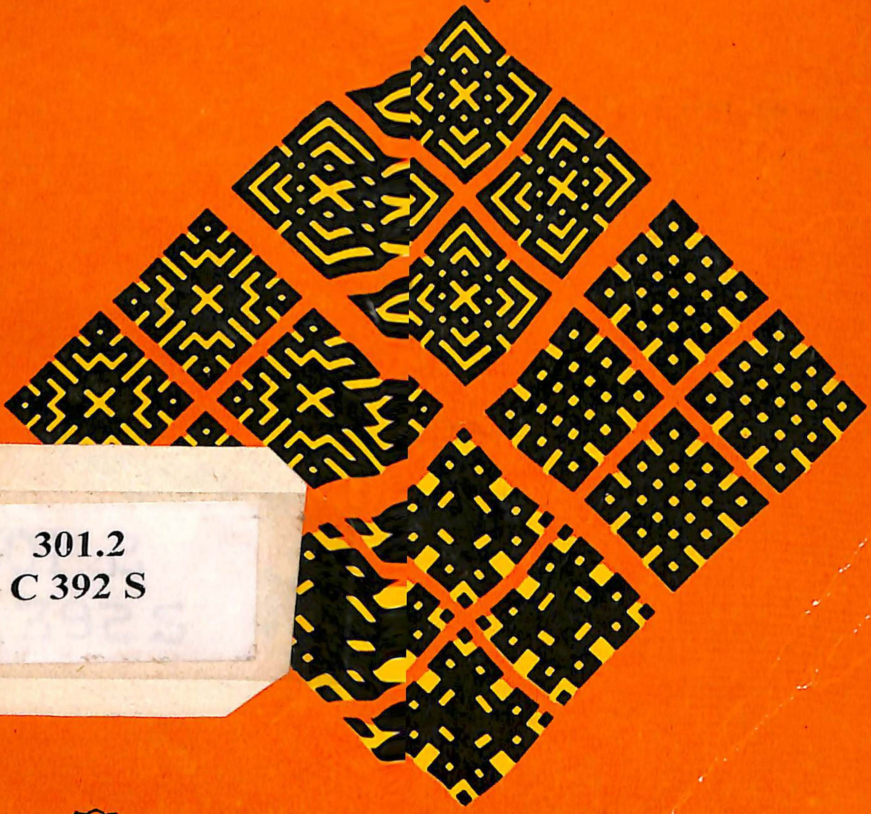
D P Chattopadhyaya

SOCIETIES AND CULTURES



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

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by

D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA

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KULAPATI'S PREFACE

THE BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him

freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata,* summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita,* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita,* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1 QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD
NEW DELHI
3rd October 1951

K. M. MUNSHI

PREFACE

Man, as we all know, is a *social* being. But most of us are not aware of what it really means. He has a past behind him and a *tradition* to support and regulate him. Sustained by the present and his *culture* he always looks forward. He is more a pro-ject than a product. Continuously streaming forward in the channel of time he often looks backward and within. Being *finite* as he is, he always tries to be aware of and to become what he is not. In other words, the quest for values is native to his nature. Being *fallible* as he is, he cannot but question and review his inheritance and acquisitions, propositions and proposals. The obligation of being *rational* makes him reflect on what he is and whatever he has.

Man is a *multi-dimensional* being. He lives and moves not merely in space and time but also, and perhaps more truly, in a society as an integral part of it. His life is also a part of *history,* he himself being its author and creature at the same time. His very being is embedded or, one might even say, he is born in a *culture* marked, among other things, by its *tradition* and *modernity, language* and *myths, science* and *technology.* Wherever he goes, and even if he is a cosmopolite, he always carries his *cultural identity* and *personality* with him.

Man is a *semiotic* being—sign-using animal. This is claimed at times to be the most comprehensive definition of man. Man cannot identify himself or his own personality without the minimal use of some signs. The sign-using rules, rules of formation and transformation, are also social in origin. In fact, language, containing signs, symbols and the rules of their use, is the *basic* social institution. We use language not only to *express* ourselves, we need and do use signs even to be meaningfully *impressed* by external objects and sense-stimuli. We can neither abridge and conserve nor express and articulate our experience in concepts without using any sign or symbol whatsoever. Even our self-encounter and solitude is mediated and animated (but *not* necessarily) by signs. The limit of the use of signs is the limit of man's world, social intercourse and life.

Man, whether he is primitive or modern, is by nature self-reflective. He cannot help reflecting on what he is and what he is not. As he is integrally related to the society, his self-reflection entails reflections on such social agencies and institutions like history, culture and language.

Sustained by a tradition and embedded in a culture, man almost continuously questions them both. For, his sense of values can never be completely dominated and determined by his tradition and culture. The challenge of modernization is always there before him. He cannot easily ignore or bypass it. Continuous growth of knowledge, particularly of its scientific form, and advancement of technology often make us question our own traditional heritage and cultural past.

Different individuals and societies have differently res-

ponded to this challenge of modernization. Some are so overwhelmed by it that they disown or at least try to disown their tradition and culture, accept the latest and fancied life-style borrowed from alien societies, and in the process get hopelessly confused. They do not know the distinction between *modernity,* defined in terms of some superficial ways and accessories of life, and *modernization,* which demands of us a really new type of integration and transvaluation.

Secondly, there are others who lightly dismiss the talk of integration and transvaluation. They think that our culture, rightly understood and interpreted, does contain all the contents and virtues which we may possibly derive from modern science and civilization. Their response to the challenge of modernization is almost entirely negative. They prefer to withdraw within the protective shell of tradition and try to rationalize and justify uncritically whatever we already have. This uncritical approach appears to my mind as a very perverse form of cultural positivism.

Finally, there is another group of persons, and I count myself as one of them, which does not believe that there is a necessary conflict between tradition and modernization. The tradition of science and technology makes it abundantly clear that between the past and present systems of ideas and experiments there is no gap, discontinuity or essential distinction. No informed student of science will maintain that there is a sharp line of demarcation between, say, Newtonian Physics and Einsteinian Physics. The scientist and the technologist do not see any area of conflict between what they had (i.e. their tradition) and what are being discovered and invented contemporarily (i.e. the challenge of modernization).

Without being disrespectful in the least to our own tradi-

tion and culture, we can prove ourselves equal to the task and challenge of modernization. In fact, any creative culture has to keep itself continuously open to modern innovations and inventions. In the world of knowledge and learning one has to be critical and remain open at the same time.

It has been argued that the characteristics of *cultural history* are not quite similar to those of *history of science and technology,* and that it is not easy to follow the model of scientific and technological continuity in the general process of acculturation. A socio-political variant of this argument is reflected in the thesis that without *structural transformation* of society, the talk of cultural integration and transvaluation is bound to remain idle. The values and ideas are said to be consequences of or accessories to some or other social structure or system of production. If the latter is not transformed, the former cannot be changed autonomously.

While I recognize the force of this argument and myself accept it partly, I do not quite see why for cultural integration and transvaluation we have to wait for structural reformation or revolution. Under the roof (or, should I say, over the foundation) of the same structure, different cultures simultaneously co-exist and interact, though not necessarily peacefully. This is ultimately due to structurally irremediable human peculiarities. In vain we search for the structural cause of each of our ideas and actions, ideals and valuations. The spirit underlying this type of search or research is metaphysical.

In spite of the conflicts and tensions which accompany it, the process of acculturation is continuous and knows no

gap. It may be looked at both horizontally and vertically. Vertically speaking, the structural axis which supports several simultaneous cultures is itself continuous with and influenced by the latter, and made up of the same stuff, differing only in the degree of generality and durability. And horizontally speaking, the structurally correlated cultures are obviously continuous, hanging on and supported by each other. True, they complement and overlap each other. But their identities are separable and discernible. By changing the structural correlates of cultures we can only change some of their forms and styles but cannot destroy their basic identity and continuity. Cultural revolution, although we badly need it at times, for instance, now in India, its exploits and achievements are much less spectacular and dramatic than what a cultural empiricist tries to make out of it. Cultural revolution is not canvas cleaning. The aspect of continuity is always there.

Broadly speaking, the theme of this book as partly evident from and partly concealed in its title, is (*Individuals in*) *Societies and Cultures*. And it grew out of my previous work, *Individuals and Societies : A Methodological Inquiry,* first drafted in 1961-63 and then published with slight modification in 1967. Six papers of this book have been prepared and published between the years 1965 and 1970. 'How History Can Be Objective' and 'The Moral Challenge of the Gandhian Ideology' are being published here for the first time. My studies on the more philosophical aspects of the issues raised in the present volume and *Individuals and Societies* will be presented in a separate volume, *Individuals and Worlds : Essays in Anthropological Rationalism,* which I promised in 1967 and is expected to be published in the near future.

Although the responsibility for the views expressed in this book is mine alone, I should like to record my gratitude to the many people who have helped me: to the Library staffs of Jadavpur University, Calcutta, and the Parliament, New Delhi; to my colleagues and friends for their valuable comments, including Professor K. K. Banerjee, Dr P. K. Sen, Dr Kalyan K. Sengupta and Dr Jagannath Chakraborty; to Dr S. N. Ganguly and Dr S. P. Banerjee for several useful discussions; and to my graduate students at the Indian Academy of Philosophy and Jadavpur University for their stimulation. I like to thank my friend Shri Buddhadev Bhattacharya for helping me in the matter of publication of this book. I should also like to thank my personal staff, particularly stenographers and typists. My shortcomings are not for lack of help, advice and suggestions.

1 Sunehri Bagh Road
New Delhi 11

D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA

CONTENTS

1

HOW CAN HISTORY BE OBJECTIVE?

THE PROBLEM of historical objectivity continues to be of interest to the philosopher and the historian. In fact, '*the* problem of historical objectivity' represents a group of related problems, the core of which consists in the denial, partial or complete, of the objectivity of historical statements. The objectivity of history is denied both by the sceptic and the relativist.

In what follows I shall consider some leading forms of historical scepticism and relativism with a view to ascertaining their meanings and substantive imports, if any. Growth of Knowledge, a key concept in my analysis, does not allow the substance and meaning of a theory to stand static for long. No factual theory purporting to give true knowledge can rationally claim to have eternal immunity from error. There cannot be any absolute insurance against human fallibility. The sort of historical fallibilism that I hope to develop in the following pages may superficially resemble historical scepticism and relativism as ordinarily understood, but a closer look will reveal that it is different from them.

II

There is a group of theories which tries to establish the impossibility of historical objectivity in a rather simple way: as the historian cannot be absolutely free from his biases and prejudices, his works can never be completely objective. The advocates of these theories commonly assume that objectivity depends upon freedom from biases and prejudices. But they differ on the attainability of complete freedom from such subjective factors. Some Baconians believe that by *systematic* efforts various 'idols' which bedevil our mind can be swept away and the mind restored to its natural purity. And it is at this natural state of purity that mind is capable of attaining objective knowledge.

But many rationalists think otherwise. There are some basic equipments of mind, they hold, without which the very act of sweeping, still less a systematic one said to be necessary to make and keep the tablet clean, becomes quite impossible. The possibility of the Baconian way of attaining objectivity is firmly discounted by them.

The traditional empiricists and rationalists, whatever be their difference, agree on a very important point: that there is an ideal mode of acquiring knowledge which can assure us of its objectivity. The nearer we are to the *source* of our knowledge, they suggest, the surer we are of its objectivity. We will see, later on, the bearing of this general epistemological position upon the rationalist and empiricist epistemologies of history.

Like the rationalists, it must be noted here that the empiricists, too, differ among themselves in formulating the problem of objectivity and in their attempted solutions of the same. Hence the terms *rationalism* and *empiricism* should be taken with some discrimination.

III

The opposition to the *tabula rasa* epistemology of history assumes different forms. Of them, only a few will be referred to in this essay. In certain respects, this opposition comes even from quarters other than traditional rationalism.

Sometimes we are told that a particular report in a particular newspaper is not objective, and that it is due to the reporter's bias. For instance, if the reporter be a communist, his report is likely to reflect his communist bias. One may ask then: "Are we to understand that objective reporting is not possible at all?" But are not the journalists frequently asked by the presidents of their annual conferences and political dignitaries to be independent, objective and fair in discharging their professional responsibilities? If it is not possible for one to be objective, there is perhaps no point in asking one to be so. In what sense, if at all, can journalism be objective?

A report, in spite of the reporter's biases, may be objective, if it is written according to the norms and rules of professional journalism. This view seems to suggest that the psychological make-up of the reporter has no *necessary* connection with the objectivity of what he writes. If we decide to follow certain rules in our activities and in fact follow them, our activities will be objective, no matter how we feel about the matter. Thus, in a particular case, it is quite possible that the trying judge may have a personal interest; he may be inclined to do harm or show favour to one of the parties involved. But he may nevertheless be guided by the relevant laws and rules; and then his judgment would be objective. The same considerations apply also to a referee supervising a game. But, still, don't we hear frequently remarks like "The judgment was not objective or just" or "The referee is partial"? Are we to understand

that the activities of a historian are like those of the judge or the referee?

The judgment may fail to be objective (*a*) because the judge could not understand all the relevant laws and rules and their implications, or (*b*) because he admitted inadmissible evidence (or the converse) due to misunderstanding of the laws of evidence, or (*c*) because he tried the case under some laws which are not applicable, i.e. he could not properly identify the case. The *rule* theory of objectivity in its justified eagerness to avoid the *law* theory of objectivity goes to the other extreme and commits the fallacy of reproduction. Historical situations are governed and, therefore, are to be understood by *appropriate* rules; and, it is said, they are embedded in some 'form of life'. Whether or not certain rules are appropriate to the understanding of certain 'form of life' cannot be judged from *without,* but is to be 'judged' within that very 'form of life'. This line of argument presupposes internality of social relations, clashes even with the mildest form of constructionism and gets very close, of course unintentionally, to a sort of intuitionism. Mere *applicability* of certain rules to a situation by itself does not show that the agents concerned did *in fact* act according to those rules.

IV

Sometimes it is suggested that a judgment becomes objective, if it is firmly based upon facts or evidence. On analysis, this suggestion is found to be full of difficulties. First, facts or evidence are always selected by us; and thus, indirectly *we* choose *our* 'firm basis'. Secondly, the selection of evidence is determined by the problem or issue at

hand. This point raises a very interesting controversy among historians.

It is said: the British historians of India have written histories from the rulers' point of view, and so their writings are distorted and not objective. They exaggerate the virtues of the British government and minimize, or keep silent over, its bad effects. They deliberately ignore the virtues of the Indian people and always magnify their defects. Many Indian historians, therefore, are now re-writing the history of India from the national point of view.

This problem of the point of view is continually encountered, e.g. by the official historians of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with each major shake-up in the Kremlin. Whenever the masters of the CPSU change, or proclaim they have changed their points of view, the official historians have to re-write, i.e. re-organize, the history of the Party accordingly.

If a history can be written from several points of view, which one of them should be taken as most 'representative' or 'dependable'? Are we to think that the histories of a nation or a party written from different points of view are glimpses of, or approximations to, a unique history preserved in a heavenly book or in God's mind? If every historian justifies the difference of his account from the rest on the ground that his point of view is different from the rest, then don't we reach a very anomalous situation? One may say, "the anomaly is unavoidable". The same history can be written from different points of view; and then 'the same history' would *appear* differently. But how can we be sure of the identity of the history appearing differently? The different points of view, we are told, imply different histories (of the same thing). If this difference is taken seriously, there remains no meeting point between the different histories (or,

should we say, different accounts of the same history?), except on some minor points such as the date of someone's birth, the place of a battle and so forth. But I can easily imagine that the argument of the point of view can be pushed to such an extent that at least in some (why not all?) cases agreement even on such minor points would become impossible and, what is more interesting, unnecessary. Then every historian can offer a unique account of a 'well-known' historical event, and, when challenged, resort to the argument of the unique point of view. Or, different accounts of the 'same' event may be defended by saying that although the accounts differ in details, they have a common core. But one may ask: "Can we somehow show that the *different* accounts have, or are linked up with, a *common* core?" The answer, if any, to this question would refer to what is called the problem of identity-and-difference.

It would be pointless to speak of a common core, if that cannot be indicated somehow by description. An identity that can be 'identified' in *purely* non-descriptive terms is spurious—speculative in the bad sense of the term. To defend historical objectivity on the basis of identity would then seem to fail. The identity argument would thus appear to make short work of the argument of the points of view.

V

To avoid such difficulties, originating in different points of view, some philosophers have felt the necessity of developing a universal point of view or a historical consciousness in general. The idea of the universal point of view has been offered in *different* forms by rationalists like Kant and positivists like Comte.

I do not think that the notion of the *universal* point of view

makes any very significant advance towards securing objectivity in history. It seems to share many of the defects of a particular point of view.

That it does not secure objectivity can be readily seen from the fact that there is no *single* universal point of view. Different thinkers offer different universal points of view. From each of these points of view, 'the' history of the world may be interpreted and 'the' future of mankind anticipated. In fact, these universal points of view are only *interpretative schemata.* The *universal interpretations* of history are, at any rate, not *exhaustive descriptions.* They only embody the different attempts at *rational* ways of looking into the past and also the future. The question is: which one of the various universal interpretations is most rational or dependable? It would appear that this is a pseudo-question: *Given a point of view,* no matter particular or universal, every interpretation is as rational or dependable as any other.

In fact, the universal interpretations of history are more or less *a priori* and very general; and the professional historian is not in most cases interested in such *a priori* and *general* notions. The craze for fitting every detail in the *interpretative* wholes (or 'pigeon holes') tends to end in a sort of *practical* holism, and libertarians like Popper and Berlin have severely criticised the pro-historicist note observed in such omnibus interpretations. That dead horse need not be flogged here.

