundamental nature of bondage. The dignity of the ultimate existence is transferred, as it were, from self to the non-self. That error is the substance of evil and imperfection, in one word, bondage. Naturally, therefore, the means for emancipation must lie in the attainment of insight into the sole reality of the Absolute, the non-dual spirit. What error presents, what appears as a result of illegitimate positing, is removable only by enlightenment. It is only knowledge that can cancel illusion. Hence, knowledge of the Ātman is the sole means of release.

There is a further reason also in support of this conclusion. Action is what implies time, change and plurality and as such it is implicated in the unreal. It can only perpetuate and not cancel the basic error. Hence knowledge alone is the means for emancipation and it is so much bereft of the element of action that it comes to be named 'naiṣkarmya', 'actionlessness'. Care is also taken to avoid the element of volition in knowledge. Hence it cannot be named contemplation or meditation, as these terms might imply a willed process. It is cognition unadulterated and pure. It is unnecessary to understand the cognition in question as discursive and mediate cognition. It is immediate and integral apprehension. It is more appropriate to describe it as experience absolute. Immediacy is the mark of the self and whatever else is experienced as immediate in life is so experienced owing to its fusion with the self. Hence this summit of self-apprehension cannot but be the most immediate experience of the Ultimate Reality. It is recorded in the intuitive utterance 'I am Brahman'.

In the Theistic version of Vedānta the position is altered substantially. Neither time and change, nor plurality and matter are taken as unreal. The essence of bondage lies not in the perception of duality but in the non-perception of Brahman, the Absolute self, in whose reality the empirical world, supposedly unreal on the previous view, is contained as an irreducible aspect. The vision of this supreme principle is the goal of life and expansion of human consciousness to

the requirements of this vision is the pathway of ideal life. The pathway is no doubt termed *jñāna* or knowledge but is conceived as willed contemplation of the nature of loving devotion. It is adoring meditation and as such rises out of and above mere cognition. While understanding by way of conviction arising out of evidence matures into steady and progressive meditation marked by absorbing love towards the object of meditation, the field of the mind in which the meditation has to be planted and nurtured into fullness must be rendered conducive and contributory to this operation by the continuous practice of fundamental virtues and acts of devout righteousness. There is nothing wrong in action as such when it is directed to this inner end and its being implicated in time and plurality is no peril for a view which holds them to be parts of Ultimate Reality. Even within meditation the element of will is incorporated as its exercise itself is a matter of deliberate volition and meditation marked by love spontaneously issues in complete self-dedication, which is also an act of will. Thus, Theistic Vedānta seems to provide greater scope for practice, even though it maintains that the contemplative core of devotion is the principal factor.

This trend named the *bhakti* movement received wide-spread development in Medieval India and penetrates the recent religious movements of India such as the one represented in Sri Ramakrishna. The activist outlook gets revived in a vigorous form in the contemporary traditions of thought initiated by Vivekananda, Tilak, Tagore, Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. All these take care to preserve and perpetuate the contemplative element as ultimate but refuse to under-rate activism and do not see the necessity for sacrificing it. It may be asserted without fear of contradiction that this synthesis of contemplation and action is a cardinal principle of the Neo-Vedānta of recent times.

The Necessity for Integration of Contemplation and Action

This rapid and, therefore, superficial notice of the treatment of the relative status of contemplation and action in some of the significant systems of thought, European and Indian, is a fitting preamble to a constructive indication of their possible integration in a truly philosophical life.

The self in us is neither blind will nor inert awareness. Neither side of our nature can be reduced to the other. This imposes on us the task of cultivating both. But they cannot be cultivated in mutual isolation, as that would establish a dualism. Such a dualism would be our problem and not a solution. Further, activity without understanding and contemplation without resoluteness and purpose are impoverishments of human nature. Action is at its best when illumined by understanding and contemplation gains its natural dimensions when

it becomes a passion and a creative involvement. Hence, neither contemplation nor action can be suppressed and done away with. Nor can both be cultivated in mutual separation. An integration of the two sides of our nature, therefore, seems to be a real necessity. It is the possibility of such integration that needs to be explored.

(a) The possibility of the integration in question is suggested in aesthetic experience. That experience is essentially contemplative but the contemplation is such that it is driven, as it were, by an inner urge to seek expression. The expression is not just a mechanical transfer of the inner vision complete in itself to an external and sensuous medium. On the contrary, the vision shapes itself into clarity and fullness through the process of expression. The sensuous embodiment is a creative self-formation of the vision. There is no doubt that art is a creative process and involves practical zeal and intense activity. But all the artistic activity involved is subordinate and instrumental to the contemplation. It is doing that aims at bringing about a fuller seeing. In short, artistic experience in the artist himself is a contemplation that completes itself through creative self-externalization and the artistic exertion fulfils itself in establishing the contemplation in fullness of actuality. This integral functioning of vision and work of intuition and expression, of contemplation and activity is a fruitful illustration and its moral demands amplification in life as a whole. Not merely is this fusion at work in the creative artist but also in the spectator whose experience is a faint analogue of that of the artist.

(b) This fusion is an accomplished reality in religious experience. Religion at the preliminary levels may be mere faith or aspiration but in its height it claims to be a perception of the Infinite. It is not that this apprehension or direct experience is ever conceived in purely cognitive terms. It is held as the highest value, the Supreme Good. In popular language the religious experience is both God-realization and self-realization; it is both a discovery of the Supreme Reality and the attainment of the Supreme Good.

In the preparation for the ascent to the high destiny, the active element in human nature is fully mobilized and put into operation. Worship is essentially a matter of practice and worship conceived rightly involves the dedication of the whole personality of the worshipper to the active endeavour after communion. As already noted, the experiential communion is both a vision and a fulfilment. The consequence of this experience in the life of the individual is not that he passes out of the realm of activity and the world's concerns but that he is energised and re-enters the realm of activity with unprecedented dynamism. The new force of personality generated by the experience liberates him into wider fields of God-centred action and he comes to be an instrument and a channel for the ever-expanding

flow of intense activity, inspired as he thinks by a source beyond himself and for a good beyond his own. There is a passivity in the great mystics which distinguishes itself in the realm of human history as boundless activity, with unpredictable power and uncommon clarity of purpose.

This paradox of religion as a contemplation that is the fulfilment of life and, at the same time, as imparting a new passion and motivation, is but a revelation of the integral character of religious experience. A philosophy that is convinced of the desirability of uniting contemplation and action can do nothing better than approximate to the condition of religious experience. In this special sense, religion, it would appear, fulfils the aspiration of philosophy.

(c) Perhaps there is no work in the world's philosophical literature, other than the *Gītā*, which seems explicitly designed to meet the challenge of this problem. It is even likely that the very theme of the seminar has been suggested by the *Gītā*, though the problem we are discussing has received wide-spread recognition in all the reflective literature of the higher cultures. It is unnecessary for our purpose to go over the entire argument of the *Gītā* and to take note of the divergent interpretations its message has evoked. Fortunately, the central thought of the work is stated unambiguously and that over and over again. It has everything to do with our theme.

It is necessary, at the outset, to recognize the doctrinal limitations within which the *Gītā*, propounds its theory of contemplation and action. From the standpoint of the *Gītā*, any view which takes man to be merely a physical entity or system without a super-physical and immortal principle is an absurdity. Similarly, to look upon the universe as merely a temporal and physical order not rooted in an absolute divine principle and not sustained by its interpenetrating presence is an absurdity of absurdities. The summum bonum for man lies in integrating his immortal essential being with the infinite deity through a total utilization of all the resources of his personality—volitional, emotional and intellectual—for that high purpose in a supreme endeavour. The *Gītā* formulates the ideal way of life within this frame of reference. It is immaterial whether this specific perspective is judged too narrow or too broad. It is only important to remember that it is within it that the argument takes shape.

The teaching of the *Gītā* is occasioned by Arjuna's proposal to retire from the bloody action about to be initiated. Śrī Krishna enlightens him through his philosophical discourse and dispels the error that was blocking his natural activism. Arjuna acknowledges at the end that his error has been annihilated and that he would do the teacher's bidding. Even a commentator like Śaṅkara admits that the *Gītā* inculcates action in Arjuna. He says 'as the Bhagavan is a

supreme well-wisher to Arjuna, He teaches him *karma-yoga* not associated with the supreme non-dualistic wisdom' :

yasmācca arjunasya atyantameva hitaiṣi bhagavān tasya samyagdarśanān-anvitam karmayogaṁ bhedadṛṣṭiṁ antameva upadiṣati.

The other interpreters of the *Gītā* find it even less difficult to accept this activist import of the *Gītā*. But the activity advocated in the *Gītā* is sought to be exalted through a fundamental spirit of asceticism in action. Action sublimated by a clear awareness of the nature of the self and freed from the binding craving for the realization of personal ends and dedicated to God in the spirit of worship is what is enjoined. Hence the contemplative spirit, the element of spiritual awareness enters into the very substance of action. This is the significance of the paradoxical assertion that the wise man sees action in in-action and in-action in action. Inaction in the context is what is other than action; it is contemplation. Hence, *naiṣkarmya*, literally meaning actionlessness, is taken as signifying knowledge. This is again the significance of the celebrated Brahmārpaṇam verse.

The action so performed does not terminate in itself. It generates the state of steady-minded contemplation. "All action culminates in knowledge". The glowing accounts of the man of knowledge given several times in the *Gītā* come in at this stage. The knowledge extolled in this fashion is no mere ratiocination; it is apprehension direct and perceptual of the nature of man and God; rather it is the apprehension of man in God and God in man.

From the standpoint of the *Gītā* it is hardly fair and proper to describe this knowledge in narrowly intellectual terms. It is contemplative apprehension maturing into adoration. Śaṅkara designates it as '*jñāna-lakṣaṇa bhakti*'. Now, what happens to the element of action that prepared the way for this illumination? Has it dropped out altogether as its work is over or does it re-enter the perfected life? The *Gītā* even according to Śaṅkara, insists upon the resumption and continuance of action for purposes of the good of the world: *atha manyase—janakādibhiḥ ajānadbhiḥ eva kartavyaṁ karmakṛtaṁ tavatā navaśyaṁ anyena kartavyaṁ samyagdarśanavatā kṛtārthena iti? tathāpi tvam lokasamgrahaṁ evāpi prayojanaṁ samphaśyan kartuṁ arhasi.*

Sureśvara adds that action as a means to perfection is superseded but action that results from the very perfection flows in unimpeded abundance. The *Gītā* urges the further unanswerable consideration that even God incarnate as Krishna is engaging Himself in ceaseless activity for the world's good, even though He has to work for nothing to be attained by way of perfection. Rāmānuja draws the surprising consequence that a man of knowledge will suffer diminution of knowledge if he does not work for the good of the world. Brother Lawrence tells us in 'The Practice of the Presence of God' that 'he

was more united to God in his outward employments than when he left them for devotion in retirement'. Madhvācārya holds that *jñāna* increases when combined with *karma*. All these point to the spontaneity of the continuance and the desirability of the continuance of action even after the supreme contemplative experience of the God-head takes place.

That the basic tenet of the *Gītā* is the integration of contemplation and action is symbolically enunciated in the last verse of the text :

"Wherever Krishna, the Lord of Contemplation, and Arjuna, the warrior ready with his bow, are together, one may be sure, that there will come about all the triumph and glory".

We may conclude, therefore, that aesthetic experience illustrates the possibility of uniting the contemplative and practical dimensions of human personality and that such a unification is an accomplishment in the high altitude of religious experience. The central classic of the Hindu tradition, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, works out elaborately the integration in terms of both ultimate principles and concrete details.

R. K. Tripathi

It is difficult to comment on a paper with which one generally agrees but it is equally difficult to agree with anyone wholly. Prof. Raghavachar starts by pointing out two kinds of interdependence between thought and conduct. There is first of all such a thing as endeavour after knowledge which means a combination of knowledge and practice, and secondly the pursuit of the good requires an awareness of means and ends which again means a synthesis of knowledge and conduct. Then he points out that while theory aims at truth, practice is for realizing the good. But truth and goodness need not be exclusive since the one may be so defined as to include the other. Conflict arises only when we take truth and goodness in a narrow sense. Here I would like to point out that Prof. Raghavachar insists on the inter-dependence of knowledge and action without defining them. He does not ask the question whether it is necessary that knowledge should always be followed by action. It is possible to show that action not only need not but cannot follow knowledge. For example, when the goal is found to be impossible or false or harmful.

After the above preamble, the Professor gives a review of representative positions in the west and in India. He comes to the main thesis of his paper in the fourth section where he points out the necessity of the integration of contemplation and action. He begins by asserting that the self in us is neither blind will nor inert awareness and that neither side of our nature can be reduced to the other. This is the metaphysical basis of his thesis, but this thesis has neither been explained nor substantiated. It is not clear whether he is talking here of our empirical consciousness which is characterised by knowledge, feeling and willing or of the self which is presumably different from these empirical states. If knowing feeling and will constitute the nature of the self, then there seems to be nothing left for realization; it is already realized. If, however, the self is something beyond these empirical states, then one cannot argue for these states in the name of the self.