Facts do not dictate how one should look at them. One may say, and it has been said by Oakeshott, that philosophy of history is, in effect, interpretation of interpretation. It is clear that the second level of interpretation is more theory-loaded than the first one although some holists and historicists tend to forget this obvious truth. There are different and alternative rational ways of looking at occurrences which, left

to themselves, cannot be said to be either rational or irrational. But there are philosophers who believe that every occurrence is intrinsically rational and that is why we can rationally re-construct the historical occurrences. This suggests that the rationality of history is a matter of discovery, and not of re-construction. This rationality (being the very objective structure of the world) cannot be altered by our subjective fancies. Thus the objectivity of history is, the rationalist says, grounded in its rationality. The ethical implication of this theory is: history is the dispenser of justice. Whatever happens is rational and therefore just.

But I fail to understand how unprovoked war, assassination, treachery, intrigue, promise-breaking, etc., which are not infrequent in history, could be considered rational and just. Unprovoked war and wanton man-killing, for instance, go against even the minimum requirements of civil life. The rationalization and justification of such things seems all the more shocking when these come from people who are eloquent on the virtues of collective living.

If rationality be the ultimate basis of objectivity, then nothing irrational would be objective. To defend (this is a defensive strategy) the ultimate objectivity of history, the dogmatic rationalist, therefore, offers two different and closely related arguments: first, objectivity is an *ultimate* category, and in the non-ultimate levels, it may accommodate varying degrees of subjectivity. Secondly, the *appearance* of deviation from objectivity is due to our being subjected to senses and passions. Our subjectivity, i.e. being subjected to senses and passions, is to be ascribed to the cunning of reason; and reason being ultimate reality, *its* cunning cannot claim an independent status.

This defensive strategy fails for obvious reasons. The sense in which objectivity is sought to be defended by the

uncritical rationalist has little relevance to history. So long as our knowledge is affected by our senses and passions, we are told, it is bound to be more or less subjective, and history being an empirical discipline can never attain complete objectivity. However paradoxical it may sound, according to such an apologist of rationalism, completely objective history must be completely non-empirical, i.e. *a priori*. Thus the level at which 'completely subjective history' is defended is clearly unhistorical.

The argument of the universal point of view has been reformulated so as to make it more plausible. In his reformulation of the argument, Collingwood shifts the emphasis from *universality* to *rationality*, and in this way he hopes to be less metaphysical and more fair to the issue of historical objectivity. A *historical point of view* has to establish its rational *bona fides* so that it may claim universal recognition. The historian ought to rely on *contextual rationality*, and *not* on *universal rationality*. The rationality of human acts has to be discovered and it is this discovery which would show the objectivity of those acts, the subject-matter of history. The act of thinking, because of its rationality, is objective.

According to Collingwood, only those experiences of the past can be re-enacted which were rational. The historian, being a rational being, can re-enact or re-think the past acts of thinking (of his own or other rational beings). Errors and illusions, or the things that could not be carried out successfully, cannot *be* re-enacted. That which cannot be re-enacted cannot be history. For re-enactment is not merely a pre-condition of historical knowledge, but an integral part of it. Only those acts can be re-enacted which are of 'a determinate kind', i.e. have 'a certain cognitive character, and so forth'.

The subjectivity of an act of *thought* is said to be no reason

for the denial of its objectivity. The act of thought is rational, consistent with its situation, and, unlike emotions and impulsions, not washed away once for all by the stream of time. In other words, because of its rationality, the act of thought can be revived and *re*cognized irrespective of its place-time context. To the context of the act of thought we can easily reason back; and thus the context may be recaptured or reconstructed. Historical events, so far as they express acts of thought, can be re-enacted or revived. If historical events have for their background illusions or errors of judgment, they cannot be known. It is on this faulty argument that Collingwood's well-known but untenable contention rests, viz. that only Nelson's victory, and *not* Villeneuve's defeat, at Trafalgar may be explained. Long before Collingwood, Dilthey pointed out the narrowness of this view: if the scope of history be so narrowly defined, it would clearly be inconsistent with the practice of the working historian. I venture to suggest that Collingwood's own works on history contain explanations of irrational acts.

Let us look closely into Collingwood's ingenious theory of historical objectivity. His theory, as I see it, hinges upon what I call the argument of rationality. An event is knowable because it is rational. To say what is known is not objective, says Collingwood, is to indulge in contradiction.

An act of thought is said to be rational when it is consistent with the thinker's 'determinate' situation, and with, what is of minor importance here, the laws of thought. The issue of the consistency with the 'determinate' situation cannot be settled; for the situation is determined by arguing back from the act or acts of thought. Now historically speaking, it is difficult to settle whether a so-called act of thought is really an act of thought without examining its consistency with the actor's situation. Here we are put into the puzzling position:

the situation has to be argued back from the acts of thought; and whether the acts of *thought* (so far as these are historically relevant) are really so, cannot be ascertained completely *a priori* without taking into account the *prevalent* situation. How can the objectivity of the situation be gathered?

The acts of thought are undeniably private and different. The historian *now* working on ancient India may think of e.g. Alexander's thought at the stormy night he had dodged the *Paurava* king and crossed the Jhelum, but his acts of thought cannot be identical with Alexander's acts of thought. At this point, Collingwood's argument is difficult to follow. Sometimes he seems to believe that the acts of thought themselves, unlike fleeting feelings and passions, can be revived without destroying their identity; sometimes again he seems to hold that the acts of thought can be identically reproduced only because of the invariance of their content. Perhaps one need not argue at length to expose the weakness of the former argument. How can it be rationally affirmed that my act of thinking (Alexander's crossing the Jhelum) *qua* act of thinking is identical with Alexander's act of thinking (about the crossing of the Jhelum, for example)? The latter argument also does not appear to be strong either—at any rate not strong enough to solve the problem of objectivity.

The objectivity of history is said to be guaranteed by *the identity of its content.* If the content of Alexander's thought on a particular occasion may be shown to be *identical* with the content of my thought about the 'same' occasion, the problem of objectivity, as regards the occasion in question, seems to be resoluble. But the 'if' of the last sentence poses great difficulties. First, one may challenge outright the concept of identity assumed here. It may be contended that this sort of identity can never be exhibited to others, one may only 'see' it oneself. But this 'seeing' may easily be challenged,

and to meet the challenge the 'seer' has to fall back upon a self-evident theory of truth appended to a systematic metaphysics.

I am not quite clear about the full import of this objection. Even so, I find myself in partial sympathy with this objection.

Secondly, the content of thought is said to be a 'Corporate possession'; whoever can think can think it identically. Man can think what other men have thought because of his 'ability to perform determinate operations'. These determinate operations are operations of determinate human nature in determinate situations. Mind or human nature *is* what it does: here Collingwood curiously enough re-echoes a sort of Humanism. What mind thinks or does cannot be quite independent of his 'nature' on the one hand, and his determinate situation on the other. Outright denial of his 'nature' would entail the question about the determinateness of his activities. The admission of space and time as the basis of determinateness of human nature would give rise to the further question: how can two differently determined minds separated by vast stretches of space and time understand each other? This problem is encountered particularly by the historian working on 'primitive peoples' or 'the dark ages'. One may say, "as human nature changes or as the activities of minds change from age to age, it is difficult to imagine how the content of thought remains identical all through". Can the content of thought remain totally indifferent to, or unaffected by, the mind that thinks? Collingwood's answer to the question seems to be in the negative. Re-enactment, says he, is not mere remembering, but means re-thinking the past (thoughts) in present thought. This re-thinking is critical thinking in an altered situation. Critical thinking is *not* critical if it has not brought about any difference in the thought that has been its object. If re-thinking in different ages bring

about considerable change in 'the' history of a particular event, how can it be claimed that the content of the said history has remained identical through the ages? It is said that history is *lived* history. The history that remains identical to itself, and indifferent to the critical thinking of the historians down the ages, cannot be but a *dead* history. One wonders whether dead history is history at all. This is not a mere question of definition of history.

Lastly, I would like to add that Collingwood's discussion is systematically bedevilled by the ambiguity of the term *thought* by which sometimes he seems to mean an act of thinking and sometimes the content of thinking.

If I am not mistaken in my foregoing analysis, by neither of these meanings of thought Collingwood can reach his goal —the objectivity of history. The classical rationalist tried to establish the thesis of historical objectivity on the basis of *universal rationality*. Irrational events were his headache; and he tried to do away with them in a very *un*historical way. Collingwood, unlike the classical rationalist, tried to make his way from contextual or *situational rationality* to historical objectivity, and thus to be fair to the practice of the working historians. But, called upon to account for the irrational or thoughtless acts of the past, he too failed. Irrational events, according to him, cannot be known at all; so for him the question whether they can be known *objectively* does not arise at all.

VI

But the question may be raised: (1) Is the historian entitled to tamper with the records or deny the facts of history in order to show the rationality of irrational actions? This question is related to many other questions: (2) Is the

historian entitled to reshuffle the *descriptive* orders of facts? (3) Can there be anything like *pure description*? (4) If historical narration or description is bound to be *interpretative*, how possibly can we be sure of its *objectivity?* Can the terms *interpretation* and *objectivity* go together?

(1) It has been already observed that facts are not as hard or given as they are ordinarily believed to be. Facts are *accepted* and well-*established* theories. Acceptance and establishment of factual propositions are never final. Facts may be organized and re-organized in many ways. But it has to be admitted that facts somehow *constrain* interpretations. The historian's ways of looking back to the past are *influenced* by facts. *Facts may be questioned, but not all facts at every level,* for then we reach nowhere. One may say: in fact we do not reach anywhere. To the question, "to what extent is a fact given?" we would return in the next section.

(2) Perhaps *order* cannot be fully described. *We* impose orders on facts. Kant wrongly held that this imposition is *a priori* valid. *A priori* validity of imposed orders implies that facts have no constraining or regulative influence on them, that fate of the facts is sealed *a priori*: once fact always fact. Facts are filtered at different levels—and at each level, filtration brings about some change, or purification in the nature of facts. One cannot say if absolutely unfiltered 'facts' are facts at all. Unidentifiable facts cannot be said to have any *regulative* or critical influence on our proposed (*a priori*) orders. *With the change or detection of change in the identity of facts, the proposed, i.e. imposed orders are regulated and modified.*

(3) Pure description is impossible. *Every description is theory-oriented or ordered.* Transition from one descriptive statement to another remains a mystery, unless we *believe* in a connecting thread. The *belief* is said to be objective if the

critical minds agree that the connected descriptive statements have not changed their identities beyond recognition.

(4) In a sense, it is true that *all historical description or narration is interpretative.* This is another way of putting what I have already said before: descriptive facts are always theory-oriented or value-biased or both. But that orientation or bias is no bar to our way to objectivity will be shown later.

VII

The empiricist theory of historical objectivity has been claimed to be satisfactory on the ground that it avoids speculation altogether. The presumption is obvious: speculation destroys objectivity. "Erect the structure of scientific history on the basis of hard facts"—is the 'constructive suggestion' of the positivist historians like Burckhardt, Taine and Renan. Critical examination, however, reveals that this suggestion is hardly constructive.

We have already seen that hard facts are not as hard as they are believed to be. Consequently, the basis consisting of 'soft' facts cannot be 'solid'. The very idea of factual basis is misconceived. This idea stems out from the belief in the omnipotence of the inductive method. Facts are said to be indubitable observation statements or their equivalents in memory or document.

But pure induction, like pure description, seems to be impossible. Observation statements *qua* observation statements are not related to one another. Their relation presupposes a theory or point of view in the light of which observations become *significant,* either positively or negatively. There is no point in saying, "this observation report (or document) confirms or refutes *that view,*" if we do not have any

idea whatsoever of *that* (point of) *view*. Inductive confirmation thus involves paradox.

No observation report can be shown to be unconditionally true. For different purposes, the ideal conditions of observation have to be laid down differently. If a uniform set of ideal conditions is legislated and accepted by all concerned, this is purely a conventional stratagem and *not* empirical. I am not totally opposed to all sorts of conventionalism and not at all levels; but we should be clear when we are empiricist and when not.

To avoid this difficulty, some positivists hold that the basic statements are self-evident, and that they *show* their own truth. It is difficult to understand how the self-evident basic statements can be said to be empirical. Except in their alleged scope, the basic statements of the empiricist and those of the rationalist do not differ fundamentally in their nature.

The objectivity of history supposed to be insured by the 'solid empirical basis' may be questioned on several other grounds. It may be said that one may observe correctly but his documents may be defective—defective either because of bad memory or because of wrong expression used by the documenter, or something else. One may also raise here the arguments of the observer's biases, valuations, points of view, etc.

It is true that bad memory makes history impossible; but from this, one must not rush to conclude that good memory is good enough to make history possible. It has been rightly observed by Collingwood that history is not remembering a work of memory. The problem of remembering is analogous to that of observation so that neither pure observation nor pure remembering is possible, since fruitful observation or remembering presupposes a definite point of view.

In his pamphlet on *The Presupposition of Critical History*, Bradley rightly emphasized this point. A similar argument was offered by Hume against our belief in miracles.

VIII

The attitude of Logical Positivism towards history is, as expected, law-biased. Some logical positivists denied outright the *statemental* character of historical 'statements' on the ground that these, like ethical 'statements,' are not empirically based and verifiable. Given the crude verifiable theory of meaning, historical statements are undoubtedly meaningless, and the question of their objectivity does not arise at all.

Some later verificationists do not denounce historical statements as pseudo-statements. Influenced by their general theory that statements about other times, other places and other minds have to be indirectly verified, they think that the meaningfulness and objectivity of historical statements are indirectly justifiable. Without playing upon words one may observe, "indirect verification also requires a direction." "Yes, of course, it does," replies the verificationist, "and that is given by law-statements." From the law-statements about (other) minds, places, times, and some other general truths the historian retrodicts the past events. The logical structure of prediction and retrodiction is said to be identical. And this structure is hypothetico-deductive.

Hempel rejects *the method of empathetic understanding* and shows the law-governed unity of scientific and historical explanations. Like scientific explanation, historical explanation, too, consists in showing the deducibility of the event in question from a set of universal hypotheses (i.e. law-statements) in conjunction with a set of statements des-

cribing the determining conditions of the said event. If both the sets of statements are empirically well tested, the explanation can be said to have met the requirements of *objective checking,* and the explicandum *rationally presumed* to have actually happened. 'Idealistically' disposed philosophers have objected to this model of explanations on the ground that this view can show nothing more than what might have happened, and not what actually did happen, the unique subject-matter of the historian's enquiry. Hempel says: "there is no difference, in this respect, between history and the natural sciences: both can give an account of their subject-matter only in terms of general concepts, and history can 'grasp the unique individuality' of its objects of study no more no less than can physics and chemistry."

Objectivity of historical statements is said to be law-guaranteed. An event is presumed to have happened if its *necessary* initial conditions were present and if the relevant laws were operative. This formulation of the explanatory scheme may sound tautologous; but, in fact, it is not. For, as it has been already said, the explanatory premises are testable. It has to be noted here that the positivist does not, contrary to the allegation that he does, say that he retrodicts the explicandum *directly* from the law-statements. He does not even try to achieve that impossible logical feat. To the statements which describe the initial conditions of the event to be explained the positivist attaches necessary importance, and thus he tries to preserve the historical character of the explanation he offers.

The hypothetico-deductive model of explanation has been criticised by Dray as 'covering law model'. The reason for this is that he, being a follower of the Croce-Collingwood tradition of humanistic historiography, thinks that the positivist is merely aping the method of natural sciences when

he seeks to explain a historical event by just subsuming it under, or covering it by, a set of laws. I do not say this criticism is entirely misdirected; but I think that every formulation of the hypothetico-deductive model is not as flat as Dray seems to believe. If law-guaranteed objectivity of historical explanation appears to be distasteful to the humanist philosopher of history, one may point out that the humanist's cherished ideal of *objectivity through unique-and-detailed description,* too, is unattainable. All the details of an event cannot be described. The descriptive details cannot be explored to that extent where its *final uniqueness can be said fully to reveal itself once for all.* Every descriptive statement is revisable. The constellation of descriptive statements also changes. In the light of new historical evidence, old historical conclusions are revised. There cannot be factual estoppel either prospectively or retrospectively. So it is difficult to believe that a historical event may be described *fully* and that full description would reveal the uniqueness and objectivity of the event described. The argument of uniqueness seems to rest on a large commitment: the reality as a whole is unique and every part of it is also unique. I do not know how one may plausibly defend this commitment at the factual level.

When I think that the theory of objectivity through unique description fails, I must not be taken to be an advocate of the 'covering law model' as formulated by Hempel. Hempel's formulation is open to some criticisms as pointed out among others by William Dray[1] and Alan Donagan.[2] W. W. Bartley III has rightly shown[3] that the hypothetico-deductive model may be, and in fact has been formulated (by Popper for example) in such a way that it remains no longer open to the criticisms that have been levelled against the Hempelian formulation of the model. But as in this

paper my primary concern is not with the problem of historical explanation, I propose not to go into the details of this controversy. The only point which I would like to emphasize now in this connection is this: the testable character of the explanatory premises shows their objectivity.

To this point I will return presently.

IX

Some thinkers have relied too much on psychological mystery to deny the objectivity of history.

The boundary between our mind and the outer world is said to be constantly shifting. This constant shift is prompted, broadly speaking, by our pleasure-seeking or pain-avoiding instincts. The methods by which we seek to alter the relation between our mind and the world are numerous; but each is designed, consciously or unconsciously, to realize the instinctive ideal of attaining pleasure and avoiding pain. The practice of the yoga, displacement of the libido, to live in an imaginary world of art, to develop an emotional relation to the objects of the world which are harsh and inimical to our happiness, and to turn neurotic are, for example, some of the methods we consciously or unconsciously resort to in order to gratify our pleasure-seeking habit or soothe our lacerated feelings due to frustration.