As regards the question of the integration of theory and practice, it seems to us that the author regards theory, contemplation and knowledge synonymously, though they ought to be properly distinguished. It is confusing to regard knowledge and theory as one and it is possible to regard contemplation as a kind of action. Unless a clear distinction between theory and practice or contemplation and action

or knowledge and will is made, it would be difficult to understand where one ends and the other begins. The more important point to which we want to draw attention is that it is not clear whether for Prof. Raghavachar, theory and practice *may be* integrated or *must be* integrated. The example or the analogy of aesthetic experience which he cites to support his case suggests that the integration is necessary, for it "is doing that aims at bringing about a fuller seeing". But he says that "it is true that the discipline however ethical may not culminate in knowledge". Moreover, he takes it for granted that there are degrees in seeing or knowledge and that one can ascend up only through action. Again we wonder whether it is proper to compare knowledge with aesthetic experience which is based on imagination and feeling. It would appear that it is not knowledge that requires fulfilment but some other urge behind it.

In his analysis of religious experience, Prof. Raghavachar agrees that religion at its highest is a perception of the Infinite, which is at once a discovery of the supreme Reality and also the attainment of the supreme Good. If so, the Professor does not make it clear how and whether it is necessary to supplement that experience by action. What is left for which action is necessary? If for example one comes to realize that God is the agent and that He is *mangalmaya* or doing good to everybody, is there any room left for effort and action? What is most astonishing is his remark that "religion fulfils the aspiration of philosophy". This statement may appear to be unjustified in view of the fact that no clear-cut distinction between religion and philosophy or between the scopes of the two has been made. If philosophy stands for knowledge, it is possible to take the view that philosophy is a self-sufficient and independent discipline and stands in no need of supplementation by religion. Again, is it not confusing to say that religion stands only for practice without any theory in it?

Prof. Raghavachar draws support for his thesis from, his interpretation of the Bhagavad-Gītā. But it is surprising that he forgets that according to the Gītā though Sāṅkhya and Yoga lead to the same goal, they are distinct and not supplementary to each other (*dvidhā niṣṭhā*). That all action culminates in knowledge should only mean that all action is prior to knowledge but his example of aesthetic experience suggests that action fulfils knowledge or comes after knowledge. One may agree that there *may be* some life of action even after the attainment of knowledge but it does not follow that there *must be* a life of action after knowledge. If knowledge leads to the realization of the goal of life, on what basis is it possible to say that there must be action even after? When Rāmānuja says that knowledge will suffer diminution if one does not do good to the world, he takes knowledge merely in the sense of intellectual conviction and not in the sense of immediate experience of which it has been said *na vardhate karmaṇā no*

kanīyān (that which neither increases nor decreases by action). This gives rise to another issue. It has not been made clear whether the term knowledge is used in the sense of immediate experience or merely for intellectual cognition; because if intellectual cognition is called theoretical, immediate experience is certainly not theoretical. So when it is said that there must be an integration of theory and practice, it would appear that the integration suggested is not with reference to immediate experience, because that is not theory. In the end we would like to point out that while one may agree with the view that theory and practice must go together, one may contest the view that philosophy is theory. For one who holds that philosophy is not theory, the question of theory and practice does not arise. If one is able to attain the goal of life by philosophy or *jñāna* alone, there is no question of action being a *must* for him. Prof. Raghavachar also admits that imperfection is due to ignorance and can therefore be removed only by knowledge, but he insists that action is a *must* for knowledge. We fail to understand this insistence.

The history of the relations between theory and practice in the West is instructive. Schematically, yet truly, it may be said to be the history of a gradual dissociation, if we mean by practice not activity as such, but moral activity or activity by right.

For Socrates, indeed, as far as one can judge, to know virtue is to be virtuous, for it is impossible really to know courage, without being courageous: if we will know courage, we have to be born to courage, to unite with it and to change into it. Thus knowledge is not a mere observation of an external object, neither it is reduced to a logical judgement, but it implies inner transformation and therefore has an ethical and spiritual dimension. Knowledge is a state of the mind to be acquired.

In my opinion, Plato's thought should be understood in the same way. The soul knows Ideas only by means of a becoming. When it makes use of the body, it is dragged away from itself, it staggers, as if it were drunk. Therefore, it has to detach itself from the body and to know by itself. For what is pure is seized only by what is pure. The soul knows Ideas by discovering its kinship with them, that is to say by becoming what it is, pure, identical and immortal, as Ideas are.

One sometimes maintains that the knowledge of Ideas is a matter of theory, whereas the consideration of the Good belongs to the practical order. It is not so. The Good gives birth to Ideas by illuminating them, and these give sensible things the propriety of being as it is good for them to be: the radiation of the Good extends through the whole universe. In the reverse direction, man raises himself to the level of Ideas at the cost of a purification which affects his entire soul and, through their mediation, he bends towards the Good by the same movement, both theoretical and practical.

We can understand Platonic philosophy only if we perceive that it expresses a religious tradition, as is shown by the part played by the priestess of Mantinea in the *Banquet* or the "ancient tradition" in *Phaedo*. Otherwise, Ideas appear only as logical notions, and Plato's thought is reduced to the reasonings which abound in the *Dialogues*. How can we fail to recognize the ethical and spiritual significance of Plato's philosophy? In his book entitled *The Greek East and the Latin West* (Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 5), Philip Sherrad gives the following answer: "Plato stood at the end, rather than at the begin-

ning of a tradition of religious thought, and..... from this point of view, his work represents an attempt to express in as full a manner as possible in philosophical terms truths which in themselves are beyond such formulation. In other words, there is already implicit in the method of Plato a danger that the very Ideas he sought to express will be falsified; and this, indeed, actually happened as soon as what for Plato had been a method became an end in itself, and the categories of logical thought were regarded as capable of embracing the whole realm of truth, the whole of reality."

I agree with Philip Sherrad: if the Platonic thought is deprived of its religious and mystical meaning, it becomes philosophy in the narrow sense of the word, that is to say, an undertaking of reasoning and demonstration. But, with Plato, philosophy is wisdom, theory practice, and knowledge a spiritual state. This practical dimension of knowledge appears clearly in the conclusion of the myth of the cave: when the philosopher has followed to the end the path which leads him to the Good, he must, as we know, enable other men to benefit from his wisdom and throw himself into administrative and political life. The private *praxis* of purification and inner change does not exclude public *praxis* in the city, but is its condition. In other words, Plato does not think one should change the world before one has been changed oneself.

Aristotle already represents another doctrinal tendency as is apparent from the criticism that he levels at the Socratic thesis: for him, to know virtue is not yet to possess it; the knowledge of virtue has not the status of an end; or again: it is true that virtue is accompanied by reason, but it is wrong to regard it as being constituted by reason alone. Now this implies that, for the Stagirite, knowledge has not the plenitude that is attributed to it by Socrates and Plato. Then the question arises of how virtue is acquired, and not only of how it is known.

Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic theory of Ideas also shows that knowledge has not for him the same moral and spiritual significance. The idea or essence of a sensible being, according to him, cannot be found outside this being; it is actually in the sensible and conceptually in our minds. But Aristotle does not see that the essence of a sensible thing, in Plato's doctrine, resides outside it as its transcendent cause. The Stagirite is no longer concerned with the knowledge of the principles of things, requiring a spiritual ascent on the part of the philosopher, in order that he should resemble them and be united with them, but with a knowledge all on a level, that of the concept we can abstract from the sensible. Therefore, Aristotle situates intelligence on another level than Plato. As it has been said in the Middle Ages, Plato looks up towards heaven, while Aristotle keeps in contact with the earth. The old Muslim philosophy has overcome this opposition,

by showing that it may be integrated in one and the same system, and Albert the Great followed it in the West by distinguishing the universals *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*, that is to say the Platonic Ideas, secondly the Aristotelian essences conceived as the effects of the Ideas, and thirdly the Aristotelian concepts. Notwithstanding, this opposition points out to two tendencies of intellectualism: one may be called mystical, the other rationalist. In the latter, intellection is not moral action, in the former it is. From Aristotle's criticism raised against Socrates, there follows the distinction between metaphysics and ethics, as well as the distinction between intellect and will. This last distinction is certainly useful and represents a progress, if we are concerned with the description of the ordinary man; but it is definitively a setback in relation to the final aim of the mind, which is the unity of its powers. The remembrance of this state of unity is present in Aristotle's works, particularly in the famous passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the philosopher mentions the joy and self-sufficiency of contemplation.

Greek thought did not come to its end with Aristotle: later on, Stoicism proposed a vision of the world, which is at the same time a spiritual path. For, if we actually understand that a universal Reason is the law of all events, which are connected by it like causes and effects, and if we truly know that the reason of every human being is a part of the universal Reason, we have at the same time the rule and the force to act; we are able to accept all events independent of us, as wanted by God, and fear, desire, regret, have no place in us any more.

But in spite of the appearance of new philosophical currents, the Plato-Aristotle antithesis dominates the Western thought for a long time, in as much as it illustrates the opposition between a theory conceived as a practical path, because it assumes a religious tradition of bliss and salvation, and a metaphysics, which is a speculation of the intelligent man who remains on his human level. At the end of the Greek period, as we know, Platonism was reinforced by Neoplatonism, which inherited most of the earlier doctrinal trends, and taught a theory which was one with practice: to know the primordial source of the universe is to know what we truly are and to become that; furthermore, outward action, depending on contemplation, is, as it were, its shadow.

Indeed, the Plato-Aristotle antithesis is found again in the West in the Christian era. The doctrine of the Greek Fathers and even that of St Augustine are analogous to Plato's, while the thought of St Thomas is in some respects reminiscent of Aristotle's. In the teaching of Origen and the Cappadocians, as in that of Denys or of Maximus the Confessor several centuries later, contemplation, which may rise to the level of *agnôsia*, or mystic ignorance, goes hand in hand with

purification and consists in the restoration of God's image in man. "God became man so that man might become God" is the formula in which Greek theology is expressed and which is still to be found with those Latins, who are most indebted to it, like John Scotus in the ninth century. All the writers maintain that speculation, being the contemplation of God, is divine contemplation or deification (*theôsis*); it has the character of an event, and therefore of the practical as much as the theoretical. This is why it can engender and regulate outward action, to which it imparts its perfection. Of course, we find moral commandments in the Christian Scriptures, but these do not appear to the wise man as commands from the outside; they are considered in their divine origin and seized as contained in the Truth or the Good, which is the object of the spiritual or mystical knowledge.

Most certainly, St Thomas Aquinas also aims at restoring the divine image in us. For him, the image of God is somehow already present in man by reason only of his existence (*imago creationis*); in the righteous, it is present to a higher degree by virtue of the grace by which they are illuminated (*imago recreationis*), and in the blessed it is complete (*imago similitudinis*). The path which he describes leads therefore to heavenly bliss by way of the sacraments of the Church. But this goal is achieved here below after an effort of "natural" or "scientific" thinking. The theologian is situated on the level of man as man and is not a divinized meditator, as he is with Denys; he is a scientist who inquires into the nature of God to the full extent of his human reasoning powers. Here, then, we have "objective" knowledge which does not involve man's entire life, and once again we observe a certain dissociation of theory and practice. In fact, if it is a question of reaching God, love takes precedence over intellect.

But it remains that thomism is an intellectualism, since the clear vision of the last goal necessarily involves volition. It is no longer the case with the later Franciscan school, which teaches the autonomy of will in relation to intellect. Thus, we may sum up what we have observed till now as follows: in Platonism, intellect and will are one, because knowledge, which bears on the Divine, requires the assimilation of the knower with it; in Aristotelianism, intellection is distinguished from volition, but as a rule dominates volition; finally, from the end of the thirteenth century with the Franciscans, intellection guides the act of the will without causing it. So the intelligible loses its spiritual and existential plenitude and a doctrine appears, which may be already called *voluntarism*.

The trend derived from Platonism and the Greek Fathers persisted after the time of St Thomas Aquinas; the name of Master Eckhart is enough to remind us of this fact. But modern philosophy has often stressed the rationalistic tendency which is a feature of Aristotelianism. Modern philosophy may be explained also to a large extent by the

elimination of the spiritual and mystical aspect of Platonism and by the reduction of the latter to some doctrinal structures emptied of their original contents. For instance, Descartes uses again Platonic themes: the refusal of senses, the soul first known and God better known than the body. But with Descartes God is only the guarantor of the certitude of the human knowledge; He is not its object and its end. Knowledge which inhabits the Cartesian soul has mathematics for its ideal and wants to be purely scientific and human. Nevertheless the French philosopher hopes to deduce moral rules from science, but since science is incomplete, he formulates provisional ethics.

As for Leibniz, he makes God the keystone of his explanation of the world; in comparison with that of Descartes, his thinking is less centered in man. But the intelligence at work with him is not the mystic intelligence of the Greek Fathers; Leibniz already belongs to modern dogmatic rationalism, of which we may wonder whether it has not carried the ambition of human knowledge to excessive heights. The Good is also the principle of Leibniz's philosophy, as with so many *Platonicians*: God is good; therefore His action is also good and the world He chooses among the infinity of possible worlds, is the best. The man, contained in the best world, acts equally according to the rule of the best; the sole difference from God is that man can fail to recognize the best; the best can be for him only the apparent best. But no matter, human actions, even imperfect, are included in the best world that God has chosen without being mistaken. Compared with ancient or medieval doctrines, where thought is divine contemplation, Leibniz's system appears as a construction of the modern, rational thinking. This system is great and noble indeed, but in its theory has no longer the same moral and spiritual bearing as it used to have.