Most of us are non-practising yogis, and each of us is more or less neurotic. The historian is no exception. He cannot help reviewing the past world coloured by his own desires and their fulfilment or otherwise. To the ego, the object of its love appears pleasant and beautiful, and the object of its hatred unpleasant and ugly. In intense love, its object ceases to be external to the ego, and the boundary line between the two tends to dissolve. But there is a limit

to our ability to love or hate; this limitation is imposed by our previous stages of mental development, particularly the earlier ones.

Freud has compared the human mind with Rome.[4] As in the Rome of today the traces of all previous stages of development of the city are somehow conserved, so in an adult's mind the previous stages of its development are conserved. Of course, there are limits to this analogy; but they are too obvious to be referred to in detail. The main point of interest for us, here, is this: one's mind cannot be properly understood if its past layers of mental development or retardation are not probed into. The historian's mind, subject to his own previous mental developments and methods of settling accounts with the objects of his desire, can never be completely successful in giving an *objective* picture of history. Each of us desires to strike the balance (between the social and personal poles) at a point where he expects to enjoy the highest possible happiness. This balance or equilibrium is short-lived and highly subjective. The historian being one of us has his own subjective preferences and his 'objective' ideal is bound to be coloured by them. Even in his theoretical works these preferences cannot but colour his object of study.

The above theory of psychological determinism is very difficult to follow. Whether it intends to advocate a thorough-going or a modified form of determinism is not clear. But in either case, it involves difficulties. Thorough-going determinism is a metaphysical assumption and is not empirically corroborated. Test conditions of this assumption can never be clearly laid down. Sporadic confirmation of this assumption by some psycho-analysed cases is certainly not enough to lend it scientific character. This criticism is particularly reinforced by two other relevant con-

siderations. The methods of psycho-analysis are themselves imperfect and biased. Moreover, the psycho-analyst himself is not ordinarily psycho-analysed. If he ever agrees to be analysed, he prefers his own method of analysis; and he refuses to accept the verdict given by another man's analysis of his psyche.

Even the psycho-analyst's case of a modified form of determinism is not very strong either. For he cannot say definitely which of our psychological factors, and to what extent, are responsible for shaping our attitude to the world around us. I live in *my* world, you in *yours,* and he in *his.* And we have no common world to live in together. We do not even know whether ever we shall have a common world. This unknowability is said to be due to the unfathomable mystery of our mind.

One can finally point out that the psycho-analyst's whole theory regarding the impossibility of objectivity is itself subject to its own comprehensive criticism and thus loses much of its probative strength.

X

The reaction against psycho-analytic scepticism may be studied under different heads, such as (*a*) scientific materialism, (*b*) sociology of knowledge, (*c*) the universal psyche, and so on.

So far as (*c*) is concerned, I would not say much. According to the advocates of this view, the uncertainty that we encounter in the study of the individual psyche may be done away with by the realization of the universal psyche, of which the individual psyches are apparently unconnected excerpts. Underlying and supporting all individual minds, there is that universal mind, in the realiza-

tion of which alone consists the way to objective truth. This ambitious metaphysical theory together with its several psychological and sociological variations, in spite of some impressive marshalling of facts in its favour, would appear to be defenceless against the criticisms indicated above against the thorough-going form of psychological determinism.

After this summary treatment of (*c*), let us take up (*a*), a widely held view and with which Marx's name is most closely associated. The problem of objectivity has been tackled by the exponents of this view from the end of sociology, and not of psychology. Some mistaken attempts have been made to interpret the materialist's thesis in psychological terms. But Marx's own view is anti-psychological in its inspiration, formulation and execution. The psychologist's failure to get hold of the key to objectivity is said to be due to the fact that he sets out from the wrong end. The reason why he loses his way in the mystery of the mind's depth is his illegitimate presumption that mind's workings are independent of what happens around it, that is, its material environment. From our simple perceptions to complex evaluating judgments and even abstract mathematical reasons, everything (without exception) is determined by our environment which includes the determinate productive relations in which we find ourselves and over which we have no control in the short run. The forms of all human existence and activity are invariably shaped by the prevailing mode of production, and their objectivity is to be traced to it.

In spite of all its professions to the contrary, scientific materialism, like all other forms of thorough-going determinism, is metaphysical in its core. It is impossible to show descriptive correlation between the different layers of mate-

rial existence—productive forces, productive relations, and ideologies. The scientific materialist seems to be aware of this impossibility, and also to have his reply to this criticism against him. As distinguished from the pre-scientific materialist, the scientific materialist thinks that the exact correlation between different layers of material existence is not something to be discovered, but has to be established by *practical* activity. This emphasis on practical activity has to be taken seriously: its significance is at least two-fold. Its immediate significance is to save thought from abstraction and the consequential antinomies. Pure and abstract thought—abstracted from practice—fails to resolve the antinomies it encounters in its bid to grasp reality. 'Pure thought' is not really pure; continuously fed by various *practical* needs, it is obliged to strike a balance between its *live* environment and the will of the thinker *qua* a social being. Marx writes in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*:

> It is only in a social context that subjectivism and objectivism, spiritualism and materialism, activity and passivity cease to be antinomies, and thus cease to exist as such antinomies. The resolution of *theoretical* contradictions is possible only through *practical* means...a task which philosophy was unable to accomplish precisely because it saw there a *purely* theoretical problem.

The other significance of laying emphasis on practical activity is to rebut the charge of metaphysicalism. Philosophically interpreted, the world is bound to be abstract, antinomous, and infected with yawning gaps. By thought, the philosopher must not hope to remove these defects of the metaphysical view of the world, he has to *change* it.

This view of the scientific materialist is not without interest. But how far this view succeeds in resolving the problem of

objectivity is very doubtful. The practical bias of knowledge and the disinterested love of truth are not as antithetical as the Marxist would have us believe. However influenced our thought may be by practice, it cannot ignore the requirement of objectivity. Practice does not establish objectivity; it merely *shows* that. Nobody, not even the Freudian, denies the possibility of bringing about change in our environment by action; precisely that is what we have been doing all the time. But the question is: to be successful in changing the world, are we not required to have at first a theoretical and objective view of it? Can we successfully confront an imaginary world or society? *Success,* here, should not be taken entirely in the sense of conative satisfaction. For even a false 'description' of, say, a 'divine miracle' may satisfy a religious fanatic.

The materialist developed a one-sided view of objective determination. The objective foundation of all social relations and ideologies is believed to be productive forces. Even irrational events are regarded, in a thorough-going deterministic fashion, as an efflux of the basic productive forces. The materialist discounts the influence of human ideas on the course of human history. The significance of ideas, *qua* ideas, is extremely belittled; they are counted only as the instruments of the owners of productive forces. The different classes of owners of the productive process, and their theoretical apologists, offer *different* views of the world. Among the contesting world-views the Marxist's alone is claimed to be the most objective; for it is being constantly oriented by the practice of the most class-conscious proletariat, and does not rest upon an unpractised theory.

But such a criterion of objectivity is circular and deceptive. Every class has its own theory and practice, and is

entitled to test the objectivity of its theory in terms of its own practice. If practice follows theory uncritically, as among the Marxists, and does not really test it, then objectivity turns out to be spurious and becomes a matter of opinion. Every class is then free to decide what is objective for it. The Marxist's theory of *the unity of theory and practice* betrays unmistakably its circularity and uncritical character.

Whatever might be the defects of the Marxist theory of objectivity, at least one point it has made out very clearly: it is our existence that determines our consciousness and not the other way round. This view had a very sobering effect on psychological scepticism. But, as I have indicated, the Marxist could not explain, while all non-proletarian theories betray a 'false consciousness' of human existence, why the proletarian theory alone can reflect the true one.

(*b*) The sociologist of knowledge now steps into the picture and tries to answer the question. He thinks that ideologies of all classes and epochs are oriented by their sociocultural matrix, and the Marxist ideology is no exception to this general principle. Marx is credited by the sociologist of knowledge with the discovery of the transcendental character of ideology. Ideology transcends historical conditions; but there is a limit to this transcendence, and that limit indicates the boundary between ideology and utopia. In spite of its valuational overplus, ideology may be shown to be objective, but utopia cannot be. To understand not only different utopias, but also different ideologies, the only proper approach is claimed to be sociological. Our knowledge, be it utopian or ideological, is rooted in social conditions, the subject-matter of sociological analysis. It

is in terms of sociology that the objectivity, if any, of all forms of knowledge has to be grasped.

The denial of absolute epistemology is welcome, since it brings down the problem of objectivity from an unearthly height. The constancy of the categories must not be taken as the ultimate guarantor of objectivity. What theory is the correct alternative to categorical objectivity? 'Sociological objectivity' is the answer of the sociologist of knowledge. But what actually this answer amounts to does not appear to be very new. Besides, this attempt to supplant psychology by sociology is bound to fail. We find that different types of sociologies, not to speak of ideologies and utopias, develop in the same socio-historical conditions. How can different theories or categories of knowledge be rationally claimed to have arisen from the same socio-historical conditions? To show the rationality of this claim the sociologist of knowledge has to admit either that this difference in the types of knowledge is due to an irreducible ideological overplus or value-predilection, or that this is the result of different psychological make-ups of human beings. The admission of the first alternative means the breakdown of the sociology of knowledge when confronted by divergent theories of value-knowledge. The admission of the second alternative should imply that the so-called revolt of the sociological theory of knowledge against the psychological one is abortive. The sociology of knowledge is, I think, the camouflaged psychology of knowledge and fails to design even some liberal test conditions of its own. In a sense, it is definitely going back to Scientific Materialism. It is Karl Mannheim, (the systematizer of the sociology of knowledge), and not Max Weber (the initiator of the idea), who is mainly responsible for this reversion.

XI

The revolt against psychologism was right, but the forms it took were either trivial (Jung), or inadequate (Marxism), or psychological (Mannheim).

The scientific materialist was correct so far as he pointed out the primacy of human existence over human ideas. But he took the concept of human existence in a very restricted sense and therefore his theory was found to be hopelessly inadequate when applied to explain abstract ideas such as those of logic and mathematics. Confronted with this significant overplus of history, the scientific materialist fumbles and falters.

It has been observed that scientific materialism is neither materialism nor scientific. Scientific materialism is an unnecessary metaphysical appendage to an otherwise very business-like Marxism. Michael Polanyi says that it is a disguise for the Marxist's moral (i.e. class moral) purpose ... "harnessed to the service of material aggrandizement and political violence".[5] Its scientific claim has been criticised on the ground that it fails to respond to the challenge of its counter-examples and modify itself accordingly. But this criticism does not seem to be entirely correct. Admittedly, Scientific Materialism has a dogmatic metaphysics as its core, which does not respond to any new factual discovery or historical event that threatens its validity, but this is not true of the Materialistic system as a whole. That many of its historical and economic theses have been found to be erroneous shows, to say the least, that these had empirical content and were not empty and merely dogmatic metaphysic.

I think that the attempt of Scientific Materialism to free the problem of historical objectivity from the domination

of psychological subjectivism was justifiable. But the materialist overdid his job. Perhaps he could not rightly realize the concept of scientific objectivity. Objectivity does not mean material externality.

In recent times, the writer who did most to refute this incorrect view of objectivity with impressive illustrations drawn from varied branches of science and humanities is Polanyi. Polanyi would seem to have something really interesting to say. Objective truth, according to him, is in a very serious sense *personal.* Objectivity does not demand impersonalization of knowledge. Every form of knowledge, be that abstract or concrete, is a sort of 'personal indwelling'. What we understand by truth, *meaning* and even *machine-communication* cannot but be coloured by our personal beliefs and decisions. We cannot know without accrediting ourselves as knower: "This self-accrediting is itself a fiduciary act of my own, which legitimates in its turn the transposition of all my ultimate assumptions into declarations of my own beliefs."[6]

That his theory is open to the obvious charge of subjectivism, Polanyi is not unaware. But his reply to it deserves careful attention. We are said to be seriously desirous of being honest in our decisions and beliefs. This keeps us constantly alert and makes us intellectually adventurous. Consumed with the passion to know, to explore the rational layers of the universe, we cannot rest content for ever in a make-believe world. This passion is continuously eating up our subjective prejudices. There is no surer guarantee for objectivity than this.

I attach great value to Professor Polanyi's theory of *personal* objectivity so far as it tries to make good the excesses of the theories of impersonal objectivity and psychologism which amounts to the denial of objectivity altogether. I am

one with him when he asserts that we are trying to describe the world as *truly as possible,* and our will-to-know is being sustained at least partly by the rationality of the world. But I am inclined to believe that his opposition to psychologism is much less than his opposition to verificationism or falsificationism. I am ready to concede that this is an unintended consequence of his main thesis. But this does not minimize its uncritical effect on his post-critical philosophy.

XII

I am inclined to believe that there can be no absolute *guarantee* of objectivity, neither psychological nor sociological. Psychological impartiality is not only impossible for us to attain, but also useless in this connection. The impact of sociological determinants of different minds is not uniform; so any approach from that end is also bound to fail at length. The issue of objectivity is most closely linked up with *criticism.* This issue can never be kept above the board of subjectivity: but this subjectivity is of a new kind. Let us call it *critical subjectivity.* The credit for sharply formulating the problem of objectivity in this fashion goes to Kant.

If our understanding is credited with the capacity to make the object possible, the subjectivity of the object cannot be denied. Now the question is: how can this subjective objectivity establish its rational or scientific *bona fides?* The answer to this question is to be sought in the fact that every rational person has the capacity to make the object possible and criticize the idea of object as understood by himself or by anybody else. My idea of object, however subjective it may be, is open to my own criticism and also to anyone else's. All rational persons are equipped with the same *formal* apparatus of criticism. But some of us lack in critical *inspira-*

tion and *attitude*, and they do not make full use of what they have. By objectivity, Kant understood critical subjectivity or *inter-subjectivity*. There is no guarantee of objectivity; there is only critical check to subjectivity. Let us recall the words of that great thinker: "Reason must in all its undertakings subject itself to criticism; should it limit freedom of criticism by any prohibitions, it must harm itself, drawing upon itself a damaging suspicion. Nothing is so important through its usefulness, nothing so sacred, that it may be exempted from this searching examination, which knows no respect for persons. Reason depends on this freedom for its very existence."

We agree entirely with Kant when he emphasizes the rule of critical reason in his bid to solve the problem of objectivity; but we think that, although he realized the reflective character of reason, he did not consider its self-critical character; and here we differ from Kant.

Categorical determination of the object may not be a *necessary* development or articulation of perceptual determination. Categorical determination of the object is indeed *a priori;* but it is not *necessarily valid.* What seems to be a representation in sense may not survive up to the categorical judgment of understanding. If whatever is presented by perception and imagination to our understanding is accepted by the latter, it does not deserve to be designated *critical.* It may be true that our understanding fails to move without the aid of sense-contents, but that does not mean either that sense-contents dictate the movement of understanding or that understanding determines the sense-contents infallibly. He who construes the relation between understanding and senses in this way undermines the critical spirit of philosophy.

The attempts of our understanding to unify categorically all of our sense-representations into some object or other may not succeed. But this is a possibility which is virtually discounted by the philosophies which are not self-critical. The *a priori* validity claim of understanding is at times vetoed by sense-representations. I agree that by slightly modifying this claim, understanding can escape the veto. By this, however, I do not mean that it should be the constant endeavour of understanding to make only such claims as can escape the veto of sense-representations. For, by doing so, understanding will trivialize itself and make itself uncritical.

It is not enough that understanding must be critical, it must also be self-critical. It is not enough that our reason does not uncritically yield to the counsels of the senses. What is more important and needed is: if the *a priori* validity claim of reason is negatived by experience, reason must be ever ready to review its own claim and, if necessary, to modify it. This would show the self-critical character of reason and its capacity to grow *indefinitely*. The necessity of self-criticism reveals that the categorical claims of reason are in fact *hypothetical,* and is grounded in the nature of reality. Reality has different layers, each of which is infinitely complex. Self-critical reason can never assume *a priori* and *once for all* that the categorical claim of its unification of any layer of reality is *necessarily* true. This unbounded optimism, says the self-critical rationalist, is unjustified and unjustifiable, if, of course, justification means capacity to stand critical tests, and not sporadic confirmation. Our *a priori* imposition is not necessarily tolerated by the world of experience, which is so complex in its constitution and unpredictable in its behaviour that hardly can we anticipate with absolute certainty its specific objects and

general structure. Still we are obliged—rationally obliged—to anticipate; and we do anticipate. Further, most of our anticipations regarding at least the natural world are ordinarily found to be correct. The degree of correctness that we could possibly achieve diminishes when we try to anticipate (or retrodict) the socio-historical world. There is a limit to our ability to determine the object of our knowledge: but, I agree, this limit varies from man to man, and the variation is due to man's actual capacity to apply his critical reason and make his reason self-critical. The distinction between 'is object' and 'seems to be object' is one of degree and not of kind. Reason enables us to go beyond 'seeming to be object,' and get hold of 'being object'. According to the critical rationalist, the 'is object'—stage of the object marks its highest possible determination, its supreme objectivity. This objectivity is said to be irreviewable and irrevisable.

I do not share this view of irrevisable objectivity. There is no final and unique objectivity of the object. Under critical scrutiny and tests the 'is object' often loses its original 'is-ness' and seeks to gain back its 'is'-title in an altered form. Let us now consider afresh the concept of objectivity in history.

The historian as historian intends to know human actions that took place in the past. The term *human actions* is to be taken in a broad sense covering both rational and irrational, individual and social, intended and unintended actions of human beings. The boundary line between rational and irrational, individual and social, intentional and unintentional is not hard and fast. The rationality of an action is not to be determined merely by an individual's personal assessment: it is to be seen not only from the inside of the individual. The inside view of rationality so elo-

quently advocated by Croce and Collingwood fails to realize the significance of the outside or social perspective of rationality. This partly accounts for their inability to explain the positive character of irrational actions. Once the social, i.e. inter-individual, import of the individual's actions is properly understood, the obscure connection between intended actions and their unintended consequences becomes intelligible. The historian attempts to ascertain some or other network of human actions understood in the above sense.

His attempts encounter several difficulties. The past cannot be directly recaptured: the irreversible time-order stands between the historian and the object of his study. Moreover, he has to be sure as far as possible that the 'is-objectivity' of his object is not a mere 'seeming objectivity' resulting from 'illegitimate use of categories' or subjective prejudices and biases.

Anybody who refuses to be ensnared by the metaphor of infallible intuition has to face the problem posed by the irreversibility of time. Time cannot be lightly dismissed as unreal by anyone who takes history seriously. Time by itself may not be able to confer uniqueness upon a historical event, but it has a say in the matter. The time-determinations of its content cannot be totally disregarded by thought, however pure it may try to be. Obviously, the historical mode of thinking is not what some thinkers are inclined to believe. The historian cannot perceive the past, he can only think of it. Nor can he be assured *a priori* that his thought is true. The past cannot be directly recaptured: it can only be rationally reconstructed in terms of *the logic of situation.*

This brings us to the second difficulty referred to above. Although the working historian tries to make his rational

reconstructions as objective as possible, there is *always* an objective limit to empirical objectivity. 'Is-objectivity' is in fact the best possible 'seeming objectivity' at a given time. To arrive at the best possible objectivity, the historian has to be constantly and severely *critical.* For, as I have repeatedly asserted before, *criticism is the life of objectivity.*

The historian criticizes not only his materials or evidences, he also critically interrogates his own organizing principles. This is what I mean by self-critical historical objectivity. Whatever inhibits criticism, to quote Kant, inhibits objectivity. Churches and dictators dislike criticism; they believe in legislating and not in seeking truth. Consequently, their histories singularly lack in objectivity. The historians interested in objective truth form a co-operative or critical fraternity, and do not work to please the humour of the authorities. The authoritarian and anti-critical histories, in most cases, exhibit the worst type of subjectivity.

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2

THE PARADOX OF VIOLENCE

I. Power as End and Means

We all want power, and, it is true that, without power we cannot achieve anything good. We need power not only to achieve what is good but also to give it a lasting shape. The immense use-value of power often obscures the main issue, viz. whether we need it as an end in itself or as a necessary means leading to it.[1] An intimately related and almost equally important issue is: What form of power should we prefer, and why? On these two issues Gandhi's thought and action, particularly the latter, are, I think, extremely significant and likely to prove very important in shaping the future of mankind. Gandhi says: "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life."[2]

In the abstract level of pure thought it is not very difficult to define the end-means relationship. Even those who are often accused (Marxists for example) of confusion between means and ends are, on analysis, found to be not guilty, at least not at the level of theory or thought. There is enough evidence in the history of violence to prove that many of those who advocate violence do so not merely for the sake

of violence but to protest against 'legitimized' and institutionalized violence and to create a non-violent and sane society. Even Georges Sorel[3] concedes *in theory* that ends and means are *not* inter-changeable, for, he knows, the denial of the means-value of violence turns out *in practice* to be veiled plea for a permanent reign (or institution) of violence. He makes an important distinction between *violence* and *force;* the former *may be* used for 'noble and progressive purposes,' but force, says he, *is* 'brutish'. But the trouble is: the reign of violence cannot be made permanent, i.e. permanently institutionalized. Institution of violence *both* encourages and suppresses violence. And this is what I mean by the *paradox of* violence, an *unintended* practical effect of the theoretical justification and practical use of violence as a means to capture political power.

II. Man, Society and Violence

The logic of paradox is somewhat like this. Every intended action has its unintended and unpredictable consequences. No amount of planning of polity and economy with the help of machine and mathematics would be a sufficient premium to insure the complete success of human predictions.[4] To say this is not to deny the necessity of planning but only to remind ourselves of its limits and also the limits of our own nature which make planning necessary. The limit of planning is *felt* when attempts are made to institutionalize violence in the name of rationalization of our socio-economic existence. Whenever an action that restricts human freedom is somehow legitimized, that amounts to extending recognition of violence. To the extent the structure of a society fails to express the freedom of the individuals concerned it bears the

strain of violence. Whatever resists my expression violates my value and being. Society is intended to fulfil and not to violate our ends in life.

Gandhi thinks that man by his very nature is non-violent. *A violent man is a self-alienated man.* Institutionalization of violence means objective confirmation of subjective alienation. But man cannot remain alienated for ever: he must return to his 'essential,' i.e. non-violent nature. A machine cannot perpetuate its own motion. A man can*not consistently* confirm his own alienation. The paradox of violence reflects the ethical tension suffered by the alienated man—alienated under the pressure of violence. The distance and separation between the essential man and the institutionalized man makes itself manifest in the paradox of violence.[5]

III. Gandhi on the Paradox of Violence

Gandhi writes: "Let us not be obsessed with catch-words and seductive slogans from the West. All that comes from the West on this subject is tarred with the brush of violence. I object to it because I have seen the wreckage that lies at the end of this road..... And I owe whatever influence I have in the West to my ceaseless endeavour to find a solution which promises an escape from the vicious circle of violence and exploitation. I have been a sympathetic student of the Western social order and I have discovered that underlying the fever that fills the soul of the West there is a restless search for truth.... Let us study our Eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific inquiry and we shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume

that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty."[6]

Gandhi's view on what he calls 'the vicious circle of violence and exploitation' rests upon his commitment to non-violence and experiments with truth about human nature. One may or may not agree with the Gandhian way of solving the paradox of violence, but I for one do not quite see how his diagnosis of "the fever (of violence) that fills the soul of the West" could be honestly pronounced as mistaken. Are we not, all over the world, suffering from the fever of violence? Exploitation is perhaps nothing but a symptom of that emaciating fever.

We should remember that Gandhi's critique of violence is directed not only against the socialist or communist society but also against the capitalist or feudal society. Any human relationship based upon, or influenced by, ill-will or anger, is violent. Gandhi's ideal of *ahimsā* is very lofty indeed. "Perfect non-violence," says he, "is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy."[7] Gandhi's *ahimsā* is like Platonic *Good,* or, to quote his own analogy, Euclidean *point.* It is an ideal which "we have to endeavour every moment of our lives" to realize, but in our mortal frame we cannot realize it perfectly. If Gandhi is correct, and I think he is, we are all condemned to violence. But this condemnation does *not necessarily* put us into the paradox or vicious circle. Our *existential himsā* has not taken away our freedom to follow the *ideal ahimsā.* For in the depth of our existence we are always free, and the dialectic of *himsā* and *ahimsā* is always open there. What really threatens the ideal of *ahimsā* and can at least temporarily block our way to that ideal is *institutional himsā* and not *existential himsā.*

IV. Marx on the Paradox

Marx believed that man would pass from the realm of conflict and dependence into that of co-operation and freedom. If the history of the Marxist countries has not yet corroborated Marx's belief, the reason is not far to seek. He prescribed wrong means for right ends. Marx thought that at least the proletariat class may safely be entrusted with the authority of using violence as means for realizing the end of human freedom. He hoped that by abolition of private property the dictatorship of the proletariat would put an end to all forms of human alienation, individual and generic, objective and subjective. But practice shows that the very conditions which make a dictatorship successful tends to make its abolition unsuccessful.

Marx said: "The existence of the State and the existence of slavery are inseparable"; Gandhi puts the point in a slightly different way: "The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form." Both of them wanted to abolish State and establish a truly free society or, what Gandhi calls, an 'enlightened anarchy'. But Gandhi was convinced that violent class-struggle and revolution make 'equal fredom for all' impossible. In this connection he pointedly draws our attention to the paradox of violence.[8]

"It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time.

"What I would personally prefer, would be, not a centralization of power in the hands of the State but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum State-ownership."

When Gandhi expresses his fear about State-ownership and wants to keep it down to a minimum, he does not entertain any illusion about the modes of function of 'free economy.'[9] He is quite aware that the consumer is never sovereign, neither in a planned economy nor in a competitive economy, and that the voter is not sovereign in a parliamentary democracy either.

V. Values in Politics

It is not easy to choose between the alternative systems of theory and practice. The uneasiness is felt deeply by persons like Gandhi who are involved in experiments with truth and not prepared to air the current shibboleths. About private ownership Gandhi is not all praise: he thinks it is just 'less injurious' than State-ownership. The plausibility of his argument is mainly ethical. Both forms of ownership rely more or less on violence, but Gandhi thinks the violence practised by private owners because of its less institutionalized character is more open to moderating and moralizing influence. Gandhi's theory of trusteeship (i.e. the wealthy would not own but hold wealth in trust for the poor), his alternative to capitalism and socialism, is capitalist in form and socialist (almost utopian) in content. About its success in practice he is not sure. But for him, a devout *satyagrahi,* success is not the most important consideration. "A *satyagrahi,* whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious. He is vanquished only when he forsakes truth and non-violence and thus turns a deaf ear to the Inner Voice. What helps me to break the vicious circle of violence is my Inner Voice, the free and fearless voice of head and heart, and *not* the Outer Voice of Party or State. It is by asserting my non-violent inner nature in practice that I

could do my best to solve the paradox of institutionalized violence."[10]

VI. Freedom, Consent and Political Obligation

Gandhi's view on violence *vis-a-vis* the relation between the ruler and the ruled is characteristically simple but profound. It touches upon three fundamental concepts on the borderline of morality and politics, viz. 'freedom, consent and political obligation.'[11] Gandhi's concept of freedom reminds one of Kant's. Both are of opinion that to be free we must be free from hedonic susceptibilities and passions like anger and ill-will. Gandhi seems to endorse the Kantian ideas of morality and politics founded upon Good Will. But while Kant insists on the autonomy of Good Will and its independence from God-Will, Gandhi thinks that the goodness of human will consists in its dependence upon the will of God. According to Gandhi, the Inner Voice is the Voice of God in us, and we are obligated immediately by our Inner Voice or conscience. Our political obligation is essentially personal and only incidentally social, and, therefore, Gandhi points out that most of the social reformers and political revolutionaries are at the beginning misunderstood and found to be lonely. This is even more true in the case of those who preach the primacy of ethics in politics. For Gandhi, the freedom of the country and that of the individual are identical at bottom. "Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals." Traced to its ethical root, our political obligation is found to have simultaneously bound us with God and fellow human beings. Gandhi says: "My creed is service of God and therefore of humanity." Gandhi takes *Law*,

Truth, Love and many other terms of synonyms of God. And it seems to me that the ethical contents of Gandhi's thought could be defended without any theistic postulate.

Freedom, according to Gandhi, is to be deserved and achieved and cannot be given as a sort of gift. In genuine freedom there is no place for hatred, anger or ill-will. The struggle for freedom is to explore the possibility of that Law which is equally acceptable to the ruler and the ruled. The *Swarāj* which is achieved 'through' *ahimsā* is nothing but the realization by man of the Law of his own nature. Gandhi's ideal of *ahimsā* is very lofty indeed, but, he takes pains to point out that our journey to this ideal is essentially an inward journey—a ceaseless endeavour to realize the Law of truly human, i.e. divine, nature. "Swaraj is synonymous with *Ram Raj*—the establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth." Our political actions and dispositions are right or good only when we are genuinely free. Freedom is the minimum necessary condition for our actions being ethical. The locus of ideal freedom is Universal Man and *not* individual man (affiliated to this or that sect/class/nation). But it should be remembered that 'free', for Gandhi, is primarily a predicate of man and *not* of this or that holistic entity like class or nation. The anarchist implication of Gandhi's concept of freedom is transparent.

The continued existence and function of every form of government, foreign or national or even local, depends upon the *consent* of the governed and the *cooperation* between the ruler and the ruled. Gandhi writes: "Even the most despotic government cannot stand except for the consent of the governed which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot. Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is gone." Gandhi holds that "all exploitation is based on cooperation, willing or forced, of

the exploited." We note here again that Gandhi is using the terms *consent* and *cooperation* in an extraordinary and ethical sense. What he seems to have in mind is this: It is always humanly *possible* (i.e. man is *free*) to withhold consent or refuse to cooperate. Gandhi thinks always in terms of an *ideal* socio-political order. Although he claims to be a *practical idealist,* which indeed he is, his *ideal* is too lofty to be practised in the *actual* state of affairs. The gap between his ideal and its actual field of application is so vast that one feels inclined to take his views on politics as purely utopian. Utopian he is, I agree, but he is the only utopian in the history of mankind who has 'successfully' practised his utopia for the *swarāj* of a nation of 350 millions and whose utopian ideas are being increasingly accepted by the world at large.[12] Gandhi thinks that a government has no moral right to exist and function if it is not being *continuously* sustained by the consent of the people concerned. Simply in return of the protection of law that a government affords to the people it cannot (certainly not morally) compel them to obey its law. Unless the law(s) of government reflect the Law of Free human nature, the citizen is free to withhold his consent to be ruled by, and cooperate with, the Government. The authority which compels people to obey its laws rests on *himsā.* "The mind of a man who remains good under compulsion cannot improve, in fact it worsens. And when compulsion is removed all the defects well up to the surface with even greater force." The authority which rests and relies on *himsā* is gradually weakened because of the people's indifference (or withholding of consent) to its rule and finally destroyed either under the pressure of its unsupported super-structure or by more effective counter-violence. The authority based on *himsā* alienates people from its rule.

VII. Violence and Alienation

The relation between violence and alienation deserves serious inquiry. The use of violence results in the alienation of the user not only from otherselves but also from himself. Violence is self-defeating and self-alienating. Martin Luther King says that "violence is impractical because the old eye-for-an-eye philosophy ends up leaving everybody blind.... It is immoral because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for everybody."[13] *Non-violence* sounds negative but is very much positive in content. It means respect and love for other persons including even opponents and enemies. Hatred and contempt breed hatred and contempt and make us blind to others' virtues. Consequently, what happens is very tragic and nearly suicidal when enemies are defeated and liquidated; we start treating even our critical friends first as opponents and then as enemies, for we simply refuse to believe that one may be critical of us without being inimical towards us. This is the unmistakable lesson that one draws from the history of the bloody purges in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1934-37).[14] But "violence is no monopoly of any one party." Gandhi very rightly observes, "I know Congressmen who are neither socialists nor communists, but are frankly devotees of the cult of violence," and "contrarywise, I know socialists and communists who will not hurt a fly but who believe in the universal ownership of the instruments of production."[15] Gandhi counts himself as one among the latter. Gandhi's view is to be understood in the context of his conviction that politics of violence is politics of alienation. Even when man is forced to surrender to (or fails to resist actively) the rule of violence he feels angry, spiritually withdrawn from but not

completely indifferent to, the ruler, and when opportunity comes, he strikes back and tries to destroy the rule of violence.

Violence and what it entails, i.e. alienation—individual as well as generic, weaken the social infra-structures of polity, and consequently, threatened from below, the violent politicians, themselves alienated from the social milieu, are obliged by the logic of situation to fall back more and more upon bureaucracy, police and military. As the inbuilt violence of political super-structure is not *subjectively* supported by its infra-structure the minimum *objective* obedience that a polity needs for its functional survival is exacted by it by means of its power, propaganda, and other forms of highly planned socio-cultural engineering. Gandhi takes pains to show that smooth functioning of all types of institutions ultimately depends upon the persons who man them.[16] He "looks upon an increase of the power of the State with the greatest fear" for he thinks "it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress." If power circulates only from above to below and not the other way round, the power-structure gradually assumes an authoritarian and insensate character, i.e. 'powerful' politicians at top become impervious to the opposition and criticism from bottom.