Kant's situation in the evolution of Western thought is particularly instructive for us. From a science concerned only with phenomena, Kant cannot derive the principles of practical living. Therefore, Kant is more successful than Descartes in understanding the nature of modern intellectuality: bound to experimentation and deduction, it no longer has any practical scope: the moral commandment is different in kind from the scientific operations about the sensible things. Thus the opposition between knowledge and action, nature and ethics, so characteristic of modern thought, comes to light. Some people often think that this opposition is a definitive one; on the contrary, it corresponds to a certain stage of the philosophical evolution and is not true in itself. If theory is scientific knowledge, it is obvious that theory is foreign to practice, for science is always incomplete and cannot rule human action with the authority of an absolute legislator. Thus the keystone of philosophy comes to

be no longer the principles of knowledge, but those of morals, which can be seen with Fichte, Kierkegaard, Marx or Nietzsche.

Nevertheless, other modern thinkers have attempted to restore the Western intellectuality to its past richness and self-sufficiency. Hegel teaches, as we know, that the absolute reason realizes itself in nature and spirit according to a dialectical process and engenders in the course of history the social institutions, which rule individual behaviour. Thus the progressive rational understanding of the world goes hand in hand with the gradual development of practical life. Finally, when reason will perfectly possess itself in the domain of knowledge, it will also be perfect freedom.

In a sense, we find again with Hegel a schema which recalls the old philosophies: truth and good are one, so that to think the truth is to become it. But in fact we are very far from the old doctrines and Hegel's thought is most probably a fallacy in this respect. For, in Hegel's doctrine, the absolute has to realize itself in time and history, so that time and history are divinized. The absolute is not reached outside history, in order to discover the sense of history, but it is attained in history whose sense it is. Then the danger is to justify the historical events for this sole reason that they happen. If all events are a moment of the Idea, there is no longer a criteria to be found outside history in order to judge history, and reason dissolves into the object it had to rule.

We meet the same type of thought with Marxism, which also regards the historical events as the development of the ultimate reality, that is to say the matter, of course, and not the spirit. The dialectic is intrinsic to historical action and gives it its rationality, but in fact action has the primacy in Marxism. The condemnation, that follows, of the theoretical philosophy is quite sound, in so far as philosophy is conceived as an objective or formal knowledge without practical dimension. But in its Greek or Christian origins, theory had not this character, since it involved the acquisition of a state or the realisation of a being, as we have seen.

Despite Hegel's attempt, the modern thought of the twentieth century has moved towards a narrow conception of reason and the intelligible. Husserl's Platonism does not keep anything of the metaphysical and mystical aspects of the original; it is the reason why the German philosopher may place his doctrine under the patronage of Descartes. In some way, Nietzsche's antiplatonism is found again with Heidegger, who projects on the Platonic thought a cramped conception of Idea by considering it as something that is to be seen and not as a state that is to be acquired. As for the neopositivists and their successors, they go to the length of reducing thought to a pure language or to the operations a machine can perform.

Thus it has become more and more difficult to understand the

nature of the intelligence referred to by the authors of the pagan or christian Platonic tradition; for this reason, it has become almost impossible to translate their writings into modern Western languages. When Augustin for instance speaks of knowledge of God, what type of knowledge can this word evoke in the mind of a modern reader? Empirical knowledge of the sensible world or deductive knowledge? But both are irrelevant here. The same problem arises in translating Oriental texts. How the word *buddhi*, for instance, is to be rendered? A. Ganganatha Jha does not conceal his embarrassment about it: "intellect" seems for him to be insufficient; he proposes "will" and, commenting on the *jñāna* property of the *buddhi*, he adds: "To attribute the property of wisdom to *buddhi* is to give it the dual character of Intellect and Will."¹

The dissociation between theory and practice therefore goes hand in hand with a transformation in the meaning of the word "theory". In the beginning, theory is an act of intelligent consciousness, involving all the powers of the soul, reason, will, affectivity, faith, energy, and so on; theory is practice, that is to say an inward behaviour, from which springs outward action. At the end, theory is pure logical thinking considered in itself or as systematic interpretation of facts. Who reflects on this evolution in the meaning of theory, will be absolutely stupefied by it.

Under these conditions, what is it that justifies ethical propositions nowadays, since it is fairly generally agreed that the mere logical thinking has no ethical significance? Our philosophers often stress the heterogeneity of science and morals: it is impossible, they say, to deduce ethical propositions from scientific evidence. Kant already knew it and Hume had insisted on the impotence of reason as far as human behaviour is concerned. Then, have ethical propositions an objective foundation outside the reason which operates in sciences, and what is the nature of this foundation?

There are remains today of the Kantian philosophy of duty or moral commandment. It is worthy of respect, but consecrates the dissociation between knowledge and action. Scheler's material ethics provide another solution of the moral problem, of which René le Jeune has given an equivalent in France. In this perspective, science also is moral activity, since it is animated by the search of the value "truth". But truth as value is not truth as such. The first stimulates an effort of knowledge, which is concerned with concrete or mental objects; the second is in itself the end of knowledge, but a knowledge conceived this time as union with the absolute.

Other philosophers situate ethical propositions in the sphere of mere subjectivity, either as J. P. Sartre in *Being and Non-being* for the sake of a type of existentialism, which rejects all norms anterior to action, in order to save human freedom, or as the neopositivists and

their successors, who regard ethical propositions as the expressions of emotions, since they are neither deductive nor experimental.

Thus the contemporary thought has fallen into confusion, as far as the question of the foundation of ethical propositions is concerned. It is tempted then to deny the heterogeneity of ethical propositions and to maintain a psychological, sociological or economic naturalism. It is attractive to explain human behaviour by reducing it to its natural conditions: it seems to be a valuable scientific undertaking. But the determinism involved in the method destroys the dignity of human action, since it is conceived as an effect of natural causes, and wipes out morals, which requires freedom and responsibility.

How can we get over this confusion and avoid doubt, despair, violence or mere opportunism in the spiritual desert where science leaves us today? The return to a human wisdom, Cartesian or Aristotelian, would be welcome, but Descartes is at the origin of the modern scission between knowledge and ethics, and Aristotle inaugurates their distinction. We can find a satisfactory answer to this question only in the renewal of divine wisdom. At the end of the evolution, after all experiences of distinction and separation, the thought normally goes back to the origin, where is mere unity in the transcendence.

At the present moment, is Platonic or Christian contemplation realized somehow in the West or at least conceived possible and advocated? It is in some shrines of religion, in the secret of many hearts and in the works of a few writers, who have recalled it in the memory of those who have ears to hear. But this is only embers on the hearth. That is why it is necessary that the Eastern countries, where this supreme life of the mind remains — the country of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi and Svami Ramadas, or the country of shi'ism and sufism — help us to maintain and revive it, since it is to this unique Source of knowledge and action that all men finally aspire.

1. *The Taitva - Kaumudi*, translated into English by Mahāmahopādhyāya Ganganath Jha, Poona, 1965, third ed., p. 35.

— Comments

Eliot Deutsch

Dr. Brunner's paper exhibits an effort to characterize Western thought, more or less from its beginning to today, in terms of the degree to which "theory" and "practice" are conjoined in it. He finds that for Socrates and Plato "theory and practice are one," but that for Aristotle they are dissociated, and that subsequent Western philosophy becomes aligned to one or the other of these models, with the vast majority of important thinkers, unfortunately, following the Aristotelian lead.

Now although Dr. Brunner offers us many historical insights, and although I find myself in deep sympathy with the fundamental concern set forth in his paper, Dr. Brunner fails, it seems to me, to recognize that the real inherent tension in Western thought is not between theory-practice (of a religious-mystical kind) and theory alone (of a dogmatic rationalistic form), but that it is between two or more kinds of theory-and-practice. Dr. Brunner rightly notes that for a Plotinus, an Eckhart, the acquiring of knowledge is also the *being* of what is known, that insight involves the transformation of the whole person, but he does not note that for an Aristotle, a Descartes, a Kant, the acquiring of knowledge is also an activity, and an activity of a special kind. It is a form of practice which involves both the mind and the heart; it involves the *person*, and provides its own kind of intellectual satisfaction. Psychologically, we know today that there is no such thing as an act of "pure" disinterested reason; that thought functions only in connection with feeling (and commitment), that intellectual interests, like all other interests, are stimulated and quickened only by needs, and so on.

If we are to characterize the whole of Western thought along the lines suggested by Dr. Brunner (and I must admit I'm not really inclined to do so) then it seems to me that we have to look carefully at the various spiritual values that motivate and inform the major philosophical visions and attempt to understand these values in their own terms. The history of Western thought is surely something more than a mere opposition between lively mysticism and deadly rationalism. Every school of thought in fact (and this seems to hold as well with Eastern traditions) exhibits a kind of "development" from an initial phase of exciting discovery (usually accompanied by some form of spiritual practice) through a period of elaborate systemization, to a

stage of highly technical, and often rather dull, scholasticism.

A few specific points are made by Dr. Brunner which need, I think, some clarification. He asks: "Why can we fail to recognize the ethical and spiritual significance of Plato's philosophy?" Who is the "we" here? I would have thought that "the ethical and spiritual significance of Plato's philosophy" has indeed been widely recognized.

Dr. Brunner states that with respect to Aristotle's treatment of the problem of virtue "it is theory only". Within the framework of Dr. Brunner's own terms, I just don't understand this statement. I always thought that Aristotle conceived of philosophy (at least of "first philosophy") as the active *contemplation* of basic principles, with "virtue" indeed being something to be realized inwardly. I think there is more of Plato in Aristotle than Dr. Brunner is willing to admit.

— Comments

Andre Mercier

There is a tendency among philosophers to interpret the scission which has parted rational thought into science on the one hand and a "remaining philosophical quest" on the other, as indicating that science has paradigmatically taken over the role of theory or "pure reason", whereas "practical reason" is consequently alien to science and promotes alone the world of action in man's quest of his self: Science would, says Brunner, remain with us as a rationalistic quest deprived of its spiritual dimension and it attempts even at eating up the remnant of morals into some sort of naturalism.

This, it seems to me, is a wrong view of the true nature of science. Science is primarily concerned with praxis as well as with theory, for it is the making of a knowledge as an act which requires a steady close intercourse of praxis and theory known in the intricate process of verification which literally means a *making truth* to actual truth even if it is not final or absolute truth about the self or about absolute being. But precisely science is meant to do the job by avoiding the problem of such absolutes: it is an ordeal in objectivity which systematically avoids scholastics or orthodoxy.

This is made possible by the application of mathematical-like reason *not* as a science (for mathematics is not a science) but as a *power*, which in virtue of an "either (correct) or (incorrect)" which is its working criterium, is equivalent to so strict a discipline of the mind that it (mathematics) surpasses the vigour of the discipline of ethics.

Contemporary science is not as Aristotelian in nature as Dr. Brunner says; it is rather Pythagorean if anything to be looked for in Antiquity (and in that sense Platonic if you wish).

So the Aristotelian impact does not concern its fundamental character, but its method.

If you insist calling science "theory", then it is theory in the Pythagorean sense even if the contemplation *and* the progress (as religious procession) implied by that sense seem totally absent from modern science which has put in a bracket, if not even deprived its activity of, the sense for the sacred,—a bracket never sincerely reopened since the days of Laplace. But the putting-in-a-bracket is an asceticism, and is part of the game played by Western scientists.

Yet perhaps it is not a necessary condition for good science, and I should not be surprised if Indian thinkers would, thanks to their tradition, help getting rid of the unnecessary condition.

Troy Organ

Sometimes we in the West admonish each other to be philosophical. We use expressions like "Let's be philosophical about this" or "I do hope you will be philosophical in this matter". Very closely related to these admonitions are recommendations to take a philosophical attitude: "Now take it philosophically" or "Take a philosophical attitude about this." But I want to consider wider situations than those in which we ask another to *feel* philosophically or to *think* philosophically. I want to consider the situations in which we advise each other to *be* philosophical. We are now using the expression "being philosophical" in a lay sense. Later in this paper we shall examine what philosophers mean by being philosophical.

The recommendation to be philosophical is not offered in tragic situations. It would be in bad taste, and very inconsiderate, to say to the parents who have lost a child, "I think you ought to be philosophical about this." Usually the situation that calls for the admonition is one in which the element of humour is possible. It's the sort of thing one might say to a friend who has lost one hundred dollars betting at the horse races, or whose golf ball has been sliced into the trees, or who has been accidentally doused with a cup of coffee by a careless waitress. A wife who drives the car home with a freshly dented fender might begin her explanation with, "Dear, please be philosophical about this. It could have been much worse. And I wasn't injured at all."

The admonition to be philosophical reveals a number of things about how philosophy is conceived in the West by the non-philosopher. In the first place, it shows that philosophy is thought of as a way of acting that can be voluntarily engaged in, and presumably, that can be voluntarily rejected. In the second place, it suggests that on some occasions the activity of being philosophical is desirable, and presumably, that on some occasions it is not desirable. And in the third place, it suggests that being philosophical is a recognizable activity; we can distinguish who is and who is not being philosophical, and when one is and when one is not being philosophical.