In the wake of alienation comes a breakdown of communication between 'they' (i.e. powerful) and 'we' (i.e. powerless). 'They' simply 'don't' (in fact, will not) understand our language of reason which to 'them' seems completely meaningless, abstract, and therefore useless. Gradually, under the pressure of circumstances, 'we' become convinced that the only language 'they' will understand is the language of power, i.e. 'their' own language. The 'two-language formula' will not simply work. This tragic con-

viction underlies different forms of violent protest, rebellion and revolution. The closed and power-packed structure of violence fails to save itself against the attack of counter-violence. This is the picture of the paradox of violence reviewed from the end of alienation. Alienated from 'us' (i.e. the social base) and imprisoned in 'their' closed set-up, the more 'they' try to *feel* strengthened by assuming and concentrating powers in 'their' hands, the more weakened 'they' become *objectively.*

VIII. Dissolution of the Paradox of Violence

Gandhi's idea of *Ram Rajya* offers an utopian solution of the paradox of violence. The fact that such an ideal society is not realizable at present confirms the paradox in a way. The Marxist utopia of Communism, too, is yet to be realized. Gandhi never questions the fact that the Bolshevik ideal is 'noble' and "has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women", but he is convinced that unless the ideal "precludes the use of force" and "is quickened and purified" by the noble example of renunciation and sacrifices of 'such master spirits as Lenin' it will not succeed.[17] Marx was persuaded that the root cause of all *social* ills, private ownership, is to be removed by a *political* act of revolution (to be followed up by the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat), but, aware of the possible danger of institutionalization and perpetuation of violence that comes in the wake of revolution, he emphasized the necessity of shortening the life-span of the 'transitional' dictatorship. It is found in practice that party dictatorship which relies on veiled but violent power for its existence makes the formation of self-corrective inner mechanism impossible

and, therefore, proceeds through jerks and jolts, and its transformation (or destruction) could be brought about only by clique, conspiracy, or/and counter-violence. As the increasing *human* character and *social* look of a *political* system mainly depends upon people's *willing* participation in its activities, the *duty* of the ruler is to provide the people more and more with the *objective* opportunities for participation. By allowing the people to be free participants in ruling, the ruler does *his* duty, i.e. paves the way for *swarāj* (self-rule), but *swarāj* is not merely a political phenomenon, its essence is ethical, and people must *deserve* it first and should not accept it as a gift from the ruler. In fact, the paradox of violence is to be *dis*solved (and cannot be solved). The process of dissolution is gradual and demands willing cooperation, free dialectic, between the ruler and the ruled. This cooperation entails voluntary abdication of power on the part of the ruler and assumption of greater responsibility on the part of the ruled, but neither is possible unless *both* the ruler and the ruled sincerely try to become *swarāj*ist (self-ruling) first. "The first step to *swarāj* lies in the individual" and not in party or class. Gandhi's view on the point is very clear: "Violent means will give violent *swarāj*."[18]

Deeply moved by violence underlying Capitalism, Marx wanted to get rid of it once for all by means of a quick and total act of violence, i.e. revolution, and establish Communism on the twin principles of freedom and spontaneous cooperation. Gandhi is not at all unaware of the violence and exploitation legitimized by the Capitalist society, but he is also equally aware of the 'inevitable' miseffects of using violence to undo the miseffects of violence. He also knows that "good travels at a snail's pace," "that to impregnate people with good requires a long time," and, therefore, he

is "not in a hurry."[19] To dissolve the paradox of violence, Gandhi is in favour of practising non-violence primarily at *personal* level and he believes that its impact would be felt in due course at the *institutional* level also. Any other moral way of dissolving the paradox is yet unknown.

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3

THE MORAL CHALLENGE OF THE GANDHIAN IDEOLOGY

I. Prefatory

Broadly speaking, there are two different ways of doing politics: (*a*) by politicalizing morals and (*b*) by moralizing politics. But wherein precisely does lie the difference between the two cannot be easily indicated, certainly not by a rule of thumb, perhaps not even by a rigorously defined external criterion. The difference is known best only to one whose political decisions and actions are imbued with moral consciousness and whose basic structure of personality and temperament is ethical as distinguished from political or economic. It seems to me that unless one could go deep into the moral core of Gandhi's personality one would fail, as many of us have already failed, to realize the significance and value of most of his decisions and actions. Like some other great souls Gandhi has been opposed, maligned and finally killed by his enemies and critics, and misunderstood and misrepresented by his disciples and followers. But unlike some other great souls he is primarily known as a politician. One needs experiential depth as well as historical breadth to make a proper assessment of what Gandhi left

for us in and through his politics and economics. I think that the lasting heritage of Gandhi to mankind will prove neither economic nor political but ethical. To say this is not to detract one in the least from the greatness of his contribution to the struggle for national liberation and economic upliftment of the masses. In what follows I shall try to indicate (*i*) the moral core of Gandhi's personality and (*ii*) in what respects the Gandhian ideology is making its silent challenge felt in and around the conflicts of interests and ideologies of the modern world.

II. Man and Ideology

Gandhi's ideology is to be understood primarily in the context of his life and only secondarily in that of his society. What is of secondary importance in the understanding of other ideologies is of primary importance in the case of the Gandhian ideology. In a pseudo-scientific vein it is often said that one's ideology has little or nothing to do with one's personal life and could very well be assessed impersonally and objectively. This attitude betrays a serious misunderstanding about Science and Reasons, and its hollowness has been exposed in recent years, among others by Polanyi and Hayek.

Not only to understand his ideals but even to understand his ideas we must try to know the man in question. Man is continuously exceeding himself in his thought and action —thought entailing action. Human thought and action are prompted by a lack-awareness, i.e. by the awareness of what man is not and has not. It is to this reflective level that man owes his ideas and ideals of action. And here lies the basic difference between man and animal, or what is human in man and what is animal in him. Animals do

not think and act, and are capable only of *re*-acting. Man is essentially (one might say, existentially) transcendental and, therefore, a perpetual producer and consumer of ideologies. The scepticism regarding the possibility of ideology rests upon a wrong (i.e. positivistic) image of man. Man's relation to his ideology is dialectical—he makes it and breaks it and does so only to make it anew. And all that he does he does under a two-fold necessity, existential (or primarily personal) and transcendental (or socio-historical).

It is against the background of Gandhi the man and the Gandhian image of man that we should try to follow the moral core of the Gandhian ideology.

III. Gandhi as Man and Gandhi's Image of Man

Gandhi was not a very scholarly person and had no first-hand knowledge of the ideas (of Marx, Freud and Einstein for example) which have influenced the history of our century most. He was very humble both in his utterances and dispositions. He expressed a desire that after his death all his writings should be destroyed, for he feared that relying on those evidence one might form a wrong idea about his personality and he wished to be judged by the posterity solely on the basis of what he *did* and *not* what he *said*. Being finite and limited as we are, we should not forget the actual gap between our professed ideals and performed acts or intentions. To say, following Kant, that *ought* (i.e. duty) depends on *can* (i.e. ability) is to say only the half-truth. To have the truth completed we must add, following Gandhi: *can* depends on *is* (i.e. existence). This implies, among other things, human ability is not primarily determined and, therefore, measurable by some fixed external deter-

minants or socio-economic parameters. The existential endlessness of human ability is a pointer to the freedom of man, an old but ever renewable image of man.

In the moral teachings of Gandhi one finds an insightful blending of rigorism and liberalism. On the one hand, he is never tired of emphasizing the necessity of unconditional adherence to law or truth, and, on the other, his firm conviction is that an ethical man must not accept and follow an ideal of which he is not himself rationally and conscientiously persuaded. One should not expect any holiday from the life of virtue. The command of rational will, i.e. imperative, is always unconditional, but how we should follow it, is conditional, i.e. influenced by our own 'lights,' as Gandhi puts it. Gandhi's ethics reminds me of Kant's. However, there is a difference between Gandhi and Kant. Obviously, the former lacks the dialectical and system-building skill of the latter, but with equal fairness, one might add, the latter did not, while the former did, experience the difficulties involved in applying a rigorous ethics in shaping the political destiny of 350 millions of human beings. Moreover, it should be mentioned in this connection that the greatness of a system of ideas or ideals does not consist so much in its logical formulations and proofs as in the insights which it tries to formulate and prove. Kant relied too much on the rational nature of man and too little on man's non-rational intuitions or insights. Gandhi's view is somewhat different: Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence.... I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason.[1] I have come to the fundamental conclusion that if you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy reason, you must move the heart also. The

appeal of reason is more to the head but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man.[2]

To follow the difference further we should better be acquainted with Gandhi's view of man. And this will provide us clearer understanding of the Gandhian ideology.

Gandhi's image of man is essentially spiritual. Created by God, man is said to be essentially good and untainted by evils around him in his social institutions. Gandhi's faith in essential goodness or godliness of man is unbounded, and he says: "I refuse to suspect human nature". Always he makes a distinction between the basic spiritual identity of man and his non-basic institutional identity, and of the two he is concerned more with the former. In other words, he is against the so-called socialist precept: To change man change his institutions first. Gandhi is uncompromising on the necessity of starting change from the other end. For him 'the supreme consideration' is 'the individual'. Whatever deepens and broadens man's own spiritual identity is of supreme importance not only from the ethico-religious but also from the socio-political point of view. The realization of man's 'lonely' spiritual identity can inspire and ennoble his political actions more than anything else. Political shibboleths or ideologies are no substitute for self-realization. In plain words, Gandhi is emphatic on the point that he who wants to *do* good of others must *be* good himself first. As regards Gandhi, it might be of interest to note that he would not have asked others to do, or refrain from doing, something which he himself could not do or refrain from doing. He was no believer in double-standard morality or politics. A believer in violence and untruth must not advise others to be non-violent and truthful. One must try to achieve a unity in one's thought and

action. The leader must deserve leadership before he intends or begins to lead (the people). This profound ethical core of Gandhi's own life added a new dimension to his political ideology unheard-of before.

IV. Gandhi on Moral Law

The basis of Gandhi's moral and political ideas is God. For Gandhi to serve God and to serve human beings are one and the same. His ethics rests on the metaphysical faith in the unity of, or identity-in-difference between God and human beings. He writes: "I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity;"[3] "My creed is service of God and therefore of humanity."[4] "The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour (to realize God), simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all... My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceless, so inert that I must concentrate myself on serving them."[5]

What strikes me most in this connection is the depth of Gandhi's conviction and the simplicity of his expression, and, I think, the latter follows from the former. A non-believer might pertinently raise the question: "Does Gandhi's ethics stand if its underlying metaphysical postulates regarding the existence of God and the essential unity of God and human beeings are withdrawn?" I believe it does, i.e. it has a secular content. To accept Gandhi's ethics and the ideology based upon it, one need not share Gandhi's *advaita* faith in the unity of God and Man. Apart from other un-Gandhian possibilities of justifying the Gandhian ideology it should be borne in mind that Gandhi himself

has left at least some formulations of his own thought which might be accepted by one in clear conscience without committing oneself to the theistic faith of Gandhi.

Gandhi's views on God and morality are not easy to represent in a very consistent way. This is because his main concern was *not* consistent system-building, but giving expression and remaining faithful, to *his* own experiences. Still the striking consistency that a keen student of Gandhi observes in thousands and thousands of propositions uttered and written by Gandhi at different times and on different issues is an unmistakable expression of his inner unity. To him God is perfect embodiment of all highest values. He characterizes God in different ways—as Truth, as Love, as Living Law and in various other ways, and at the same time he takes pains to point out that God is nameless and formless and transcends speech and reason.

Gandhi seems to be an absolutist when he says, "I do not regard God as a person;"[6] but when he says, "I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity,"[7] one wonders if he is not a personal idealist, attaching more importance to Man than to God. His views on the modes of realization of Truth and God indicate that he is an intuitionist and mystic,[8] but when he says with all seriousness that "every formula of every religion has, in this age of reason, to submit to the test of reason and universal assent,"[9] one can hardly doubt his rationalism.

Of all Gandhian characterizations of God the one that seems to me most important is Truth. And it is very significant to note that he brings the concept of Truth very close to that of Law. For him Truth or Law is not a dead concept but a *living* presence, a *loving* presence. God is said to be Life, Light and Love. Society is a living whole, united by Law and Love, and the progress in its journey to

swarāj depends upon the light of the individuals. All that Gandhi says and suggests in the course of elaborating his idea of God might be rationally accepted without believing in God. At least that is how I understand Gandhi's view of God.

Gandhi's notion of religion is also in some respects uncommon. It is very much ethical and reminds me of Kant once again. He says:

> There is no religion higher than Truth and Rightness.[10] I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality.[11] As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious.[12]

Ethics, broadly speaking, may be construed in two different ways—ethics of solitude and ethics of relation. There is no holiday from the ethical life, neither when I am one-among-others nor even when I am relatively lonely. The requirements of being and remaining ethical in loneliness are difficult. To appear ethical to others is easier than to *be* so. Gandhi insists on the ethics of relation based on the ethics of solitude. Gandhi's politics is primarily based on the latter and it partly explains its so-called failure and utopian character.

V. From Morality to Politics

In the age of Reason when the idea of secular politics has gained tremendous popularity it sounds odd if someone says, as Gandhi does, that politics must be religious.

> Religion which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion. I am putting a religious matter before you in a practical form.[13] I cannot conceive politics as divorced from religion. Indeed religion should pervade every one of our actions.[14]

But to avoid possible misunderstanding one should remember what he means by religion and why he himself entered politics. According to him, one does not really need to enter politics, in fact "politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake," and his politics is "to wrestle with the snake."[15] The question is *not,* "whether we should do politics?" but, "what sort of politics should we do—good or bad?" Gandhi's mission was to moralize politics, to infuse higher values in politics. By religion he did not mean anything narrow or orthodox: "Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. ... It harmonizes them and gives reality.[16]

Gandhi intends to found his politics on the most ideal basis, which, according to him, is also the most real basis, i.e. the spiritual identity of mankind individuated or separated by space and time, creed, caste, and class. He is a down-to-earth 'practical idealist', and has been more adored or maligned than understood. And for this misunderstanding we, the common people, are not alone to be held responsible. Gandhi decided to follow steadfastly some very lofty and rigorous ideals in an age when most people are self-alienated and seek immediate gratification of self-interest. Self-alienation, according to him, cannot be really undone without self-realization. Self-rule (*swarāj*) without self-realization is said to be impossible.

For *swarāj* Gandhi set before the nation some such ideals as the common man finds extremely difficult to follow even in the very limited sphere of his own private life. He constantly reminds us that he has nothing new to offer us. His ideals, e.g. truth and non-violence, are, according to him, as old as the rivers and mountains of India. But the ideals

of Gandhi, as we find them in practice, are something very new and wonderful. Practice is said to be the 'acid test' of an ideal. Gandhi put his ideals to a test unheard of before; he wanted to see if on the basis of the ideals of truth and non-violence a movement of national liberation could be launched, sustained and its end successfully achieved. It is here that one encounters the moral challenge of the Gandhian ideology.

True, the Marxists also think that a theory not tested by practice should not be taken seriously, and should be regarded as nothing but an empty speculation or illusion. But there is a very significant difference between the Gandhian test of the Gandhian ideology and the Marxist test of the Marxist ideology. The latter test is closed or confined within the practice only of the proletarian class or, to be more precise, the proletarian class as dictated by the dictatorship of the proletariat, while the former test is open to the practice of all 'classes,' for, unlike Marx, Gandhi thinks that truth is absolute, i.e. not class-relative, and that there is no earthly reason why the proletarian consciousness alone should have the privileged access to ideological truth and all other 'class'-consciousness be debarred from it. One might say in a metaphysical vein that in the depth of individual consciousness the so-called class-barriers are not to be found, and our endeavour should be to make this depth-consciousness the basis of political action. It is to be noted that the Gandhian test of the truth of an ideology, because of its liberal character, is very rigorous indeed. Open to the experience of all classes, both severally and collectively, Gandhian ideology is falsifiable by the falsity-consciousness of any individual irrespective of his class-affiliation. But Marxist ideology is never falsified; first, because it is not open to falsification, except in a very restricted sense, res-

triction being set only by the proletarian experience, and secondly, because each time it is falsified it is given a new interpretation and twist, without admitting the fallible character of the ideology. An infallible ideology can never be logically accepted as scientific. Marxist ideology, being closed as it is to both internal and external criticisms, soon turns out to be a dogma. Its official interpretations may come and go, its official exponents may change, but its 'essence' seems to remain unchanged; only its strategic and tactical aspects are said to be undergoing change. To defend it against all possible modification and criticism, it has been converted into a closed system, both theoretically and practically; its ideological content is being sacrificed at the altar of convenience and opportunism. When I say this I do not intend to deny in the least the humanistic inspiration of Marx's own thoughts and some of his followers.

But we must note the contrast between the character of the Marxist ideology and that of the Gandhian ideology. As his ideology does not truly reflect his own fallible character, and lest one might form a wrong view about him, Gandhi expressed his wish to be judged by his actions and not ideas and ideals. This is thoroughly an ethical attitude and rarely to be found among politicians or even political ideologists who are always busy to justify their ideologies in terms of strategy, tactics and highly interpreted (i.e. distorted) ideology. The ideologists generally take one of the following two types of rational attitudes: either they try somehow to justify an ideology to prove its rationality, or they themselves criticize and critically review it continuously to prove its rationality. The former attitude may be called the justificationist view of rationality, and the latter the self-critical view of rationality; the former is loose and liberal, the latter austere and rigorous. It is an apparent

paradox, but logically not at all surprising, that those who are politically illiberal take a very liberal (i.e. uncritical) attitude towards the defects of their own ideology, and that those who are politically liberal take a rigorous (i.e. self-critical) attitude towards their own ideology. The reason is not far to seek: while some are concerned with political truth and morality and intend to keep these values open to question to any and every individual man irrespective of his collective affiliation, others define truth in terms of practical success and legislate revolutionary morality on the authority of a particular class. Gandhi is self-critical and rationalist. He says:

> Scriptures cannot transcend reason and truth.... Error can claim no exception even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world....And error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.

Gandhi's concepts of absolute truth and morality questionable by any self-critical and free *man* are quite different from those of class-truth and class-morality questionable only by the proletarian class under the dictation of the dictatorship.

At this stage one might intervene on behalf of the Marxist ideology and say that I am a partisan in the battle of ideas between pro-Marxists and pro-Gandhians. Yes, I confess, I am. In the struggle between higher truth and lower truth one should be partisan; the only point is to see whether the partisanship is critical or not.

It is very difficult to accept higher values, and in practice the difficulties prove even more difficult. It is no wonder that Gandhi has been more worshipped than followed. The critic's cries that the so-called followers of Gandhi have themselves betrayed him, are unfortunately true in general and

are understandable. The challenge posed by the Gandhian ideology before us is too high to be adequately responded to by us. The fact that we have largely failed to follow him shows not only our ordinary abilities and disabilities but also the extraordinary moral orientation of his politics. An ideology is not to be judged exclusively in terms of its immediate and pragmatic success or failure.

But it must be said that Gandhi did not live in vain and he was not an empty visionary. He led the struggle of our national liberation and led it most successfully. Given his lofty moral ideals, his political influence and success appeared unbelievable to many of us. At least some of us are convinced that Gandhi was a shrewd and crooked *banya*, and his moral professions were intended only to cloak his real political motivations. There are others who half-heartedly admit that Gandhi was a very effective mass leader because of his good charismatic personality but then hasten to add that he was not good enough for the purpose of leading a proletarian revolution. What these evaluations mainly reveal is not Gandhi's personality but our different criteria of judgment, prejudices and biases. The main thing is: we are not yet ready to believe that a political man may be a truly moral man.

Gandhi, himself a keen analyst of human nature, was not unaware of this common belief. He knew more than anyone else how difficult it is for one to follow unwaveringly the lofty ideals of *ahimsā* and *satyāgraha*. *Ahimsā* is not merely absence of violence or hatred, it means the positive attitude of love and toleration (toleration not as an act of condescending but due to a deep sense of duty) to all beings, human and sub-human. The duties of the *satyāgrahī* are very difficult indeed to fulfil. The *satyāgrahī* should not be "impatient with blind orthodoxy, nor be irritated over the

unbelief of the suppressed people. He must know that his suffering will melt the stoniest heart of the stoniest fanatic and that it will also be a wall of protection for the wavering *Panchama* brother who has been held under suppression for ages. He must know that relief will come when there is least hope for it."[17] The ideology of the *Satyāgrahī* is based upon three presuppositions, or, what he prefers to call, propositions: (*i*) human nature is essentially spiritual and rational; (*ii*) it is, therefore, bound to respond to spiritual and rational influence; and (*iii*) the spiritual and rational man is optimist. Gandhi had no doubt that these propositions are true, and, at the same time, he had no illusion about the fact that the movements he led were not in strict accordance with his noble ideals. His view on the point is very candid and insightful:

> I have admitted my mistake. I thought our struggle was based on non-violence, whereas in reality it was no more than passive resistance, which essentially is a weapon of the weak. It leads naturally to armed resistance whenever possible.

But Gandhi was not prepared to compromise his moral principles simply because they did not pay in the short run, and here lies his exceptional nobility or, what one might say, utopianism. He would not give up his end simply because appropriate means are not readily available. According to him, political struggle is a moral struggle and its worth does not consist in procuring some external gain. "For a fighter," Gandhi says, "the fight itself is victory for he takes delight in it alone." In face of hostile facts he is doubly determined to fight for and stand by his values. Gandhi declares: "we shall never achieve (our object) unless new facts are *made* to suit the principle, instead of performing the impossible feat of changing the principle to suit existing facts."

VI. Non-Violence as a World-Force

Gandhi thinks that non-violence is a world-force. In the face of it this view sounds hollow. But to me this view reveals Gandhi's insight into the weary heart of the modern world. Political violence is the counsel of despair, frustration, and anger. Even those who resort to violence will not deny that its value is only means-value, and knowing as we do the consequences of two global wars, several local wars, and the bloody purges in Russia and some other totalitarian regimes, it is impossible for us to deny honestly the potential danger (i.e. of counter-violence) involved in achieving some end (however just might it be in itself) by violence. The peace, socialism, or *swarāj* purchased at the price of violence has always proved unstable; maybe this proof is not equally clear to all of us. The Marxist thought that once the bourgeois state, the most powerful instrument of class violence at the hand of the bourgeoisie, could be crushed by violent class war, the necessity of further using violence would be removed or, at any rate, minimized. Then it was thought that unless socialist victory assumes an international dimension through a series of violent proletarian revolutions, the possibility of perpetrating violence by the counter-revolutionaries would remain there both inside and outside the socialist camp for ever. But, at the risk of being tedious, Gandhi went on saying that violence begets violence, and that to consolidate what you gain through violence you have to institutionalize violence and terror and thus to form a vicious circle of violence.

Gandhi left us twenty-five years ago and we have witnessed several important things in the world since. First, the independence of some Afro-Asian nations in a non-violent way (not exactly in the Gandhian sense); secondly,

the establishment of totalitarian socialism in some countries through violence (not always according to the official interpretation(s) of violence); thirdly, the phase of cold war between the 'free world' and the 'communist block'; fourthly, the thaw, the policy (neither principle nor tactic) of peaceful co-existence, the *Panchsheel* and the efforts to control nuclear armament; and, finally, the diplomacy of sphere of influence. Certainly the Marxists have not become Gandhian and lost faith in the creed of violence, but, perhaps, now better educated in the school of revolutionary experience, they have started realizing the limits of violence for the purpose of gaining the communist objectives, national and international. It is under the combined effects of external pressure and internal experience that they are now exploring the peaceful means for achieving their ends. Gandhi expressed long ago his "firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built upon violence," and the basis of his conviction was the realization that non-violence is a 'soul-force'. Only the soul-force can provide the true basis of world-force. Gandhi says:

> Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and worldly affairs. I do not agree. I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation. Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along.[18]

Throughout his life Gandhi was trying to say something very simple, fundamental and absolutely logical. First, systematic suppression of truth is not possible, and, secondly, violence cannot be institutionalized without inviting as well as suppressing violence. His experiments with truth convinced him that the paradox of violence cannot be solved by violence, however sophisticated might be the forms of violence. Non-violence, according to him, is the very nature

of human self; so, to be violent is to be self-alienated. A violent man is a self-alienated man, and the revolution of the self-alienated cannot be permanent. Man's *svadharma* is non-violence, but due to an alien *yugadharma* he is self-alienated. Man must return to his own nature, and that would mark the end of his self-alienation and the beginning of true *swarāj,* i.e. the realization of the self-as-ruler. For Gandhi *'swarāj'* is synonymous with *Ram Raj*—the establishment of 'the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth', and, the Kingdom of his "dream ensures rights alike of prince and pauper."

Marx also dreamed of a 'realm of freedom'... where that labour which is 'determined by need and external purposes' comes to its end and "begins the development of human potentiality for its own sake." To realize their 'dream lands' Gandhi and Marx chose fundamentally different paths. Military success of the Marxist cause in Russia, China and some other countries must not make us blind to the fact that Marxism is now caught napping in the paradox of violence. The monolith of official Marxism is no more monolithic: the cry of polycentricism is now being heard in every Marxist society. The necessity of democratic transformation of the socialist society is also being deeply felt. Without being a prophet Gandhi could foresee this consequence of the victory of violence. He was very much aware that his ideology is neither very dramatic nor going to prove very successful immediately. He said:

> Good travels at a snail's pace. Those who want to do good are not selfish, they are not in a hurry, they know that to impregnate people with good requires a long time.[19]

Looking at the world around us it seems, as I said before, Gandhi did not live in vain. Maybe we could not prove ourselves equal to his expectation, but he never lost faith in

us. If we have failed, and I think we have, to respond properly to the challenge of the Gandhian ideology, it is not only because most of us are self-alienated and pathetically pragmatist, which indeed are the dominant traits of our nature, but also because Gandhi was never prepared to deviate from his moral path of politics. To say this is not to assert either that Gandhi's views are all correct or that all his decisions are unquestionable. But it must be admitted that Gandhi himself was the most searching critic of his own views and decisions. This shows both his humility and rationality. The aroma of his personality has added a new dimension to his ideology. Gandhi has been killed by his enemies, but his ideology cannot be destroyed even if all his enemies are combined to destroy it. The reason is very simple and unexciting: he was a convinced apostle of truth and non-violence and a devoted servant of mankind.

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4

MARX ON ALIENATION AND FREEDOM

I. Prefatory

In this chapter I propose to discuss (a) Marx's concepts of alienation and freedom, and show (*b*) that the institutional measures suggested by Marx for undoing the alienation of the individual and thus restoring his freedom are doomed to fail. The first part of the chapter will be in the main expository and comparative, and the second part comparative and critical. By the way I shall try to clear up a current misconception about Marx, viz. that while the early Marx was for a *freedom* of the *individual* the latter Marx turned against it and stood for violent *class*-struggle and the *dictatorship* of the proletariat. Marx's ideas on individual freedom and class constraint are coherent, at least theoretically, and I think he expounded these very ideas throughout his life. However, my main criticism of Marx lies elsewhere: the means he 'chose' for the realization of his ideal social end, i.e. communism, are essentially violent, tend to form a vicious circle and, therefore, cannot deliver the intended good. The persistent gap between the intended humanism of Marx and the unintended anti-humanism of some socia-

list states may be partly accounted for in terms of *practical incoherence* between Marx's concepts of (*personal*) *alienation* and (*socialized*) *freedom.* The difference between the *ethic of solitude* and the *ethic of relation* cannot be completely eliminated, certainly not ethically.

II. Alienation in Perspective

Human beings are *not* what they intend to be and can be. Alienation is man's consciousness of the 'separation' or distance between his actual being and intended (or potential) being. This simple truth of our own existence has been explained by ontologists, sociologists and economists at different levels of depth and delicacy.

Engaged in studying the process of Thought, Hegel[1] finds alienation of being (with capital B) in the *inessential* of *essenceless* (but necessary) *determination* of itself *qua* Essence. Grounded in Being-*qua*-Essence, *existence* and *appearance* (i.e. illusory or alienated being) are opposed to each other due to the necessity of expressing and developing Being itself. Without alienating itself in *its* otherness or nothingness, Being cannot *de*velop, *dis*cover and *dis*close its self-identity. Hegel's conception of alienation expounded in highly technical jargons is, of course, primarily ontological, but not without human relevance. For the drama of reality as a whole is being continuously re-enacted in the life of finite beings like ourselves. Hegel thinks that because of our finitude we cannot clearly follow the inter-relation between the different acts of the drama. How I *appear* in a *role* or *status,* e.g. is determined by existence, and when my role or status disappear, my existence is not annihilated or destroyed altogether, for, grounded in essence, existence

is not exhausted by any or even all of its appearance(s) and disappearance(s).

This last point of Hegel is hinted at by Kierkegaard[2] when he says that our objective appearance (in our roles and statuses as governed by social do's and dont's) is not only *illusory* (i.e. ontologically *de*-graded) but also *unethical* (i.e. ethically *de*-grading). Under the fetish of objectivity man gets himself prepared to accept the social rules and principles governing our behaviour and thought without any serious or searching question. The worst illusion that man suffers from is the *illusion of objectivity*: he thinks or, because of his thoughtlessness, believes that it is in his objective mode of existence that he lives most rationally and ethically. A truly moral is, according to Kierkegaard, "against every form of objectivity" and "should be infinitely concerned about himself." The objective man is alienated man, estranged from the rational and ethical base of his personality, i.e. *true subjectivity*. Identifying himself with the dead forms and norms of social life man kills himself ethically and starts enjoying or suffering an *inauthentic existence*. Kierkegaard is quite aware of the tremendous difficulties involved in living a subjective life, but he insists that the task of philosophy is to convert people to the subjective.

This view was expounded also by Feuerbach whose influence, and not Kierkegaard's, on Marx is pronounced. It is following Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel that Marx first realized that the *paradigm of alienated being* is not Hegelian Being but human being and that it is to the latter's abstract speculation that the former owes its existence. Paradoxically enough the big Being is an abstract copy of the small one. Hegel said that spirit passes through the stages of externalizing or projecting into objects and the estrangement or alienation resulting from mind's persistent attitude of *in-*

dependence from, and even hostility towards, objects. It is Feuerbach who brought about 'revolution in philosophy,' to use Marx's own expression, by setting the Hegelian dialectic upside down, i.e. by reverting the subject-object relationship. He had applied the concept of alienation to religion in which he found that man projects his (i.e. the subject's) own powers into different natural objects and then, 'forgetting' these acts of projection, starts falling on his knees to worship and pray to them as the powers of a supernatural alien Being. Influenced by Feuerbach's concept of *the religion of the alienated man,* Marx developed his *critique of the economy of the alienated labour.* While Feuerbach took the alienated subject, i.e. object, only in a *theoretical* sense, Marx takes it in a very *practical* sense and this, he believes, would enable us to use even the theoretical pursuits like philosophy in changing our objective circumstances and thus in undoing our alienation.

III. Marx's Analysis of Alienation

There was a time when in the concept of *enlightened self-interest* human situation found its most appropriate expression. Today it is in the concept of *alienation* that human situation has found its deepest expression. The very light that enlightens the self also casts its dark and haunting shadow in the form of self-alienation. This is true both ontologically and economically. The very determination which enables the self to determine or identify itself also negates or alienates itself from itself. Every act of self-identification entails and is entailed by a relatively unintended act of self-disintegration. This ontological truth has its economic counterpart and drew Marx's penetrating and passionate attention. If the self is not free in its *solitude,* then

determination by others in relation to class or group is destined to disintegrate or alienate itself. Unconscious of the *ethic of solitude* and determined by its (class) interest, the (capitalist) self, in spite (or because) of its light, fails to see its own shadow or doom. To the capitalist the labourer has *no* existence as a human being but only as a labourer; involved in his own interest he is *indifferent* immediately to the labourer's existence and mediately to his own.

Marx[3] holds that four types of alienation emerge from the worker's situation of work: (1) alienation from the process of work, (2) alienation from the products of work, (3) alienation of the worker from himself, and (4) alienation of the worker from others.

(1) *Alienation from the Process of Work*: It is by means of working upon the external world and appropriating it that the worker lives and also deprives himself of the possible means of living. What sustains him, i.e. the process of work, is alienated from him, made into an independent object, and dominates him instead of being dominated by him. The worker does not enjoy his work; for him work is suffering and begets emasculation. The process of work which produces objects of value reduces proportionately the value of the subject: and as a result of this the worker is alienated from the process which devalues him as a subject and reduces him to a mere object.

(2) *Alienation from the Products of Work*: The end product of an alien process cannot but be alien to the worker. The worker is not there in his work, nor in what results from his work. Marx says: "The worker...feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself." To the mason the mansion he builds up putting in years of toil is completely alien. The large limousine standing at the end of

the assembly line is alien to the worker who did something very definite for its production.

(3) *Alienation of the Worker from Himself*: The alienation of nature from man means the alienation of man from his own universal, generic, social being. It is in and by the consciousness of his belonging to a universal being that man is or can be free. This freedom has two dialectical aspects—theoretical and practical. The range and depth of man's continuous intercourse with nature measure the scope of his freedom. Man could reproduce himself not only intellectually in consciousness but also actively in reality, but his failure to grasp nature in thought and action alienates him from his generic existence, his *human* being. And then his generic social existence, instead of representing his essential nature, becomes a mere means for satisfying his egotistic and animal needs.

(4) *Alienation of the Worker from Others*: Alienated from his generic being, man is alienated from other men. The alienated man regards other subjects, i.e. human beings, not as 'subject' but merely as 'object' and does not feel drawn towards them; he 'finds' that everyone of them is out to crush him. Having lost faith in others he loses faith in himself as well. For, every self-encounter involves other-encounter and the converse. Alienated from other selves, man 'finds' himself alienated from his own self, discovers a schism in the self and does not know where to return and why. To the worker work becomes a purposeless, i.e. *de*-grading, habit—almost a series of mechanical re-actions.

Ordinarily it is believed that private property is the cause of alienation, but Marx thinks that it is just the other way round. He writes: "though private property appears to be the course... of alienated labour, it is really its consequence.... Later (at the very culmination of the develop-

ment of private property) this relationship becomes reciprocal." Alienation is to be understood, as Marx insists in other writings,[4] not only in terms of private property but also in terms of more basic concepts as commodity production and division of labour. Marx recognizes two aspects of alienation—subjective and objective—and thinks that the abolition of private property would mean nothing more than the end of objective alienation. For even then subjective alienation would remain. Socialism, by abolishing private property, marks merely the elimination of objective alienation. True, the socialist does not worship private property as something material or *non-human* but he does worship it as a product of *human* labour, and, therefore, his mode of doing away with self-alienation is, according to Marx, merely *negative*. Communism takes us a step forward: it implies the *positive* overcoming of private property. Marx finds that even the communist mode of abolition of private property in its less developed form is not satisfactory either.[5] For merely by transferring the ownership of property from the individual to a commune or society and by allowing the latter to enjoy the *physical* ownership of it, what we achieve is merely the *generalized* form of subjective alienation and not its negation. The more developed form of communism marks the beginning of the end of general-and-subjective alienation.

IV. Freedom and Alienation

Kant thought[6] "each must seek his own happiness in the way that suits him best provided that he permits *another* the *freedom* to pursue a similar goal; it is therefore possible to formulate a universal law *for the freedom of all* which does not interfere with the *freedom of each.*" According to him,

the condition of a self's freedom is the freedom of others. And when the Kantian box of 'others' is unpacked one finds in it not only other selves but also the body *of* the self. Out to vindicate the concept of absolute and unconditional freedom, Kant arrives at an abstract and a very negative concept of freedom. If Kant is correct, alienation turns out to be a negative necessary condition of freedom: one cannot be *free* unless one is alienated *from* others—other subjects and all bodies including one's own. To be *free*, suggests Kant, I must be free *from* others' (i.e. social) influence and the affection and passion of my own body. I propose to call this negative concept of freedom as *freedom from* and intend to contrast it with the positive concept of *freedom in.* Hegel's dialectic provides the theoretical clue to the solution of this problem of freedom-by-alienation. When I *could* be conscious of that from which I have to be alienated (to be free), it (the 'that') ceases to be a mere negation and becomes a positive content of my (I-consciousness) self.