As part of the preparation for the writing of this paper I asked a number of people, both philosophers and non-philosophers, what they thought was demanded by "Be philosophical." I received responses such as "Be indifferent," "Become thick-skinned," "Roll with the punch," "Grin and bear it," "Think about it, but don't be disappointed if it does not come out as you had hoped," and "Play it

as many problems as it solves. For example, it will be a great day for Indian philosophy when Śaṅkara is no longer presented as an Indian Kant or Bradley! Again we'll never understand Indian philosophy if we think in terms of dichotomies: philosophy *versus* religion, philosophy *versus* science, philosophy *versus* art. If there is an Indian philosophy beyond Indian music, sculpture, painting, architecture, literature, dance, ethics, and religion, it is the unity within these activities. This unity is in the acts, not separate from them or imposed upon them. Unifying concepts such as *Brahman*, *Satchidānanda*, *Sat* and *Tat* are inherent in the nature of things, not transcendent to things. Indian philosophy is religious in the widest sense of that term. In other words, in India there has not developed an existential revolt against essentialism because Indian philosophy has always been existential; it has always been an ingredient of *sādhana*. There was no *sādhana* that became in time philosophical, nor a philosophy which in time became a *sādhana*. When the six orthodox systems developed in India each of the systems was presented as a soteriology, a way to end the sufferings inherent in the human condition. But this was not an innovation; the speculations of the Vedic literature were so presented, although their *sādhana* stressed more the positive attainment of happiness than the negative escape from pain. Radhakrishnan has written, "On account of the close connection between theory and practice, doctrine and life, a philosophy which could not stand the test of life, not in the pragmatic but the larger sense of the term, had no chance of survival. To those who realise the true kinship between life and theory, philosophy becomes a way of life, an approach to spiritual realization..... Every doctrine is turned into a passionate conviction, stirring the heart of man and quickening his breath."³

Let us turn now to comparisons and contrasts. In the West being philosophical means acting in accord with a certain attitude toward events, the attitude expressed by Epictetus as "Nothing can hurt me." It means being sufficiently removed from immediate concerns that one may see life steadily and as a whole. The philosopher is a drop-out in the sense that he maintains sufficient psychological distance to evaluate the passing scene. Philosophy as conceived in the West encourages separation of theory and practice. The traditional perch for viewing philosophically is the ivory tower. Milton in *Paradise Lost* placed philosophers in hell where even there they detached themselves from events:

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will and Fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.⁴

The Danish existentialist Kierkegaard accused the philosophers of building great mansions of thought and then living in a doghouse beside the mansions. In classical India being philosophical meant being attached rather than detached. An orthodox (*āstika*) philosopher accepted one of the systems and lived in accord with the guidelines of that system. This existential involvement in the human scene may seem superior to Stoic detachment, but a price was paid. The marketplace is where the action is, but the man in the marketplace never has the overall view of the man in the tower. An indication of this is a curious insensitivity of Indians towards history. They became a traditional-minded people rather than a historical-minded people. Their first history was written by Westerners. They had no point of view from which to measure progress, and as a result very little social, economic, or intellectual progress was made during the centuries of greatest growth in the West. Indian creativity had run its course by the fifteenth century. The dark ages settled down on the subcontinent. A renaissance of sorts was stimulated by contact with the British in the nineteenth century, but the genuine renaissance was expected to come after August 15, 1947. Unfortunately the problems since independence have been so many and so complex that the new nation has not yet attained the position of cultural leadership many had hoped she would reach in her first quarter century. One of her early acts as a nation delighted philosophers around the world. What other nation planned during the second year of its existence for the publication of a comprehensive history of philosophy? The book itself speaks for the high principles of this young nation, and the motivation for publication as stated by the editors is superb: "It may perhaps lead to a better understanding, and demonstrate the unity of human aspirations which transcend geographical and national limitations."⁵ It is on this note that I now wish to turn our considerations.

The differences of East and West are only cultural. Beneath the differences is a "unity of human aspirations." The desire for health, knowledge, peace, and love are the desires of all men regardless of colour, creed, and nationality. Such aspirations are what make us human. Integral to these aspirations are the literature and art by which we give form to our humanity. The generic name for these contributors of form is culture. And it is culture which can divide us. The foreigner's speech is barbaric, his manners atrocious, his art strange, his music weird, and his literature unprofitable! But we for some time have been moving into a happier period. We have learned how rich and profound is the other's culture, and how much our own life is enlarged by acquaintance with other cultures. Many now say with Gandhiji, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides any my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be

blown about my house as freely as possible, but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any." There was a time not many years ago when we were discussing the creation of a world philosophy. Immediately following world war II some people were hoping for "one world," one in language, government, and ideology. This was a chimera. Now we are striving more realistically for the condition in which we appreciate the many variations on the human theme. We are discovering wherein we can and should be the same and wherein we can and should be different. Specifically, we live in a world of common sciences and of unique arts. There is no such thing as American chemistry or Indian physics. The sciences seek to understand the nature of things from a basis which is not national or international, but rational. Zinc and hydrochloric acid react the same in the laboratories of Bombay, Berlin, Boston, and Bali. But this is not the case in the arts. It makes perfectly good sense to distinguish Western and Indian poetry, music, and dance. They are elements of culture, that is, the forms by which we express our human aspirations.

Philosophy is an activity which sometimes attempts to arrive at conclusions which any rational being would be forced to accept as true by reason of the principle of rationality, and which sometimes functions within an identifiable group of people as part of the means by which this group expresses its deepest longings, its peculiar attitudes, and its unique history. The first activity I shall hereafter call "being philosophical as science." It is a quest of man the rational animal working within the limits of rationality. Philosophers like Kant, Descartes, and Gotama (the founder of Nyāya logic) appeal not to Germans, nor Frenchmen, nor Indians but to rational minds. Being philosophical as science means to attempt to step outside one's own culture in order to appeal solely to minds. Descartes stated this excellently in his *Discourse on Method*, Part II: "...as for the opinions which up to that time I had embraced, I thought that I could not do better than resolve at once to sweep them wholly away, that I might afterwards be in a position to admit either others more correct, or even perhaps the same when they had undergone the scrutiny of reason." When philosophers are being philosophical as science they arrive at remarkably similar conclusions: examples would be Gotama's and Aristotle's analyses of the syllogism and Nāgārjuna's and Kant's meta-philosophizing. The second activity I shall hereafter call "being philosophical as art." Here the appeal is to the man within his culture. The philosopher functioning in this manner does not seek to sweep wholly away the opinions which he has embraced up to this time, rather he seeks to clarify, enhance, and extend his cultural heritage. The activity of being philosophical as art is culture. In India the six systems of classical Indian philosophy were critical reflections upon the speculations recorded in the Vedic literature, and these reflections

have themselves become part of the cultural tradition. In the West philosophy is more than "footnotes to Plato," but much of it is an extension of the methods and problems raised by the Greeks, and the sophomores (wise fools) among Western philosophers are those who have attempted to philosophize without having read Plato and Aristotle. The goal of being philosophical as science is to assist in the attainment of true knowledge about reality; the goal of being philosophical as art is to assist in the discovery and/or creation of moral and artistic values.

I propose now to reconsider the admonition "Be philosophical." But this time we are to think of it as being said seriously by a philosopher to a philosopher. Possibly we have been paying too much attention lately in philosophical circles to so-called "ordinary language." Philosophers talk philosophical language as well as ordinary language. What would a philosopher be recommending to another philosopher when he suggests that they *be* philosophical? I believe that it would depend upon whether we are thinking of being philosophical *as science* or of being philosophical *as art*, that is, upon whether it is the philosophizing of man as rational animal or the philosophizing of man as cultural animal. We shall therefore examine the implications of being philosophical in each of these two contexts. We must remember that we are considering what it is to *be* philosophical, not what it is to think philosophically. Being philosophical as science will be examined as an act having four component parts: to think, to express, to infer, and to apply.

An American publishing house a few years ago put on the cover of a brochure of philosophical textbooks a picture of Rodin's sculpture "The Thinker". The company obviously thought that an image of a man sitting with head bent forward, brow furrowed, eyes partially closed, and chin resting on hand was a fitting symbol of the philosopher. Philosophers do not object to being considered as thinkers, but they ought to object to being considered as *only* thinkers. Being philosophical as science begins when an occasion arises which creates puzzlement. As John Dewey has said, "Men do not, in their natural estate, think when they have no troubles to cope with, no difficulties to overcome."⁶ Presumably, if man had no problems, philosophy would not have developed, that is, philosophy in the sense in which we are now considering it. Philosophy as problem-solving has two parts: one can be called critical thinking, the other creative thinking, or perhaps a better terminology is to call one the structured sort of thinking, and the other the non-structured. The former has been carefully examined both in India and in the West; the latter remains mysterious. We do not know how to create the situations, which might produce creative ideas.

The second step in being philosophical as science is to express.

A philosopher is a talker. To philosophize is to speak and to write. Wittgenstein's advice to be silent on that whereof one cannot speak has been used to support a variety of philosophical absurdities. Silence is not a sign of profundity. More often than not it is an indication of lack of verbal skills, or of befuddled thinking. Clear thinking can be expressed in clear words. The so-called silent philosopher is no philosopher at all. Words are the tools of the philosopher, and the philosopher who uses them badly is a bad philosopher. Part of the reason for the high reputation Bertrand Russell has as a philosopher stems from the fact that he writes with clarity, wit, and incisiveness. He is one of the few philosophers who has won a Nobel prize for literature. There ought to be more. For cumbersome and prolix speech and writing few have surpassed Herbert Spencer. On one occasion after addressing a group of convalescent inmates in a mental hospital, Spencer noted that one of the men in the audience was distraught with manic laughter. Upon being persuaded to reveal the cause of his laughter, the man remarked, "To think of me in and you out!"⁷ If one can't express his thoughts well, one is not being philosophical as science.

Inference is the third step in being philosophical as science. Inferring, like thinking and expressing is a psychological process known as philosophizing. Inference must be carefully distinguished from implication. Implication is the logical relationship which connects validly related propositions; inference is the process of the living mind which asserts the relationship and draws the conclusion. Inference is the necessary psychological activity which links the implicative propositions and the conclusion. In the absence of inference, implications may be heaped upon implications but nothing can be concluded. This is the moral of Lewis Carroll's delightful story "What the Tortoise said to Achilles." In brief his argument is that if the major and the minor propositions of a syllogism are true, then the conclusion follows—unless, that is, the proposition "If the major and the minor propositions are true, then the conclusion follows" is itself treated as a third proposition! How often philosophers act like a foolish housewife who computes the calories of food but does not give food to her children! The analysis of ideas without consideration of what ideas denote is a carrousel of movement which goes nowhere and accomplishes nothing. Inference is the process by which one moves from logicity to reality.

But thinking, expressing, and inferring is not the whole of being philosophical as science. There must also be application. It was this aspect of being philosophical which Charles Sanders Peirce and William James stressed. I do not believe that any system of philosophy has triggered more unfavourable criticism than has pragmatism. European and Asian critics have attempted to write it off as a self-defence of American activists. The critics of pragmatism might

ponder over the sub-title James gave to his lectures, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. Possibly James' greatest error was in trying to present pragmatism as a full philosophy rather than as the application step in the philosophical enterprise. It was his way of saying that ideas do have consequences when they are applied to realities, also that non-application is unphilosophical. Being philosophical is being philosophical all the way. I can find no evidence that Plato felt he was betraying philosophy in attempting to train Dionysius for the role of philosopher-king. On the contrary, the charm and significance of his *Seventh Epistle* is the delicacy of his defence of high expectations and miserable failure in Sicily. If Plato had refused to attempt to apply the principles delineated in *The Republic* when the opportunity came to him, he could rightly be written off as one who refused to be philosophical at the crucial point. The philosopher who cannot actualize the cash value of his ideas may be *thinking* philosophically but he is not *acting* philosophically. As Jaspers has said, "The philosopher is expected to live according to his doctrine the philosopher has no doctrine if by doctrine is meant a set of rules under which the particular cases of empirical existence might be subsumed, as things are subsumed under empirical species or men's acts under judicial norms ... the philosopher and the man are inseparable."⁸ Thought without action is useless; action without thought is dangerous.

Being philosophical as science means to think, to express, to infer, and to apply. Being philosophical in these senses is the same in India and the West for it is the philosophizing of the rational man. And who is the rational man? He is the man who would communicate with other men. As Aristotle says, the way to demonstrate negatively the truth of the principle of rationality (for Aristotle it is the truth of the law of non-contradiction) is to ask the one who denies the principle to say something, for in saying anything he assumes that the contradictory of what he says is false.⁹ Aristotle adds that if he says nothing, he is "no better than a vegetable." Perhaps we do not need to go to that extreme; at least we can say he is not a philosopher.

Being philosophical as art differs from being philosophical as science in that it appeals to fundamental metaphysical and axiological assumptions of a people as well as to rational principles. Communication here depends upon understanding, if not accepting, these beliefs which ordinarily are not questioned by a particular group of people. T.R.V. Murti gives an excellent description of what we are here calling being philosophical as art: "Systems of philosophy are the elaboration, through concepts and symbols, of certain original intuitions. If all of us had those basic intuitions, systems should be superfluous..... It happens that the great mass of mankind can but be followers and are not leaders in thought. Systems of thought are intended to lead them to the highest experience through symbols and

concepts."¹⁰ I prefer to extend Murti's description a bit by pointing out that systems of philosophy in addition to propagating the original intuitions may also be instruments of clarification, systematization, rationalization, integration, and criticism. In India the six *āstika* systems present argument for the Upaniṣadic intuitions. The best examples from the West are the scholastic philosophical systems in their relation to the biblical intuitions. If the telos of being philosophical as science is discovering and/or creating true knowledge about reality, the telos of being philosophical as art is celebrating the ideals of the good and the beautiful which the group has made its own, tracing out the implications of these ideals, and applying these ideals as criteria for judgment of present reality and as programme for future attainments. Being philosophical as science, we have said, is the same for all rational animals; but being philosophical as art differs with each human culture. I want to mention four differences in basic assumptions of Indians and Westerners.

The first has to do with attitude towards tradition. India, it seems to me, is a place where people do as they do because that is the way it ought to be done. For example, a philosopher friend of mine consulted an astrologer before his daughter's wedding, offering me the tongue-in-cheek explanation, "Her grandmother wanted it." Again a post-graduate student replied when I attempted to argue for the values of bachelorhood for a scholar, "But marriage is a part of life. You can't escape it." "Such uncriticalness toward traditional modes of behaviour makes for stability to be sure, but the Westerner feels that it underrates the worth of change. Western Indologists differ widely in personal reactions to this aspect of Indian culture. René Guénon praises India for traditional-mindedness and condemns the West where "a philosopher's renown is raised more by inventing a new error than by repeating a truth which has already been expressed by others."¹¹ P. Thomas condemns this feature of Indian culture saying that "the best modern philosophers among the Hindus can do no better than interpret the teachings of their ancestors."¹² The West ceased to be traditional in the fourteenth century. Since that century progress in the West has been measured by change. Cities, states, schools, and industries in America customarily observe their centennials with celebrations often labelled "100 Years of Progress". These celebrations consist of tracing the changes that have taken place accompanied by gentle laughter about out-moded customs and manners. Rejection of the old, the past, and the traditional has perhaps reached its culmination in the turned-on generation of American youth, one of whose clichés is "You can't trust anyone over 30." Perhaps the difference between America and India at this point might be clarified by reminding us that whereas William James wrote "The Will to Believe" as a defence of "The lawfulness of

voluntarily adopted faith," had he been an Indian his essay would have been a defence of the elimination of the notion of voluntary adoption with respect to traditional faith. A word of caution is needed before leaving the subject of tradition: the hand of tradition is firm in all cultures. India is a land of ancient traditions; the United States of America is a land of young traditions. In India a traditional way of acting is followed not because it is advertised as traditional, but because it is just the way to act. In America sometimes a smoke-screen of words about voluntary choice is created before doing the traditional act, and sometimes Americans reveal curious naïvete about traditions in assuming that one can originate traditions at will. I recall an announcement in a student newspaper that the following week would be held the "first annual" winter frolics!

A second difference in basic assumptions has to do with the sense of reality. By and large the West is naturalistic. At no point is the West more Greek than here, and Epicurus may be regarded as the one who best expressed the West when he said that the gods exist but they are not what we commonly think they are; they can't touch us, and we can't influence them, so let's get about our proper business.¹³ The assumption of Western action is that the sensed world is reality. In India there is a long and persistent tradition of the unreality and deceptiveness of the world of sensed appearances. To compare a naturalistic tradition of India with the naturalistic tradition in the West would demand that we conceive of a Western tradition in which the last naturalist was Epicurus. A West without Lucretius, Haeckel, Huxley, Hobbes, Comte, Hume, Darwin, Spencer, Mill, Dewey, Sellars, Russell, etc., would indeed be a strange West.

A third basic assumption which divides India and the West has to do with the roles of unity and plurality. "The key to the understanding of Indian religion and art is to be found in her long search for the One behind and in the many," writes Kenneth Saunders.¹⁴ Whereas the West has stressed the one as the individual unit, which when related to other individuals forms a community, India has stressed the One as the matrix from which individuals have emerged and to which in time they return. The oft-repeated observation that Indian philosophy is Platonic and Western Philosophy is Aristotelian has enough truth in it to be a suggestive starting-point and enough error to be extremely dangerous.

The last basic assumption of Western and Indian Philosophy is the quantity-quality syndrome. Which has prior value: "How many?" or "What kind?" Indians who criticize the West for its materialism may not be talking about materialism but about the Western preoccupation with numbers. There is an interesting notion in the West that if one is good, two is better, and the largest possible number of the commodity is the best. In the last few years several

models of cars have been recalled by American manufacturers when it was found that certain parts were defective. Reading between the lines of the statements of manufacturers to owners of the models, I detected little evidence of humility on the part of the auto companies for putting inferior products on the market and some pride for the large number that had to be recalled. In other words, they had outsold their competitors! In India there is an emphasis on quality, perhaps best seen in the much misunderstood *varṇa* system. In spite of all that has been said about the equality of vocations and the dignity of individuals, the fact remains that the twice-born usually exemplify human possibilities much more than do the Harijans. Qualitative distinctions transcend quantitative distinctions in fundamental Indian evaluations.

Being philosophical as art differs in India and in the West because philosophy in this sense is part of culture, part of the way by which we give form to our humanity. The perfecting of our possibilities, as Hinduism has so correctly pointed out, is through several means or ways (*mārgas*): the way of action (*karma mārga*), the way of thought (*jñāna mārga*), the way of devotion (*bhakti mārga*), and the way of psycho-physical discipline (*yoga mārga*). But any way will suffice, since if it is pursued steadfastly, it will encompass the values inherent in the other ways. This is the integral *mārga* adumbrated in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. As for the integration of being philosophical as science and being philosophical as art, our best clues can be taken from Aristotle, who argues at the opening of the *Metaphysics* that understanding (*epistēmē*) and skill (*technē*) are the products of the experience of things (*empeiria*) which is unique to man. From these products of human experience come the final products: theoretical truth, practical action, and beautiful and useful objects. Again, to stay within Aristotelian concepts, we may say that being philosophical as science provides the matter, being philosophical as art provides the form, and that the informed matter is the whole man as philosopher motivated by and towards the Good. In India man is celebrated as the being through whom the Good is revealed and realized. Indian Philosophy has been described as "a running commentary on the text, 'Thanks that I am a man.'"¹⁵

1. *Mahābhārata* 12. 300.
2. *Dohāvalī* 3.
3. *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951, pp.26-27. Giuseppe Tucci writes that India is "a country where religion and philosophy were blended together in the unity of a vision (*darśana*) that helps an experience (*sādhana*). In India the intellect has never prevailed to the extent of obtaining mastery over the faculties of the soul, of separating itself therefrom and thus of provoking that dangerous scission between the intellect

and the psyche which is the cause of distress from which the Western world suffers." *The Theory and Practice of the Maṇḍala*, translated from the Italian by Alan Houghton Brodrick, London: Rider and Company, 1961, p. 1.

4. ii, 57.
5. *History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western*, Vol. I, edited by S. Radhakrishnan and others, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1952, p.6.
6. *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920, p.120.
7. M. J. Adler, *Dialectic*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1927, p.112.
8. Karl Jaspers, *Way to Wisdom, An Introduction to Philosophy*, translated by Ralph Manheim, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951, pp. 127, 128.
9. *Metaphysics*, 1006 a 13.
10. *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Second Edition, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960, p.55.
11. *The Crisis of the Modern World*, translated by Arthur Osborne, London: Luzac and Co., 1942, p. 82.
12. *Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners*, Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala and Sons, 1948, p. 150.
13. See his letter to Menoceus.
14. *Buddhism*, London: Benn's Sixpenny Library, 1929, p. 66.
15. A. Chakravarti, "Humanism and Indian Thought", Miller Lectures, University of Madras, n. d., p. 27.

Herbert Herring

In his paper Dr. Organ endeavours to grasp at the proper meaning of "being philosophical". The discussion of some meanings of "being philosophical" in the lay sense leads him to the conclusion that "being philosophical" in that sense is not at all "being philosophical". I quite agree, but I have my doubts as to whether his premises, i.e. the distinction he draws between feeling philosophically, thinking philosophically and being philosophical, are all that clear as they seem to be at first sight.

As to the first, *feeling philosophically*, I rather think that this does not mean anything. Feeling like a mother, a father, a lover, a friend, an enemy, etc. certainly makes sense; for, what is meant by the term "feeling" is some particular emotion located somewhere within the human being—but surely not in the brain. This feeling, of course, might be directed or regulated by reflection, but it is not necessarily connected with the understanding or even dependent on it. Thus it makes no sense, not even a lay sense, to speak of somebody feeling philosophically unless one wants to state that this somebody and his attitude towards other beings is being determined by uncontrolled, unreflected emotions—, and this is undoubtedly no philosophical performance whatsoever, since philosophy, at least as it has always been understood in the West, is an activity of the mind carried out by means of rational thinking: and it is rational thinking that is necessarily involved when saying that someone is *thinking philosophically*.

Now, what does "being philosophical" mean, first in the lay sense? "Being philosophical", of course, does not mean to behave like a Stoic, and I think that only very few people in the West would subscribe to this labelling of the philosopher. On the contrary, from what I have experienced myself since living in India, I get the impression that this is much more the way philosophers are expected to behave by laymen in the East where the distinction between Myth and Logos has never been drawn—a distinction which, at least since Aristotle, lies at the bottom of the Westerner's understanding of philosophy. (Whether this distinction is right or wrong, useful or useless, is—for our purposes—a question of minor importance.)

As to Stoicism as such, I cannot see upon which evidence Dr. Organ bases his statement that Stoicism was "the last philosophical system which was a complete philosophy which includes a logic, a methodology, a metaphysics, an ethic and a soteriology." Where is,

for instance, a systematic logic or a metaphysics in Stoicism? I can hardly find one, neither in Zenon, Chrysipp, Poseidonios nor in the younger Stoics like Seneca, Epiktet or Marcus Aurelius. On the contrary, Stoicism, first and foremost, was mainly an ethic, a guide to morality, and therefore—as was believed by the Stoics and their followers—a guide to eternal happiness. The great philosophical systems as characterized by Dr. Organ, the systems of Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Schelling or, in our century, of N. Hartmann, are much later than Stoicism, with, of course, the one and only exception of Aristotle's system.

Then Dr. Organ mentions eight different acts which, according to classical Indian philosophy, one has to perform in order to be philosophical; but these acts mean nothing new to somebody who has a sufficient knowledge of the thoughts of the Pre-Socratics, of Plato's "Dialogues" or Aristotle's "Metaphysics". The close and intimate connection between theory and practice which Dr. Organ mentions as one of the strongest elements in Indian thought has always been a strong element in Western thought too,—from the times of Socrates, saying that virtue is an activity of the soul based upon reason, upto the existentialists of our days with their decisive demand for action in order to be a being which is not just there, which is not just the case, but a being which exists, a being in full awareness of its capacity and thus, its limitations.

Theoretically, for methodological or hermeneutic reasons, it is true, that thinking and acting are distinguished from one another; but I can hardly see how one could deny that moral behaviour should rest upon some certain knowledge of the Good, no matter how this Good is being defined: as something general and transcendent; something immanent in the human soul; something dependent on a given religious or cultural background or environment; something acknowledged for pragmatical reasons by a particular group of people; or something just valid for a single person.

Socrates, St. Augustine, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and many others have proved that they were not at all living in an ivory tower and that they really did not have the slightest idea of being locked up in such a precious and useless piece of mental architecture: they were constantly demanding that man's action should conform to his awareness of his duty towards mankind and the world-order.

The difference between Western and Eastern thought is not, unless I am completely mistaken, that the one is located in the ivory tower and the other in the market-place, but that the one is based upon the realm of things in space and time—ontologically speaking—or—logically speaking—upon what can be experienced by our senses, what can be known by means of sense-experience and rational

cool." One of my students replied to my question, "When one is asked to be philosophical, all that is meant is that one be Stoical." Of course the student was right. The other replies were but variations on Stoicism. What a strange fact about philosophy in the West. Being philosophical does not mean being Wittgensteinian, Whiteheadian, Kantian, Cartesian, or Augustinian; it does not mean to be existential or language analytical, idealistic or materialistic, rationalistic or empiricistic. It means to be stoical. This points up an interesting fact about philosophy in the West: that the last philosophical system which was a complete philosophy, that is, a philosophy which includes a logic, a methodology, a metaphysics, an ethic, and a soteriology, was Stoicism. Stoicism as we all know was not equally advanced in each of these areas of philosophy, but obviously it has been so well received that few, if any, in the West would think they were being asked to be Epicurean, or Aristotelian, or Platonic when they were advised to be philosophical.

In classical India if someone were told to be philosophical, he would have to take note of the word that was being used. Sanskrit is bountifully supplied with words somewhat like the Greek term *philosophia*. Since philosophy is best understood as an activity both in the East and in the West, I shall treat them all in participial form. There is *dr̥ṣṭi*, seeing, regarding, or opining. Then there is *darśana*, coming from the same root *dr̥ś*, "to see," and meaning either the having of a point of view or the point of view itself. It probably comes close to what the Westerner means by a doctrine or a philosophical system. The Sanskrit equivalent for the Greek *sophia* is *jñāna*, but more explicitly there is *tattva-jñāna* and *viveka-jñāna*. *Tattva* is from *tat* (that), and is used in Sāṃkhya for the generic name of the twenty-five categories, whereas in Vedānta it is the *tat tvam in tat tvam asi* (That art thou). So *tattva-jñāna* means superior knowing about the reality or thatness of things. *Viveka* means discrimination or judgment; hence *viveka-jñāna* is discriminative knowing. *Āvīkṣikī* may be used also for philosophizing. It means the thinking about thought, metaphilosophizing, perhaps we should call it, or may be it is epistemologizing. Then there is *adhyātma-vidyā*. *Vidyā* is a rather unexciting term for learning; but *adhyātma* means the inside of things. So *adhyātma-vidyā* means learning about the inner nature of things rather than merely looking at the externalities. *Prajñā* is another Sanskrit term for knowing, but in this case it is a knowing without distortion, a direct form of knowing, perhaps an intuiting. And there is *bodhā*, a term which means the blooming of flowers, but it also can be used to stand for the self-awakening experience, the "ah-ha experience," the illuminating understanding that may come after long meditation. So in classical India if one were asked to be philosophical, he would be asked to do any one of eight different acts (Here I shift to the infinitive):

1. To select an opinion.
2. To take a general point of view.
3. To attain knowledge of the nature of things.
4. To seek discriminative knowledge.
5. To think about thinking.
6. To look on the inner nature of things.
7. To know in a direct fashion.
8. To engage in meditation until experiencing illumination.