Marx makes good use of the Hegelian dialectic by turning it 'upside down', i.e. by bringing it down from the spiritual height to its natural material basis. I regard Marx as one of the early propounders of the concept of *freedom-in*, or freedom-by-*de*alienation. That I am, or can be, free only as one-among-others is a point which Marx very rightly emphasizes. And in this respect he draws inspiration from Hegel's criticism of the Kantian concept of freedom as something very 'formal' and 'negative'. Hegel says: "freedom is only negatively comprehended when it is represented as if the individual in his relations to other individuals thus limited his freedom in order that this universal limitation—the mutual constraint of all—might secure a small space of liberty for each". Both Hegel and Marx, as opposed to Kant, think that human freedom is *positive* and its substance

is to be found in *concrete* social situation. But while Hegel asserts that the "State is the reality in which the individual has his freedom" and offers us only a *metaphysical concreteness,* Marx, mainly concerned with the *working* conditions of freedom in *civil* society develops a *concrete economic* concept of freedom. Metaphysically construed, I, as one-among-others, am always free, but Marx takes pains to show that human situation in a market society is quite *otherwise,* i.e. alienated. About the bourgeois concept of freedom Marx writes in a rather sarcastic vein:[7]

> Freedom (of both buyer and seller of commodities in a market society) is constrained only by their own free will .... The only force that brings them together and puts them in relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain and private interests of each. Each looks to himself only, and no one troubles himself about the rest, and just because they do so, do they all, in accordance with the pre-established harmony of things, or under the auspices of an all-shrewd providence, work together to the mutual advantage, for the common weal and in the interest of all.

Marx relativises freedom to some definite historical context. In a bourgeois society 'freedom' means *freedom-of-alienation,* and Marx dreamt of communist society wherein freedom would mean *freedom-from-alienation* (i.e. *de-alienated freedom*).

"If man is formed by circumstances, these circumstances must be humanly formed."[8] Marx is interested in the freedom of the social and not atomic individual. Our intended freedom is not *freedom-for-alienation.* The dialectic of *Da-sein* and *mitsein* is so basic and indissoluble that it could never be permanently brought to a static end. Marx could see it but could not perhaps see through it; at least that is

the impression one gathers from an examination of the institutional means prescribed by Marx for achieving *de-alienation* of the alienated man. Marx has rightly observed that unless the bourgeois civil society is overthrown by a *political act* the communist civil society could not be brought into existence; but he seems to be wrong, or at any rate utopian, in his assumption that when the time for building up of Communist society comes we would be free to leave behind the legacy of the *political* acts of violent revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat does not know how to stop dictation and start free co-operation. Marx writes:[9]

> Without *revolution, socialism* cannot develop. It requires this *political* act as it needs the overthrow and the *dissolution*. But as soon as its *organizing activity* begins, as soon as its *own purpose* and *spirit* come to the fore, Socialism sheds this *political* covering.

Experience shows that it is not easy to 'shed this political covering'. What is gained by means of *political power* is to be protected by political power, and the strengthening of political superstructure means the weakening of the infrastructure of the society. *The use of violence both invites and suppresses further use of violence, but finally the violent victor is himself vanquished by the power unleashed by him, or he becomes a victim of his own institution of violence, allowing his means to swallow the end.* This is what Gandhi calls 'the vicious circle of violence and exploitation'. There is no doubt about it that Marx approves of the use of violence only to crush Capitalism (which, according to both Marx and Gandhi, is itself based upon violence) and he does not intend to perpetuate violence as political institution. But what Marx does not adequately realize is that every intended action has its unintended consequences. No amount of planning, even with the help of machine and

mathematics, proves sufficient for controlling the consequences of our action. Within the social framework the end and means of action tend to influence one another, and that is why individually we should always try to prevent the inter-convertibility of the two. This is absolutely necessary for maintaining the neglected but important distinction between moralizing politics and politicalizing morals.

V. Freedom and Institution

The paradox of freedom and institution is well known: without institution freedom is meaningless and cannot be preserved but within institution freedom is bound to be constrained and curtailed. One might almost say that it is institution which makes freedom possible and under certain conditions also makes it impossible. The question is not whether we should or should not try to be free without institution, for the very possibility of being free without institution is not open to man. Our concern is to identify the conditions, institutional and personal, under which freedom or its expansion becomes or tends to become impossible and we should try to *minimize* those conditions.

It would be wrong to think that Marx was not aware of this problem. Those who miss the humanism of the early Marx in the later Marx (advocating violent class-struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat) fail to see his philosophy of alienated man as a whole.[10] In his early works Marx is obviously more concerned with the *human* foundation of his ideal society and later on he is found to be seriously busy under very adverse circumstances with his scientific work *Das Capital* and other practical steps for the establishment of ideal society. But throughout his life Marx seems to have been guided by one singular vision—the vision

of Communism. Even in his serious scientific work one does not miss occasional visionary diversions and philosophical flights. The ideal Communist for Marx is like an artist who *freely* chooses and follows his own, yet not exclusively his own, norms and discipline.

My main complaint against Marx is not that he lacks in vision. It is rather the other way round: too much of vision made him partly blind to the difficulties involved in giving shape to his vision (of communism). I do not propose to substantiate my complaint against Marx either by citing the history of Communism of the last fifty-one years or by quoting the official interpreters of Marx. Marx should not be blamed for the *bona fide* mistakes or deliberate crimes of the Marxists. Marx is to be judged on his own. And it is high time that without being unhistorical, we separate the views of Marx which are separable from the widely different versions of Marxism, and discuss the former independently—as independently as possible.

Marx is at once a great thinker and an earnest worker, or, what might be said more appropriately, a utopian and a revolutionary. It does not ordinarily strike us that a utopian thinker may be a successful revolutionary. Kierkegaard said that it sounds *absurd* that Jesus Christ was the son of God and died on the Cross but the devout Christian by a supreme act of faith takes it to be true and lives by it. Gandhi believed unto the last that by means of *ahimsā* human beings would be able to establish *Ram Raj*, the kingdom of God on earth. And it is no wonder that, despite his scientific intellect, Marx believes that after the dissolution of Capitalism through violent class-struggle his vision of Communism would come true. For after all he is a utopian. Rubel brings out the point very clearly:[11]

> In a sense Marx is the most utopian of the utopians: caring little about the City to be, bending his mind on destroying the existing order ... he elevates Revolution to the level of an absolute requirement. He grafts the Utopia to be on to the actual daily struggle and formulates a dialectical clue to the proletarian revolution: let the workers will and make *their* revolution and they shall get socialism in the bargain ... a classless, stateless, moneyless society.

Marx hopes that communist consciousness would emanate from the proletariat and not at all from the bourgeois intellectuals though, strangely enough, the latter happen to be the theoretical and practical architects of the proletarian revolution. Herein lies the paradox of the proletarian movement. The leaders of the movement have been accused again and again of betraying the cause of the movement. Lenin accused Kautsky of betrayal, Trotsky accused Stalin of betrayal and now Mao accuses Khruschev and his followers of betraying socialist interests and collaborating with the imperialists. This story will be repeated in future. For the ethic of utopian revolution is relatively easy to formulate on the writing desk or from the meeting dais but extremely difficult, almost impossible, to practise in the details of personal life and party work. When, to complete socialist victory, all opposition outside the party is crushed, on the party devolves a difficult and delicate task of acting simultaneously for and against the party, i.e. the extra-party dialectic takes the form of the intra-party dialectic. The task is, as I have said before, somewhat like the poet's: the party is free, considerably free but not absolutely, to choose and reject its own norm and discipline. If the outer discipline is eliminated, we must set up inner discipline, otherwise our return to our selves, i.e. freedom, turns out to be matter of empty form. If the Communist *de*-alienation does not result in free and sponta-

neous co-operation of the workers in unions, parties, councils and other voluntary institutions, but merely in strengthening the hands of the party bureaucracy, police and military, the Communist society becomes a *re*-alienated society.

It is not easy to annihilate the institutional space intervening between the ethic of solitude and the ethic of relation, between the Communist *Dasein* and the Communist *mitsein*. Man is alienated not in poverty and Capitalist society but also in prosperity and Communist society. The ontological basis of alienation apart, it can commonly be traced to lack of (*i*) commitment to values, (*ii*) conformity to norms, (*iii*) responsibility in roles, and (*iv*) control of facilities.[12] The psychological dispositions of the alienated man, rootlessness, loneliness, meaninglessness, powerlessness, etc., cannot be traced to any single source in isolation from the rest. Within a *lived* universe the relation between cause and consequence, end and means is dialectical and not one-sided. When Marx speaks of the worker's alienation from the process of his work—roughly corresponding to (*iii*) and (*iv*) enumerated above—he indicates both a social cause and a psychological consequence.

The self-defeating character of the Marxist method of de-alienation could be shown clearly by bringing Marx's concept of alienation close to Durkheim's[13] concept of *anomie* and its revealing use by Morton.[14] To explain the apparently perplexing fact that suicide rates increase both in times of poverty and prosperity, Durkheim introduced this concept. *Anomie* is the polar antithesis of *complete institutionalization*, and, therefore, a limiting concept, meaning a *complete breakdown* of normative order (*nomos*).[15] Even under the conditions of industrial society, i.e. prosperity, security, stability and the like, Durkheim notes that man feels increasingly dissatisfied. Excited by the magic of money and machine he

forgets the distinction between the possible and the impossible, the just and the unjust, what he should aspire for and what he should not. He finds nothing in institutionalized norms to restrain his growing aspirations. The highly mobile society with its quickly changing value-systems flows almost over his head. His role and status do not satisfy him. His hopes are frustrated, expectations belied and feelings lacerated. His whole *identity* is in crisis, and in a vain bid to *integrate* his values with his institutional commitments, he restlessly shuttles between *complex institutionalization* (i.e. statism) and complete break-down (i.e. *anomie*).

Marx's primary concern is a *total* method of doing away with all the sources of alienation. But he seems not to have realized that any institutional method of de-alienation objectively encourages alienation. What is of great concern for us to note today is that the societies which have and also those which have not adopted the *totalitarian* method of de-alienation are witnessing at least one thing in common, I mean *anomie*. The *nomos* of the group provides no limit to the individual human impulses, while the *ethos* of the group proves more stifling than liberating. Failing to have his deeper impulses satisfied, the anomic man falls back upon his superficial impulses. Unable to realize his higher ends and still confronted with highly competitive or hostile society he de-regulates and de-grades his means as well. De-regulation and de-gradation of both ends and means imply an inauthentic human existence, either personal prosperity amidst social poverty or personal poverty amidst social prosperity. From the individual's point of view this means he has to love those persons whom he really hates, i.e. under a painful necessity he has to cultivate a non-involved intimacy with the persons for whose motives he has only distrust and contempt. Even in a Gemeinschaft context the

individual develops only a Gesellschaft relation, i.e. he (mis)uses even a 'genuine' community or value to augment his self-interest, as Pseudo-Gemeinschaft easily becomes the tertium quid between anomie and alienated individuals.

Capitalism is not the only, not even the most important, source of alienation, and therefore the abolition of Capitalism does not mean the end of alienation. The root of alienation is institutionalization of *human* freedom, and de-alienation demands self-regulation of end and means—man's return to his authentic loneliness in society. In practice it is an extremely difficult proposition. In his theory of alienation Marx grapples with a basic problem of human existence, but, it seems to me, the problem is far deeper than what Marx's diagnosis suggests.

VI. Conclusion

Profoundly concerned with the economic root of human alienation and political means of eliminating it, Marx persistently underestimates the difficulties involved in depoliticalizing the 'interim' policy, i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat. Once violence is institutionalized for the emancipation of the proletariat, the individual, be he a proletarian or not, loses the freedom to express his continued alienation. If Marx is justified in holding that the history of human freedom does not walk on its head, Merleau-Ponty[16] is equally justified in saying "but it is also true that it does not think with its feet either". Merely by providing the material conditions of freedom, the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot de-alienate the alienated man. When the intention of revolution is allowed to be frozen in a power-packed institution, the creative spirit of revolution first languishes and then dies. Marx's vision of the de-alienated human society under

Communism is the vision of a society of artists, involved in creative work. Alienation was originally an aesthetic concept to be found in German romanticism, e.g. in the philosophy of Schelling. The ideal form of Communism, like the work of the artist, is an intention which itself creates and freely re-creates its materials, instruments and means of expression. For the fact the 'real' Communism has turned out to be unaesthetic, meaning alienation for every creative worker in it, Marx is not to be held primarily responsible. His fault is that he underestimates the paradox of violence.

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5

MUST ETHICS BE BASED ON RELIGION?

BASE MAY MEAN several things, viz. *foundation, support, starting-point, presupposition, ground-work* or *first principle, justification,* etc., and the distinction between them should not be dismissed light-heartedly. To say, e.g. 'religion is the foundation of ethics' is not to say 'religion is the justification of ethics': for one could easily think of a foundation which may fail to justify or support what it is supposed to. A bad architect might erect a big structure on a relatively weak foundation which might in that case be said to have failed to *justify* or *support* the big structure. In fact it has been said that the material sub-structure of Marxist philosophy fails to *justify* or *support* its top-heavy ideological and intellectual super-structure. Similarly one might point out that the *presuppositions* or *first principles* of a teleological system are quite different from, rather inversely related to, its *starting point.* Ethical absolutism *presupposes* an extra-ordinary human ability, i.e. to know value-properties directly and infallibly; but, ethical relativists pertinently observe, whether this epistemological *presupposition* could be accepted as a rational *justification* of the said ethical theory is highly controversial.

These examples are not exercises in linguistic analysis but intended to focus one simple point: any fruitful discussion on the problem of *base* demands that the distinction between *factual* foundation, or starting-point or ground-work, etc., on the one hand, and its justification, or support *in principle*, on the other, must be carefully looked into. Else one might miss the important distinction between, say the causal basis of an action and its motivational or decisional bases. *Motive* and *decision* are certainly not 'cause' in the sense *push* and *pull* are. Our actions are also said to be teleologically based or oriented, for we are not always *driven*, but rather *drawn*, towards some definite future (which may or may not be *our* end).

Those who think that all causality is will-causality may refuse to recognize the above distinction and the implication of the refusal is not difficult to guess: incorporation of natural systems within value systems—subordination of the former to the latter. If the whole universe is deemed to be *a* value-system, then the distinction not only between natural discourse and normative discourse but also between ethical discourse and religious discourse becomes a matter of degree, and, what is more important, the argument of ethical autonomy loses its *intrinsic* and profound significance. The Graeco-Roman concept of *jus natural* and the Hindu concept of *Ṛta*, e.g. apply equally to the realm of justice (value) and that of nature, and ignore what is said to be the false division between these two realms, which *in reality* are said to be one.

I shall try in the main to show (*i*) ethics is independent of religion both empirically and (*ii*) logically. Those who experience difficulties in defining the relation between ethics and religion do not in most cases make it clear if their difficulties are logical, or empirical, or both. And that in turn

makes one's task to tackle the issue rather hard. Besides, those who raise the issue are not unanimous in their definition of religion.

(*a*) There are some who cannot think of any religion without god or gods *in some form or other,* but (*b*) there are others, some Jainas and Buddhists, e.g. who although do not believe in the existence of god, claim themselves to be religious. Some thinkers of the former group (*a*) point out by elaborating the qualification *in some form or other* that the founders, and in some cases even the great preachers, of the so-called godless religions are themselves manifestations, if not incarnations, of god or gods. It has also been said that really godless 'religions' are not, strictly speaking, religions at all, but only ethical modes of living, or religions in the making. The latter position obviously implies that in a sense there can be ethics without religion, but perhaps it will be added too that this empirical sense is rather unimportant, and that what is important is the teleological import of this position, viz. religion is the end of ethics. To understand the correct imports of these different, and often conflicting, positions once more one is reminded of the necessity of making clear what one precisely means by *religion.* (*c*) This necessity becomes all the more acute when one remembers the positivists who deny the existence of god in every form and yet claim themselves to be genuine believers in personal religions. Some philosophers are of the view that the concepts such as *religion* and *god* must be understood in their appropriate context of life (including language) and not abstractly.

In spite of, and perhaps partly ignorant of, the difference in the concepts of god and religion, the students of comparative religion point out three common elements in different religions, viz. a set of ethical rules, a set of rituals, and a set

of beliefs about a supernatural agency, and its relation to the world and men. In short, every religion is credited with a code, a cult and a creed. Similarly in every ethics one finds three aspects: the ends or ideals which are considered worth pursuing; the moral rules in terms of which actions are judged as right or wrong; and the motives or dispositions or attitudes which are expressed in the pursuit of ideals and the obedience to rules. Any careful analysis of these fundamental characteristics of religion and ethics will reveal, I concede, that religious discourse has much in common with ethical discourse. One might concede, as I do, not only that religion has much in common with ethics but that one influences the other, yet one could deny, without being inconsistent, religion is *the* foundation of ethics. I shall not try to disprove the intimate connection between the two but only suggest a negative answer to the question: "Must ethics be based on ethics?" In this chapter I purpose not to make any distinction between *ethical* and *moral.*

II

Let me start with the *empirical* part of my argument. Quite a few philosophers and anthropologists who have given careful consideration to this much-debated issue have expressed themselves in favour of the view that *as a matter of fact* ethics is based on religion. Malinowski writes: "all the morality of primitives is derived from religious belief".[1] According to Popper: "historically, all ethics undoubtedly begins with religion".[2] Dawson says: "Everywhere the moral law is based ultimately on religious sanctions ... the rules by which the life of a primitive community is governed are all sacred rules enforced by religious sanctions."[3] This

issue has been thoroughly discussed by A. Macbeath in his excellent book, *Experiments in Living.*

The misunderstanding about the ethics of primitive peoples takes different forms. (*i*) Ethical rules are obeyed by primitive peoples mainly, if not merely, because of their magico-religious *sanctions;* and that if they did not believe that *disregard* of these rules would displease the supernatural agent and, consequently, bring about misfortune on themselves or their people, they would not have felt induced to be ethical. (*ii*) Ethics is based on, or perhaps a part of, religion in this sense that the beliefs, the ritual practices, and the emotional attitudes of primitive peoples towards the supernatural powers influence their characters, their attitude to their fellows and their social relationships. (*iii*) The primitive man has in himself neither the wisdom to recognize what is good and right nor the courage to follow them in practice, and that both for practical knowledge and practical ability he is dependent on religion.