But, as a matter of fact, I doubt that anyone was asked in classical India to *be* philosophical. The reason for this is that philosophy was not regarded as an activity to be engaged in at will, nor was it a role one could play and then stop playing. The eight terms which were similar to *philosophia* are in fact eight terms for various aspects of a total process or activity which is much wider than the connotation of the word philosophy as that word is now used in the West. This "total process or activity" is *sādhana*, and we have no word in English which does justice to the meaning of this word. *Sādhana* stands for a comprehensive discipline designed to accomplish the full development of man. A human life may be said to be a *sādhana* when a person consciously directs his attention to the understanding and development of himself in all dimensions: physical, social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. It is man's *sādhana* possibilities which prompted Bhīṣma to offer to Yudhisthira the truth transcending all other truths: "There is nothing in the universe higher than man."¹ And *Tulsidāsa* says, "Know the devotee of Rāma to be greater than Rāma."² The Life Divine, argues Aurobindo, is the life truly human. One could not be asked to engage in *sādhana* except in the way in which we in the West might say to a man, "You ought to *live*!" This admonition, of course, does not mean that he ought to breathe, to eat, to sense, to think, to have sex relations, etc. What we would mean is that he ought to become more aware of the meaning of life processes, he ought to enter more fully into them. So a man might be reminded by his spiritual counsellor to pay more attention to the significance of all the things he does as son, brother, husband, father, vocationalist, citizen, and human being. Only in that sense could a man be asked to engage in *sādhana*.

Indian philosophy is much more than a counterpart of Western philosophy which happened to originate and flourish in the subcontinent of Asia. Indeed to try to fit Indian philosophy into the moulds appropriate for Western philosophy is to misunderstand it. Such an effort reduces *sādhana* to only an intellectual quest. And to attempt to find Western counterparts — a practice unfortunately still engaged in by many students of Indian thought both native and Western — creates

discourse; whereas the other's knowledge is primarily based upon religious principles and sometimes an irrational or even mystic awareness of the infinite in its indefinability. While Western thought rests upon the ontological distinction between Myth and Logos, Eastern thought is based upon the ontical unity of Myth and Logos, upon the Myth of the Logos and the Logos of the Myth.

But then, coming to his very point, the meaning of "being philosophical" in the philosopher's sense, Dr. Organ draws a distinction which I am very much in favour of and which could serve to clarify the difference between Western and Eastern thought in the sense mentioned above: the distinction between "being philosophical as science" and "being philosophical as art". The first description would mark the position and the interpretation of philosophy in the West, appealing to man as man, in his capacity as a rational being or — in its practical outcome — in his capacity of being rational. The second description would mark the age-old interpretation of philosophy in the East, appealing to man as belonging to a certain culture, for instance Indian culture or Hinduism. Thus one could call a Saint or a wise man a philosopher in the Indian sense of the word whereas Westerners would have some doubts in calling a man a philosopher whose statements were incompatible with some kind of logic and its basic principles. And it is for this reason that people in the West would never think of calling Buddha or Jesus Christ or the numerous Saints of Christianity philosophers, since philosophers in the West are considered first of all as reasonable people and not as wise or holy men. For everybody knows that a reasonable man need not be a wise man, let alone a holy man, whereas wise or holy men lack or neglect very often reason and rational discourse.

Let us now turn to that passage in Dr. Organ's paper where he says that "being philosophical as science is to express", that "the philosopher is a talker, that to philosophize is to speak and to write." I would agree that silence is not a sign of profundity, and I would also agree that clear thinking can be expressed in clear words, — although I would prefer to substitute the expression "words" by the expression "terms" or "symbols" in order to avoid the wrong impression that thoughts must always and necessarily be expressed by means of verbal language. Clear thinking can be expressed in clear words, terms, symbols — so far, so good. But clear thinking is not identical with thinking as such. Many problems bothering philosophers from ancient times, to be exact, those problems of traditional metaphysics which constitute what we call in the West the *philosophia perennis*, cannot be solved by means of clear thinking and thus cannot be expressed clearly. Does that, then, mean that they are not genuine problems, that they are "pseudo-problems" as logical positivists and analysts would call them, or can it mean that they are transcending

the boundaries of rational thinking and therefore transcending the realm of rational expression? Surely, words are the tools of a philosopher, but words are also the tools of a priest, a poet, a politician, a merchant, words are the tools of a variety of interhuman communications. But the tools of the philosopher are not merely words, and I would very much hesitate to make the winning of a Nobel - Prize for Literature a criterion for philosophical subtlety, apart from the fact that this prize has very often been given for political reasons rather than for literary ones.

"Thinking, expressing, and inferring is not the whole of being philosophical as science", Dr. Organ continues, "There must also be application." Thought without action, without any possible application, is certainly useless. This, however, need not indicate that the one who thinks and the one who acts, i.e. the one who applies certain ideas, must be one and the same person. Very often the man who thinks is not the man who takes action, and the one taking action is often — as history so tragically proves — not a thinker. It has to be questioned whether we can blame a thinker for his inability to act according to the principles and conclusions of his philosophy; for it is not too often that he is given the chance of making his ideas come true in social life. Plato's ideal demand for the philosopher-kings was surely a wonderful idea but has hardly had any bearing on reality.

Coming to the end, let me make one or two remarks with regard to the basic assumptions Dr. Organ mentions in order to mark the difference between Indians and Westerners: the attitude towards tradition; the sense of reality; unity and plurality; quantity and quality. As for the first two, I am — on the whole — of his opinion. As for the last two, I have some objections. I simply cannot see how the Westerner's thinking is occupied with concepts of quantity whereas the Indian is said to emphasize quality. This is surely not the case in so far as the manufacturing and selling of motorcars is concerned, to refer to Dr. Organ's own example. To show how the idea of quality is much more predominant in Western thought than that of quantity would mean another lecture. Since this cannot be done today, I must confine myself, with regard to this assumption, to a very rigorous "Veto".

Unity and Plurality: Has the West really "stressed the one as the individual Unit" and India "the One as the matrix from which individuals have emerged and to which in time they return"? The great thinkers of the West have always stressed the unity in plurality and the plurality in the unity, the plurality of all worldly beings having its ground in the foremost and uttermost, indivisible unity which is the Absolute, revealing itself in the variety of individual creatures. It is this that Leibniz means when he writes in a letter to his French colleague Arnauld (30-4-1698): "Ce qui n'est pas véritablement un être

n'est pas non plus véritablement un être" (That which is not really one being is not really a being). And the same idea is expressed in an earlier letter to Arnauld (end of 1671) wherein he writes: "Utique enim nos varietas delectat, sed reducta in unitatem" (Surely we enjoy the manifold of things but only when reduced to unity).

One could easily write the history of Western philosophy from the point of view of unity as well as from that of plurality; it only depends on whether one defines unity and plurality in terms of quantity or quality.

Finally I would say that it is not in India alone that man is celebrated as the being through whom the Good is revealed and realized. The realization of the Good has always been the final aim of the practical application of theoretical knowledge in Western philosophy. But what is the Good and what is the Truth we are to realize? The answers to these questions can really prove whether one is actually trying to be philosophical or just talking in philosophical terms.

Philosophy: Influence of Theory on Practice

Daya Krishna

Marx, in his well-known Theses on Ludwig Feuerbach, suggested that philosophers had tried to interpret the world while the task was to change it. An analogous dissatisfaction seems to pervade those steeped in what they have come to regard as the classical Indian tradition in philosophy. Only their complaint is not that philosophers are trying to interpret the world while the task was to change it. They would perhaps rephrase it by saying that philosophers were trying to interpret the world, while the task was to change their own selves or rather discover their own self — the Self with the capital S.

The dissatisfaction is not confined to Marx or his numerous followers, official and unofficial, or to Indians who have a certain idea about what classical tradition in Indian philosophy was. There are others who believe in engaged philosophy, besides the marxists. In fact, the young in the United States and W. Europe, specially those engaged in the protest movements, want their philosophers to change the world, though perhaps in a different way. Equally, the traditional philosophers in Japan feel the same way as most Indian philosophers do. Only, their idea of changing the self is influenced more by Zen Buddhism than by Advaita Vedānta of the Śaṅkarite variety. Radhakrishnan and K. C. Bhattacharyya in India and Nishida in Japan typify this difference.

In a sense, however, both the Marxian and the non-Marxian formulations seem out of step with the current practice of Philosophy. Philosophy today is no more an "interpretation" of the world. One even wonders if it ever was. The task of interpreting the world has been left to science, almost by definition. And in such a situation, the charge against philosophy that it is not doing what it ought to do becomes even more insistent. The feeling that modern philosophy is concerned with trivialities is fairly wide-spread and philosophers themselves have proclaimed its irrelevance to all knowledge and practice.

But, what exactly is the complaint about? What is the heart of the dissatisfaction that so many seem to feel? It is difficult to pin it down or articulate it with precision. Perhaps, it is like a general ache which is difficult to locate or articulate and the doctor is merely told that something is wrong somewhere and that perhaps is what the patient exactly feels. Still, there is a problem and that is why those who complain or feel dissatisfied, don't do otherwise. Who stops one from philosophising the way one likes, at least if one happens

to live in a democratic country as most of us do? Or, if one happens to be not a producer but a consumer of philosophical products, one may read whatever one likes. After all, the pursuit of wisdom or moksha or self-realization or the Absolute or for that matter, of Revolution or Anarchy or reform in social, political and institutional spheres is open to everyone who wants to pursue them. What exactly is the difficulty then? Or, to vary the metaphor, where exactly the shoe pinches?

Perhaps, the pinch lies in the feeling that that which one considers most worthwhile in life or feeling or thought has not the sanction of the most respectable thought of this century. The prestigious international centres of philosophical activity and the journals in which current contemporary discussion is carried on encourage and sanctify a style of writing and thought which is bent on squeezing out from life all meaning whatsoever. This may seem an exaggeration; perhaps, it is. After all, are there not centres of phenomenological and existential thought and others which talk of a philosophy of dialogue, with some whisper of I and Thou? Who can deny the profundity of a Marcel or the comprehension of a Whitehead? But, do not they belong to the philosophical margins of the contemporary world? And as for the counter-centres, do not they lie mainly in Europe, where languages other than English dominate the scene? In the Anglo-Saxon world, their influence and prestige is only marginal and such is also bound to be the case in those countries whose intellectual life is more or less an appendage to that of the Anglo-Saxon world. English is the medium of intellectual life in these countries and the prestigious centres which dominate the philosophical world in those countries naturally dominate in these also. The difference in this respect between the intellectual life in those countries which were British colonies in the recent past and those which were under French or Spanish domination, is extremely instructive and interesting. The former is dominated, even now, by the modes of thought dominant in the United Kingdom or the U.S.A., while the latter are governed by what is happening in France or Mexico or some countries of Latin America.

The differences perhaps derive from the language with which one happens to be familiar and, at a deeper level still, by that in which one happens to express or articulate oneself. The latter point is brought home if one compares the philosophical scene in, say, a country like Japan where most philosophers write in Japanese and India where almost everyone writes in English. The former has already a sort of distinctive philosophical tradition where thought has a continuity, building from one thinker to another. Deriving from Nishida, Tanabe and Watsuji, a native stream of philosophising has emerged in Japan for which these provide the context of both critical and creative

thought in philosophy. One finds an attempt to extend and apply the thought of these thinkers to new domains and interpret them in a novel manner. Even a philosophy of mathematics deriving its inspiration from the general thought of Nishida has been sought to be developed by such a thinker as Nagai Hiroshi. Against this, it would be difficult to apprehend a distinctive trend in India where the philosophic tradition is more than two thousand years old. The context of philosophical thinking in Modern India is provided for not so much by other thinkers in India, but by the thinkers in the West, mostly those from the English-speaking or rather the English-writing world. The reason for this seems mostly to lie in the fact that there is hardly any philosopher in India who does not know English or write in it. And if there be any who does not know English or does not write in it, he is just not considered modern.¹

The dissatisfaction with philosophy, then, as it is practised in the prestigious centres of the Anglo-American world is fairly widespread. But is the dissatisfaction confined to philosophy alone? Does not one hear the same complaint about modern Art? And this time, the boundaries are not confined to the world of England and America alone. Rather, they encompass the whole western world, its centre lying in western Europe and recently in America also. Further, it will be difficult to draw the same distinction between the creators of art in the western countries on the one hand and those elsewhere, on the other. The art-galleries in Tokyo or New Delhi seem no different from the ones that one visits, say, in Paris or London or New York. The average visitor to these galleries is as baffled and bewildered as the average reader of philosophical articles in the *Mind* or *The Philosophical Review* or *Analysis* or any other such journal. But, at least, most artists seem satisfied with what is being created or produced, a situation that does not seem to obtain with respect to those who philosophise in countries outside the major centres of Anglo-American philosophising.

Perhaps, the tension between the commitment to values which may best be described as 'moral' and the others pursued and sought to be realised in, say, art or philosophy is too fundamental to be bridged or solved in any satisfactory manner. The great and unresolved debate around the social function and responsibility of arts since the movement of art for art's sake took form under the direct or indirect inspiration of Baudelaire, is a standing evidence for this. The debate, however, is not confined to the arts only. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it erupted in the heart of the natural sciences themselves. In the social sciences, the problems of the privacy and autonomy of the individual have raised serious question whether all sorts of investigations concerning human phenomena are desirable or even permissible. Shils' well-known article entitled *Social Inquiry and the Autonomy of the Individual* is only one example of this widespread concern.

The claims of morality, then, seem to prescribe limits to the unrestricted autonomy of the pursuit of art and science as much as to that of philosophy in recent times. At least, it has seemed most convenient usually to raise objections in the name of some real or presumed violation of moral claims, or even because of alleged indifference to them. However, if a distinction be allowed between claims of utility and claims of morality, then the former have as much been the ground of perennial objection to the autonomous pursuit of any realm as the latter. This, it should be remembered, applies as much to the realm of the spirit as to any other realm, a fact generally ignored in the usual Indian critique of contemporary philosophy, specially as practiced in the positivistically inclined antimetaphysical schools of western philosophy today. The conflict between the spiritual and the moral should not be unknown to Indians, specially when the primacy of the spiritual over the moral has so often been argued and upheld in Indian thought. Equally, a critique of the autonomous pursuit of spiritual values both from the viewpoint of moral values on the one hand and of practical utility on the other, should be fairly well known to Indians and foreigners alike as it has been the focal point of comment and debate around the Hindu system of values during the whole of this century and even earlier.

The critique of the impulse to absolute autonomy in all realms is derived either from the perspective of life as it is lived at ordinary or deeper levels or from the perspective of the interpersonal life of man at social, political and even affective levels. The ultra abstract, ratiocinative, argumentative character of philosophy has always aroused suspicion amongst those who value the achievement of a deepened state of inner awareness or of the improvement of the socio-political situation of man. The men of God in India never appreciated the subtleties of Navya-Nyāya logic. Nor, for that matter, did the great debate between the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist philosophers about the reality of Universals, Substance and Causality find much favour with the spiritual seekers in either group. The feeling of unreality about the world of abstractions as compared with that which is apprehended by the senses or felt and experienced intensively by consciousness lies at the root of this critique and suspicion. In fact, the twin trends of positivism and existentialism in contemporary philosophy may be seen as extensive elaborations and rationalisations of these two types of feeling.

The moral critique, on the other hand, derives from something different. It is rooted, so to say, in the very business of living and our reflection on it. The business, at least on the human plane, is inalienably social and it is this awareness of dependence and counter-dependence with its claims and counter-claims along with the feeling that something can be done about it which leads one to judge everything

else in its terms. It is almost like the situation when one is ill and feels that everything is irrelevant which does not subserve the purposes of survival. Only, on the socio-political plane one is almost always ill and once this perspective becomes uppermost in one's mind, nothing else can count ever. The Christian Critique in the past and the Marxist critique in the present are good examples of this. Both can achieve the most sophisticated levels of abstraction, but they are *justified* only because they subserve the cause of social humanity. It may be noted in this regard that the critique from the moral perspective has generally been more predominant in the sociocentric thought-pattern of the West. The traditional Indian critique of philosophical abstraction on the other hand derives primarily from the perspective of spiritual realisation which is conceived in terms of an intensely felt state of consciousness rather than in terms of any theoretic awareness of abstract concepts. It has only been perhaps in the period starting from Ram Mohan Roy and Vivekananda that a critique from the moral perspective may be said to have emerged increasingly in India. Aurobindo, Gandhi, Tagore, Vinoba and Acharya Tulsi are diverse manifestations of this trend. However, this critique has primarily been turned more against the traditional type of spirituality than against the theoretic abstractions of philosophy itself.

The conflict between the claims of knowledge and action or of theory and practice has been perennial in the history of man. Knowledge has always been seen as instrumental by those who are dedicated to action for the achievement of some external state of affairs which they have regarded as desirable. Equally, on the other hand, action has been seen as instrumental to the achievement of knowledge or what may better be called 'illumination' or 'enlightenment,' that is, the achievement of a state of being in which truth and reality are felt and seen to coincide. In the Indian tradition, it is called *prajñā* or *bodhi*, a state distinguished from the so-called lower forms of knowledge which are primarily conceptual and instrumental in character. The perceptual form of knowledge, though not exactly conceptual in character, is still in most cases instrumental in nature. It is only in aesthetic apprehension that the instrumental character of perceptual objects is abolished and that is why such states are considered closest to the state described as the highest knowledge. In a sense, the positivistic analysis of all non-empirical concepts as having only an instrumental status in the discovery and organization of knowledge is, to some extent, similar to this. Only, it stops short of treating all knowledge of perceptual objects also as purely instrumental in character.

Action itself, though generally instrumental and purposive in character, need not always be so. In fact, there may be action just for the sake of action, as in ritual. Also, it may be for purposes other than those of knowledge, even where it is not concerned with the

achievement of an external state of affairs as is the case with most action. Action is many times undertaken for the achievement of a state of consciousness which is considered by the individual or society as one of the most significant things that can be or ought to be, achieved. In fact, cultures and individuals may be distinguished by the importance they give to this direction of action in their lives.

We have been identifying in our discussion up to now knowledge and action with theory and practice as given in the subject for discussion in this seminar. This is justified to a certain extent, but not completely so. All knowledge cannot be considered as theoretical in nature, unless we choose to regard perceptual knowledge not as knowledge at all. It may be contended that there is a theoretical element in all perceptual knowledge, but even if this were to be conceded it would only show that there is a theoretical element in all knowledge and not that it is identical with the whole of it. Also, many who conceive of knowledge in theoretical terms do so only when those terms can be significantly related partially or wholly, directly or indirectly, to that which is apprehended by the senses. There is also the type of knowledge which consists in the doing of a thing such as, say, singing or dancing or swimming. This, if admitted, destroys the distinction between knowledge and action on the one hand and the identity between theory and knowledge on the other.

The same is perhaps not the case with practice and action, though there are cases where we would hesitate to use the one even when we unhesitatingly use the other. We might, for example, hesitate to use a phrase like 'philosophical action' when something like 'philosophical practice' may be found in order. Perhaps, 'philosophical activity' might be equally acceptable. In any case, I do not want to go into questions of usage which, in my opinion, do not settle anything. At best, they alert one's mind to the noticing of a similarity or a difference which then always raises the question as to how it is to be evaluated. Still now that we have raised this question of philosophical practice we might discuss it a little more both in itself and in relation to what may be called philosophical theory.

Philosophical practice is wide and varied. It is what the philosophers do. But everything that the philosophers do is not philosophy and how, in any case, do we decide who is a philosopher and who is not? The puzzle is old and there is some element of arbitrariness in the decision one makes. Whatever criterion one adopts, there is bound to be some exclusion and some inclusion which would be regarded as unjust by someone or other. This all is well known. I only wish to draw attention to two aspects of the matter. One, that philosophical practice is not an action or activity in the usual sense of the term. There is no clear-cut, well-defined purpose or goal for which the activity is undertaken and there is, therefore, no criterion for

success or failure of the activity. On the other hand, it is no action for the sake of action, that is, ritual, either. Also, it is not pure creative activity like the one which is found in the arts. Second, that philosophical practice is what philosophical theory tries to articulate, though through this articulation it begins to influence philosophical practice itself. Thus, philosophy as practised does not remain unaffected by what philosophy is conceived to be even though, in the first instance, the conception itself is supposed to be the result of a reflection upon the way philosophy is actually practised and an articulation thereof. The "is" of philosophical practice turns into an "ought" for future philosophising when mediated by a reflective articulation concerning the practice itself.

The situation is akin to what happens in art when critical aesthetic theory reflecting upon actual works of art may sometimes determine for long periods the future of creativity in arts themselves. An analogous situation may also perhaps be held to obtain in science if Kuhn's analysis of the structure of scientific revolutions is to be believed. However, in both these cases the era of imitation is supposed to be broken by a new creation which violates the established paradigms, consecrated by the guardian pundits of the realm concerned. In a certain sense, the dialectic is inherent in the situation as the theoretic reflection on practice resulting in its articulation is bound to select certain features and accentuate them to the neglect of others. These will then become *the* features of the practice which the succeeding generations will try to follow and approximate till a new, bold and creative innovator will appear who will ignore the tradition and set up fresh paradigms of his own.

But if the reflective articulation of a 'practice' tends to turn the 'is' into an 'ought' and thus determine or influence the latter 'practice' then it becomes the duty of the person who articulates to spell this out as clearly as he can and bring it into the open. This he can do only if he is aware of the inevitable practical implications of what he is doing. However, if one were to be more interested in actualising the practical implications, then in certain situations one could choose to keep these out of sight in the background even if one were aware of them as the possible consequences of one's thought. This would be in the situation where the fact of bringing them out into the open may tend to make them ineffective. This may not be very honest on the part of the thinker concerned, but once one is interested in actualising any particular state of affairs, it is difficult to remain honest for long. Intellectual honesty, of course, demands that one be open and truthful to the extent that one can. But here, as elsewhere, the claims of pure and practical reason may, and in many cases actually do, conflict.

The practical consequences of theoretic formulations, however, are not confined to the so-called practice of the subject itself. It ranges

far and wide, spills over into other domains and, in the case of philosophy, affects the very core itself. The general influence of theory on practice is well known in domains where causal relationships obtain or are even supposed to obtain. But there is a wider and a deeper relationship where reflection is concerned with concepts which are most general and pervasive in character and where both 'theory' and 'practice' themselves become the subject of reflection. Philosophy is such a second or even third-level reflection and it is bound to have far-reaching, subtle and fundamental influence on practice both at the individual and the social level.

Philosophy does not bake bread as everyone knows. Nor was it ever meant to be that. Yet, philosophers have always felt it a limitation and others who are not philosophers have often urged it as a reproach. Theoreticians have always felt the fascination of influencing the practical world of the economist the lawyer and the politician where decisions are made. Philosophers being the theoreticians *par excellence* have felt this fascination the strongest. Plato epitomizes the fascination and the failure equally. In a sense, the theoreticians in specific domains have some satisfaction of affecting events through the application of their knowledge. But philosophers do not even know what kind of knowledge do they possess or seek. Their plight is therefore extreme and the remedies they adopt, desperate. The two poles of all desperation lie in suicide on the one hand and murder, on the other. Both are attempts to cut the gordian knot and may easily be found at all times, though the one may predominate over the other. The present, for example, is the age of suicide *par excellence* where philosophers vie with each other in showing the literal meaninglessness of all that they do.

The plight, of course, is misconceived and the remedies can only make the matters worse, specially when the diagnosis happens to be wrong. Philosophers do affect practice and this not merely in the practice of philosophy by other philosophers. The concepts they deal with are so pervasive and fundamental that they form the common background of all thought in any domain whatsoever. What they think, thus, affects the very way of conceiving, formulating and posing of questions and problems in every field of thought, though the practicing specialist is generally unconscious of the fact. There is, of course, timelag in the process. The shock of a great thinker takes centuries to be absorbed and the process of percolation and spread takes generations to become a part of the habits of thought of the intellectual elite. From age to age, country to country and subject to subject the structural pattern of conceptual ideation spreads and influences the specific formulations without their authors knowing the source that determines the shape of their thought.

Philosophers, thus, have a responsibility which is as deep as it is

wide. To think of oneself or one's pursuit as irresponsible is not to forego possible effectivity, but rather to promote and foster a general attitude of irresponsibility amongst others. This itself should permeate a philosopher's awareness and thus determine to some extent what he thinks. What philosophers do with the foundational concepts, the way they analyse them and their interrelationships, the mode of formulation and interpretation, the particular focussing on problems, paradoxes and puzzles, all have a subtle influence on the *way* that people think on specific matters. At the roots of diverse traditions in patterns of thinking which differentiate historical cultures and civilizations lie the differences in the style and pattern of philosophising which a great thinker or group of thinkers achieved in the very beginnings of that culture or civilization. Theirs is the stamp which a culture or civilization bears on its face. The artists too have a substantive hand in it, but ultimately they give only a visible shape to that which the philosophers have *suggested* through their conceptual formulations.

Beyond this function of creative conceptualisation and through that determining the very contours of thought, philosophers usually exercise another which is of almost equal importance. This is primarily critical in intent, but basically it consists in not being swayed by the fashions of the day. To be continuously vigilant in the realm of thought, to expose every loophole in the fashionable orthodoxies of the day, has always been the task of a philosopher which has generally earned him the dislike of his more orthodox contemporaries. His commitment being to thought itself, he can exercise this function more easily than others. The artist does it also to a great extent but as he has to create a work which has to have aesthetic beauty also, his criticism loses its edge and gets lost in a whole which has value of a different kind. Through the exercise of this critical function, philosophy influences practice in many domains by preventing thought from ossifying and keeping the options open. The influence, of course, takes time to be felt and grow effective. And that is perhaps the heart of the dissatisfaction of all those who complain about the ineffectivity of philosophy, about its abstractions and its historical absenteeism. The focus of attention generally remains on what happens in the immediate present. Yet, however natural it may be, it shuts off the awareness of that which is fundamental in the long run. And philosophy is just the awareness which tries to comprehend this and, by comprehending, shape it to the extent it is possible.

Comprehension, however, presupposes that there is something pre-existent which is to be understood or comprehended. It, thus, commits oneself to a metaphysics or ontology which gives primacy to the idea of Being. On the other hand, the idea of possible effectuation through a conceptualisation which is both creative and critical at the same time brings not 'Being' but that which 'ought-to be' into the centre of

thought. It, thus commits one to a thinking which gives primacy to the idea of value or the good which, in this context, mean the same thing. One is inevitably reminded of Plato whose highest Idea in the hierarchy of Ideas was the Idea of Good rather than the Idea of Being which it should have been on purely logical grounds if the concept of idea is to be understood on the pattern of the universal which it certainly is in large parts of his writings.

But basically what it signifies is a breakdown of the distinction between the 'is' and the 'ought' in the ultimate analysis and at the deepest level. It is not a derivation of the 'ought' from the 'is' on the basis of institutional facts which Searle tries to do. Rather, it derives from the fact that there are certain kinds of facts which happen to be such just because they happen to have been conceived in that way. In sociological thought it has generally been known as "the self-fulfilling prophecy," though few even amongst the sociologists seem to have understood its implications or come to terms with them. Philosophical thought, I submit, is concerned with facts of this type or, rather, it uncovers the fact that the very concept of 'fact' belongs to this type. Philosophers do not discover something pre-existent to their thought, though they often give the impression that this is what they do. Rather their thinking makes it come into being and this primarily through the shaping of those concepts and categories through which thought itself is constituted to a great extent. What is to count as 'fact' is ultimately a matter of conceptual decision and philosophy plays a substantial, if not decisive, part in the half-conscious making of such decisions on the part of cultures and civilizations.

Philosophers seem unaware of all this. Like the famous monkey-god, Hanuman, of Indian mythology they do not know their own power of effectuating things. Even the two most outstanding philosophers of contemporary India, K. C. Bhattacharyya and his son Kalidas Bhattacharyya, whose thought shows occasional glimpses of this truth fail to realise its central character for philosophical awareness. There has been much attempt on the part of philosophers for achieving a self-awareness of what they are doing, during this century in the west. But most of it is so wide of the mark that one wonders how philosophy can flourish in these countries, if what these philosophers say about philosophy were really to be true. It is time that philosophers become aware of the significance of their activity. It is the most creative enterprise in the cognitive activity of man and along with the arts, it is the most fundamental factor in the shaping of human reality itself.

1. Yashdev Shalya is certainly an exception. But his case is so unique that it does not affect our contention.

Fernand Brunner

Professor Daya Krishna's paper is very brilliant and full of suggestive ideas. I am not quite sure to have understood all his points. I shall try to summarize what seems to be essential, before asking a few questions.

Professor Daya Krishna stresses with force and humour the paradoxical situation of nowadays philosophy. Many thinkers destroy philosophy in denying its metaphysical bearing and in reducing it to a dry analysis of notions. While others—for instance Christians or Marxists accuse philosophy in general to be merely theoretical.

Our colleague does not approve the suicide of philosophy and proposes a conception of philosophy which is both theoretical and practical. Philosophy is a theoretical reflection, but this reflection is in itself, he says, an activity and even a creative activity. "Philosophers do not discover something pre-existent to their thought"; they create new conceptions of space and time, for instance, and teach not exactly what space and time are, but what we have to conceive of them. Thus Professor Daya Krishna defends a dynamical conception of philosophy. At least with the great thinkers, philosophy produces a world of fundamental notions, in which mankind will live sometimes for many generations. Therefore philosophers may be rid of their complex of inferiority with respect to the men dedicated to action.

I agree to a large extent with Professor Daya Krishna, who gives a relevant answer to those who maintain that philosophy should restrain itself to the analysis of notions. I would add that some of the new analytical philosophers would also agree. Strawson, for instance, teaches that philosophy is not only analysis but often creation of new concepts or new conceptual structures. There would be no analysis without previous constructions.

Now I would like to ask some questions. First, when Professor Daya Krishna says that philosophers do not discover something pre-existent to their thought, he offers an idealistic view of philosophy. But if there is no being to which philosophy has to correspond, what is true philosophy? All creative philosophies are true. What is the criterion of the philosophical truth, if philosophy is not relating to being? Is it the changing psychological or social situation?

Secondly, I do not understand exactly the difference which is made in the paper between philosophy and science. We may say that science as well as philosophy is together theoretical and practical.

Science has practical consequences not only for science itself but for mankind in general through its theories and techniques.

Thirdly, we may agree that philosophy is an activity, that it does something and influences people. But we must distinguish between activity as such and moral activity, activity *de facto* and activity *de jure*. Thus the question arises how Professor Daya Krishna solves the problem of the good with reference to the philosophical activity.

Our colleague has given a kind of phenomenological description of philosophy putting into brackets the question of the truth and the good. But there are many philosophies and we have to choose among them; according to what criterion?

Kalidas Bhattacharyya

Prof. Daya Krishna's observations on me toward the end of his paper are not justified. In later articles I have thoroughly examined the exact business of philosophy. I have shown that philosophy at a certain level first gives a clear account of what *ought to be* and then at another level realizes it as what *is* (this *being* is of another order—from the point of view of reflection, of a higher order). I have also examined in detail what 'ought to be' means as contrasted with *is* on the one hand and *ought-to-do* on the other. I have also tried to clarify what theoretic realization of the *ought-to-be* as *is* means.

I agree with Prof. Daya Krishna that philosophers, in so far as as they are dealing with the most pervasive features of experience, do influence not only other philosophers but other men in other domains by affecting their very mode of conceiving, formulating and posing of questions and problems in their fields of thought, though, as he says, there is often a considerable time lag in the process. But if this is considered the *only* practical use of philosophy I would disagree. Artists and men of religion, literature and politics who also in whatever way philosophize — the latter definitely in the sense of creative conceptualization and the former in a way not entirely different — not only affect the mode of conceiving, formulating problems, etc. by others — whether in those fields or in other fields — but even succeed in changing the existing ways of life. Why should not philosophers too succeed in that line? Artists, it is true, give an immediate concrete expression to their philosophy, but so do others also, including the academic philosophers: they speak out their thoughts, they write books, etc. Shall we then exclude philosophers on the ground that because they think over most pervasive categories the expression of their thought must be the least concrete? But, first, the abstruse thoughts of the philosopher may, on this ground, only take longer time to change the mode of social life, and, secondly, they may change the existing state of affairs more quickly through affecting intermediaries like men of religion, literature and politics and also artists.

Prof. Daya Krishna refers to another practical use of philosophy. It is that philosophy, because of its unceasing examining attitude, refuses to be swayed by the fashions of the day. It remains constantly vigilant and exposes every conceivable loophole in the fashionable orthodoxies of the day.

I agree to a great extent. But is Prof. Daya Krishna conscious

of all its implications? First, why should this be spoken of philosophy only? This impartial attitude and constant vigilance are found in all methodical theoretical disciplines. Would he, then, mean that though these other disciplines are critical they are fundamentally in an attitude of ontological commitment, whereas philosophy remains throughout in a non-committal attitude? But is this true? Every philosopher, unless he is a Mādhyamika Buddhist or a Kantian epistemologist or a phenomenologist or a mere linguistic analyst, has existential commitment — he takes his own view to be true in the sense that it is the account of what is really real. The apprehension that on further probing the account may turn out false is true of all views in all disciplines. Somehow it appears to me that Prof. Daya Krishna has too swiftly taken the philosopher as immune that way. The only distinction, in this respect, between philosophy and other disciplines is, I believe, that whereas everyone can, in spite of commitment, maintain a temporary non-committal attitude so long as he compares his view (to which he was committed) as one possibility with other views (to which others are committed) as other possibilities, a philosopher who, as I say, is a Mādhyamika or a phenomenologist can continue ever in the attitude of non-commitment. Either, then, only these few philosophers are continuously vigilant or all philosophers and, with them, all thinkers in all theoretic fields are so. Philosophers, except the few I have mentioned, have no monopoly business in preventing thought from ossifying.

Prof. Daya Krishna holds that philosophy has no other practical bearing and holds that it is because some philosophers labour under the false idea that they can do something for changing the existing state of affairs for the better and yet fail that they, in desperation, develop either a suicidal or a murderous tendency.

But did philosophy ever in the past fail to change the face of the existing order? My impression is just the opposite. Great creative philosophers had in the past always done that. It is only since the days Science, freed from the guardianship of philosophy, has come to preponderate — and that not without sufficient justification — that philosophy has either been quietly withdrawing, ceasing to speak of the existing order of things, or foolishly treading on the zone of influence of Science and getting rebuff. Either way it is on the path of suicide and on occasions the glorious past dawns on the decrepit it naturally grows murderous. Prof. Daya Krishna has not correctly diagnosed the disease.

He distinguishes broadly between three types of philosophy, viz. (i) philosophy as the Marxists and allied thinkers understand it, i.e. philosophy as a system of prescriptions for changing the face of the existing world, (ii) philosophy as a pursuit for changing the philosopher's own self as also those of others, and (iii) philosophy as Prof.

Daya Krishna understands it and which we have already examined. He is not against the first two pursuits. Only he says that they are based on the wrong presupposition that philosophy for other philosophers is an attempt to interpret the world. He hastens to add that it is only Science, not philosophy, which *interprets* the world. Under the idea that others' philosophy is only the interpretation of the world, these two groups of thinkers argue that such interpretation is of no worth — what is of worth and what not being, of course, a subjective arbitrary decision.

Incidentally, Prof. Daya Krishna points out that some others, seeing that the philosophies of the types (i) and (ii) have failed to be of any substantial practical worth, have developed either suicidal or murderous tendency. Modern Logical Positivists and Linguistic Analysts belong to this group. Prof. Daya Krishna appears not to be in sympathy with them. Against Linguistic Analysts, in particular, he argues that they have mainly concentrated on the analysis of English Language, his point being that such analysis of other languages could present even at relevant points different pictures.

Let us examine this thesis of Prof. Daya Krishna. There are indeed different languages and perhaps there is no pinpointable common language which different people of the world could be said to be using subconsciously. Ideal language too may be a myth. But the fact that people speaking one language can somehow learn another has to be accounted for. This is possible, I suggest, because—this is only one among many reasons—speaking one language but understanding another they discover, though not always so consciously, that the vocabulary and/or syntax of that other language is either richer or proper than their own, i.e. either comprehending and going beyond or being comprehended and transcended by that other. If this be true then the linguistic analysis of the richer language will be the better philosophy.

But the main point of Prof. Daya Krishna against Linguistic Analysis and Logical Positivism is that these have grown out of a sense of frustration. This may or may not be true. But I think the more important factor here is the dazzling success of Science, both in theory and practice. This dazzling success carries with it a strong sense of reality which the traditional philosophy, by contrast, lacks.

About the traditional Indian philosophy as a pursuit for changing one's own self and that of others—a philosophy for the attainment of a perfect state of self—Prof. Daya Krishna argues that people revolted against it on the ground that it has neither any bearing on our moral life nor any non-moral ordinary utility. He calls this pursuit over-moral, i.e. spiritual.

My points against him here are:

(1) The Indian philosophy he speaks of did not have for its aim

any *change* of the self. It is for the recognition of the true state of the self—a state which was already there, though somehow largely hidden from our view. However, this is not very important in the present context. There is a stronger point against him.

(2) It is wrong to hold that the over-moral spirituality has nothing to do with morality. The basic principles of morality at any level are the translation of the spirituality attained at that level into action. This, of course, with regard to the basic principles of morality! More detailed and concrete principles are, however, to be understood from the empirical social point of view, with the proviso that the traditional Indian attitude is to maintain social *status quo* as long as possible. This is why traditionally minded Indians regard the empirical social tradition as the ultimate sanction of these detailed concrete principles of morality.

Revolt against this traditional Indian philosophy is to be traced not to its moral neutrality, but to the wrong understanding by the Westerners to that effect, and modern Indians have unfortunately followed suit. For the Advaita Vedāntins the detailed and concrete moral principles had to be scrupulously observed till a very high stage; and, further, at the higher stages towards the top other such principles suited to the monastic life had to be observed, and basic principles were never to be abjured. It is only at the highest stage of realization that according to the Advaita Vedāntin no morality was required, but even then the liberated soul could, if he preferred, do social work with complete disinterestedness. As Prof. Daya Krishna has not said much for or against the type of philosophy that is meant exclusively for changing the world I too refrain from saying anything here. I have discussed it in my own paper.

Prof. Daya Krishna's main point is that if, as in the case against the traditional Indian philosophy, moral considerations are given more worth, then, in its turn morality too might be considered not worth pursuit against the background of non-moral utility; which means that moral and non-moral considerations should not intervene for answering the question whether a particular theoretical discipline is worth pursuit or not.

There has often been criticism, this way, of purely theoretical philosophy from the utilitarian, moral and spiritual points of view. The idea is that these are the only three practical points of view. But such practical consideration, Prof. Daya Krishna, it appears to me, insists, should not stop pure theoretical pursuits. Theoretical pursuits are to be allowed not only because we cannot, and should not, stop it in a democratic society but also because there is not much of basic distinction between knowledge and action. Unless the givenness, as in perception, is taken as the sole criterion of knowledge, action is an important constituent—and that always—

and in certain cases of knowledge the action-constituent is most pronounced, as when we say 'I know *swimming* or *dancing* or *singing*'. Here I frankly admit that either I could not correctly follow what Prof. Daya Krishna says or I have objection at every step. Since I am not sure that I have followed him correctly I do not like to speak out my objections.

I admit also that probably I have touched only the fringes of the main contention of his paper. I have a lurking suspicion that I have totally misunderstood him and all my criticism have perhaps missed the marks.