All these misunderstandings have at least one thing in common, and that is denial of the autonomy of ethics. Before we decide whether these alleged misunderstandings are really so, at least one point should be made clear. Since I do not deny the intimate connection between ethics and religion, and yet do affirm, which might sound initially paradoxical, that ethics might be satisfactorily construed without religion, I should show there are duties which are *specifically ethical* and might be clearly distinguished from those which are *specifically religious.* Since ethics and religion have no well-defined language of their own the correct imports of the religious and ethical concepts have to be determined contextually.

Our duties to our fellow-men (and why not sometime to sub-human creatures as cow, cat, dog, etc. as well) might be

satisfactorily understood without any religious reference al all. Duties of truth-telling, promise-keeping and respecting life and property *may* be regarded by some people as a part of their duties to god, but it is not *necessary* that these *must* be regarded so. One can regard these duties in a purely secular way—as *specifically ethical*—without allowing their ethical content to be affected in the least. One may decide, e.g. not to kill a cow and not to be cruel to cats and dogs without being Hindu or Buddhist, and still one's decision can be regarded ethical.

Conversely, it could be pointed out, what is of course less important for the purpose of our discussion, that there are some religious duties to supernatural agents enjoining certain actions and abstentions such as worship, sacrifices, and refraining from certain foods, etc.; and that, although the observance of these duties might have some indirect social and psychological influence upon the concerned people, the duties themselves can be properly understood as *specifically religious* and commanded by supernatural agencies (or powers).

Ethics may be approached from two different points of view: (*a*) an action may be judged ethical because it accords with some *rule,* or (*b*) its *motive* is good. (*a*) To say that a rule has religious sanctions may mean either that it has been revealed directly or indirectly (through priests and saints for example) as the will of a god, or that a breach of the rule is followed by disastrous consequences to the individual or his people, and its observance by rewards. Now these rewards or punishments entailed by observance or breach of rules are given or inflicted either in this life or in the life beyond. (*b*) To say that a motive has religious sanction may mean either that it has been directly occasioned by god's will or that it fits *somehow* in the will of god

taken as a whole. This shows that the rules or motives which are said to have supernatural sanctions, and the senses in which they are said to have them, clearly differ from one tribe to another. It has been well said by Macbeath that "what we find are not primitive morality and primitive religion but primitive moralities and primitive religions."

Anthropologists are not unanimous in their judgment regarding the relative priority of the different elements of religion. Tylor and Fraser attached greater significance to the element of knowledge, to the rules and codes rather than creeds and cults, sentiments and motives. Goldenweiser and Lowie regard the emotional element as the core of primitive religion, while Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown emphasize the ritual or ceremonial element. But what is most instructive from our point of view is to note the following views of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and some other famous anthropologists.

Malinowski who is otherwise impressed by the ceremonial and ritual elements of religion and their influence on primitive morality writes about the Australian aborigines: "there is a body of rules, handed from one generation to another, which refers to the manner in which people live in their shelters, make their fire by friction, collect their food and cook it, make love to each other and quarrel... customary or legal rules...rules of technique and behaviour in regard to the environment. ... *The rules which we find here are completely independent of magic, of supernatural sanctions, and they are never accompanied by any ritual or ritual elements.*"[4] Referring to the *Andaman Islanders* (p. 133) Radcliffe-Brown records that except the rule against homicide no other rule has a supernatural sanction. Writing on the Bantus, Junod observes: "their religion is non-moral and their morality non-religious."[5]

Writing on the Crow Indians of America, Lowie observes that their basic social and ethical canons have no supernatural sanction.[6] Similar opinion has been expressed by Haddon about the moral rules of the Murray Islanders.

Perhaps more examples are not necessary. It seems to have become clear to us that there are at least some tribes whose ethics is *not* based on religion.

III

That morality does not necessarily presuppose religion and owe its authority to it may be further corroborated by *historical* evidence. The historical argument, like the anthropological one, takes different forms. (*i*) There are religions which are essentially ethical and yet profoundly spiritual; and many people professing those religions have been found to lead an elevated moral life without believing in the existence of god. (*ii*) In history one comes across many lives who were definitely irreligious but moral. (*iii*) The history of human morals is a continuous story of man's struggles to free his morals from institutional bondage—religious and social.

(*i*) According to the Hinayana Buddhism the highest ideal of the *arhata,* the state of sainthood, can be attained by men's own power, and this attainment does not require the aid of any supernatural power. The deities that are referred to by the Hinayanists are neither omnipotent nor omniscient but subordinate to Buddha who himself is neither divine nor supernatural but a man like other men with, of course, greater genius and power of intuition.

The presence of more supernatural elements in the Mahayana Buddhism and the recognition of many 'gods' by it have been frequently interpreted as the signs of the

Mahayanists' religious catholicism and eagerness to incorporate other religions within its growing fold. The attitude of the Mahayanist teacher was this: so long you obey certain ethical rules, have respect for the orders of monks and life, kindness to animals, and a sense of resignation within, it does not matter what gods you worship. The doctrine of three *Kayas* seems to have been improvised to lend a rather thin metaphysical unity to the adopted gods of different religions. The impersonal *Dharmakaya*, under the determination of name and form, it is said, becomes personal *Sambhogakaya*, the Adi Buddha, and *Nirmanakaya* manifests itself into the historical Buddha for the salvation of mankind. The ethical ideals of the Mahayanist is the *Bodhisattva* which literally means "one whose essence is perfect knowledge." It has been said that the doctrine of the three *Kayas* is allegorical in its significance and that the ethical idealism of Buddhism can be defended without it, for indeed there was a time when the *Mahayana* knew no such doctrine.

Jains and Sāmkhya philosophers also tried to defend the possibility of ethics without god. One may not agree with this defence but the fact remains that many people of the Jaina and Sāmkhya persuasion maintained high ethical standards in their life. One may of course contend that these so-called godless moralists are *pracchanna astikas* (veiled believers), but I do hold, this argument may backfire, for the defender of godless ethics may politely submit: one can easily uphold the ethical contents of godly ethics without god, and, therefore, its 'divine sanction' is unnecessary. Since this argument and counter-argument cannot be clinched in the level of history as such, our theoretical persuasions would not be allowed too much to refashion

the fair records of history till we subject the theoretical persuasions themselves to logical analysis.

(*ii*) We may not like those people who believe that religion is an illusion or opiate of mankind, and certainly we are free to reject their beliefs, but it would be historically unfair to say that all these irreligious people are unethical and even unfit to be ethical. The trouble with the critic of irreligious ethics lies in this that his very definition of ethics has been framed in terms of religion, which is, of course, a questionable method of countering the opponent's *empirical* assertions. All Marxists over the world are not certainly unethical, and I take it to be a simple empirical assertion. Now one committed to the religious definition of ethics may argue almost in despair that Marxism *is* a religion and has its creed, cult and code. But I dare say, despite Lord Russell's authority, few will treat this argument as anything but a good joke. I have no doubt that there are definitely irreligious people who are really ethical, and that they are so not by the grace of a definition or god. I add 'or god' merely to forestall the widely held theistic argument that the irreligious people are free to be good only by the grace of god.

(*iii*) The third form of the historical argument lays emphasis on the gradual de-institutionalization—taking religions as institutions—of human morals. Writing at about the same time, but from quite different points of view, Feuerbach and Kierkegaard hammered the same point: the development of religion is marked by gradual disappearance of angels, prophets, scriptures, saints, churches and priests, etc. ferrying between god and man. The fundamental presumption of institutional religionists is obvious: left to himself man is not able to be *truly* good, and he needs supernatural guidance in this respect. But man's knowledge of

himself and what had really happened in the name of religions has made him rather critical about the above presumption. History abounds with examples how one religious authority authorizes its people in the name of religion to kill or massacre the people professing other religions, and how upright and courageous people, disowned and even persecuted by their church or/and society, uphold their ideals—theoretically and practically. To say this is not to deny many good things that we owe to different religions. My point is rather simple: a deeper understanding of the history of different *organized* religions is likely to convince a rational man that without submitting to a religious authority he can be good—truly good—on his own account. And it may be illustrated by the views of some existentialists like Sartre and some empiricists like Braithwaite.

IV

The underlying theoretical motive of all my previous arguments, anthropological and historical, was, I need hardly add, to defend the thesis of moral autonomy. Around the concept of *moral autonomy* there is a cluster of concepts such as *moral heteronomy, moral authority, moral tyranny,* etc., without an analysis of which the logical geography of the region cannot be made clear.

The denial of moral autonomy assumes different forms: (*i*) metaphysical, (*ii*) theological, and (*iii*) sociological (or anthropological) and (*iv*) psychological. Kant cites (*iv*) as instance of empirical heteronomy and (*ii*) as that of rational one; and stresses the necessity of a *metaphysic* or morals to avoid what he calls the fallacy of anthropologism, i.e. ethical relativism. Kant's defence of moral autonomy is primarily intended to uphold the categorical and absolute

character of moral law. Since I do not use *metaphysic* in the Kantian sense and do not share all that he says against anthropologism, it would not be very useful for me to pursue his lines of arguments.

(*i*) *Metaphysical Heteronomy*: There are thinkers who hold that man cannot be truly ethical without knowing the whole of reality which is itself the supreme embodiment of value or, at any rate, the ground of all values and norms. (*a*) Every ethics, it has been said, presupposes a metaphysics: without *knowing* what is real, one cannot *be* ethical or *do* what is *right* in the strict sense. (*b*) It has also been said that the significance of the world is thoroughly ethical and that it is what it is because of the *Karma* of the individuals.

(*ii*) *Theological Heteronomy*: Metaphysical heteronomy (*i*) may or may not be secular, and, when it is not, may be called theological heteronomy (*ii*) which is expressed in some such words as: the reality which is *practically* necessary for us to know is divine, or spiritual, or god. In a moment I shall return to (*ii*), but before that let me say a word or two on (*iii*) and (*iv*).

(*iii*) *Sociological Heteronomy*: It is a widespread belief that human morals are determined by, and relative to, social conditions. This belief has been criticized mainly on two grounds: (*a*) it rests on the ignorance of value-fact distinction, and (*b*) it lands us into the endless vagaries of ethical relativism.

(*iv*) *Psychological Heteronomy*: Without fear of contradiction I may point out that these criticisms have been levelled against psychological heteronomy too. If it is said, as it has been, "nature has placed mankind under governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*," and nature is taken in the *naturalistic* sense, the vulnerability of (*iv*) to (*iiia*) and (*iiib*) criticisms seems to be unavoidable.

But what is seemingly unavoidable may not be necessarily so. Attempts have been made to defend both (*iii*) and (*iv*) in terms of (*i*) and (*ii*). One could say, e.g. our social conditions, *apparent* determinants of our morals, are *objective* expressions of an absolute will which is also expressed, articulately or inarticulately, in our *subjective* wills-to-be-moral. Or, it could be said as well that to seek pleasure and avoid pain are no doubt *natural*, but given the metaphysical or theological assumptions, it does not prevent pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding actions and dispositions from being moral.

A closer look into the above two arguments in defence of (*iii*) and (*iv*) will reveal that they too rest on the implicit denial of 'is'-'ought' distinction. To say—what seems factual—man naturally seeks pleasure hardly justifies logically the hedonic, i.e. ethical, assertion that man ought to seek pleasure. The 'is'-'ought' distinction is similarly ignored by those who seek to derive human duties from the "fact that god commands man 'do these duties'." Many contemporary philosophers have recognized the logic of the 'is'-'ought' distinction, and arrived at the unfortunate (but not necessary) conclusion that in ethics *judgment* is not possible.

However, what is more important in the context of our present discussion is: some philosophers have tried to reconstruct ethical naturalism without committing the 'naturalistic fallacy', and some others to restate god-commanded ethics by pointing out the untenability of the 'is'-'ought' dualism. Among others Frankena and Prior have persuasively argued to the effect that identification and refutation of fallacious naturalism have certainly not sealed the fate of naturalism itself which rests on the *self-evident* principle that man naturally seeks *pleasure-as-value* and

avoids *pain-as-disvalue*. In defence of god-commanded ethics axiological ontologists have also argued to the effect that the statement " *'God is' is not* only a self-evident factual but also value statement". The denial of the self-evidence of the above two proclaimed principles would entail the collapse of both ethical naturalism and ethical divinism. In partial defence of the position of the ethical naturalist it could be agued that, the principle of *pleasure-as-value* apart, he cites some social *norms* which also might justify his utilitarian ethics. But even this little can hardly be said in favour of ethical divinism: its collapse consequent upon the withdrawal of the self-evident principle of God as value is total. The divinist's social norms and their authority are entirely dependent upon god's perfect goodness and rightness. Roughly speaking, this is what according to Hegel makes the Monarch's ethical and political *authority* absolute —almost *tyrannical;* and, very roughly speaking, this is what lends meaning to such constitutional precepts as "King can do no wrong" or "King is the eternal fountain of justice," etc. The social norms referred to by the naturalist are, however, independent of some supernatural authority, and here lie their autonomy and superior worth. If man's duties are decided by gods over his head, it shows their lack of confidence in him and how unworthy is he left to himself. This idea of human ethics is incompatible with the rationality and dignity of man.

Man *can* be ethical without god. And the proper significance of *can* is to be found only in the human context, and that is why having only man in view we say 'he should . . .' Man can be good and just in a godless world, but not in a world which is not only indifferent to but definitely hostile towards human *ideals*. Thus the world and gods might be said to have only a negative relevance to ideal life.

V

The logical independence of ethics may be shown even by a very schematic account of ethical discourse. Ethics may be of value (i.e axiological type) or duty (i.e. deontic type). Some philosophers like Moore and Brentano believe the latter—duties—is somehow 'extracted from or established on the bases' of the former—values.[7] Axiological ethics has no necessary connection with religion. Deontological ethics maintains that duties are *sui generis* and not founded on value, and Prichard is regarded as one of its ablest exponents. Norms are autonomous prescriptions for human action and what underlies these norms is human decision *qua* recognition of practical necessity. The terms *autonomous, decision, recognition,* and *practical necessity* have to be taken seriously, and this might help one to see that our position is different from the non-cognitivists'.

Analysis of normative discourse reveals, as will be shown immediately, it is logically independent of religious discourse. Norms may be reviewed under three heads—*commands, rules*, and *practical necessities.* Commands are expressed in imperative sentences such as "Stop the discussion," "Obey the chair," etc. These are statements of duties which need no sanction other than social. Secondly, rules are expressed in *deontic* sentences such as "you must *not* carry on the discussion ignoring the Chair's order," "You *may* obey the chair," and "lecturers in Philosophy ought to study books on Philosophy," etc. Justification of commands and that of rules falling under those commands need not be separately discussed unless the rules conflict with them. Broadly and negatively speaking, the justification of commands and rules is prevention of suffering. Thirdly, practical necessities are expressed in anankastic sentences such as "You

cannot encash the cheque to-day," "You *have to* pass the *vive voce* examination," etc. That this last aspect of norm need not be based on religion hardly deserves an explanation at this stage of our discussion. The distinction between the aspects of norms can hardly be drawn clearly in ordinary language.

Besides the above aspects of norms, ethical discourse is found to have two other types of statements: practical value judgments (such as "Freedom is the highest value") and moral judgments (such as "He is virtuous"). Norms are, no doubt, *sui generis,* but they are also expressions of some value-judgments. When a negative utilitarian says that pain should be minimized and that whenever a norm clashes with this value-judgment it should be rejected, one may ask: "why should I try to minimize human pain?" To this question the former's answer is: "If you really don't understand why pain is bad and why you should try to avoid or minimize it, you are just unfit to be moral agent," and *not* "Because it is god's command." It is a right move towards the vindication of the autonomy of ethics. Rational animals do not differ on the basic issue whether they should be free, their difference centres around the questions such as: "How and to what extent they should be free?" If the very basic issue of freedom becomes a subject of genuine controversy, we lose the very basis of settling it. Freedom is literally the basis of ethics.

I think it is not very difficult to show that moral judgments are independent of religious presuppositions. When I judge someone virtuous I, of course, praise him and, in a sense, reward him, but the judgments of this type do have cognitive contents and are regulated by rules and valuations believed to be correct. Owing to the extreme complexity of moral problems it is not always easy to deter-

mine which rules are necessary for our guidance and which valuations are to be applied. Having failed to arrive at clear-cut moral judgment we often set before ourselves, and particularly before others, *examples* of moral conduct, which prove themselves not infrequently 'a source of moral insight'. But moral examples are not necessarily religious examples. We know of many exemplary personalities famous for their *courage*, *sacrifice*, etc. who are *not* religious, but simply satisfy the criteria underlying our valuations, duties and moral rules.

"For these reasons," I agree with N. Smart, "it seems not inappropriate to treat moral propositions as logically independent of religious ones."[8]

Our ethical life is not only logically but also practically independent of religion. The practical necessities of each of us being unique, the questions such as "what should I do?" and "what ideals should I follow?" must be answered by each man for himself.[9] But it so happens that the practical necessities of different persons have some identical elements in them and which account for the generalities found in our decisions and duties. I am interested in a metaphysic of decisions and duties which might show that the fruits of freedom, although not distributed by gods, have connection with the rest of our life and reality. Moral life is shaped around an ultimate decision which, 'far from being arbitrary' is "the most well-founded of decisions, because it is based upon a consideration of everything upon which it could possibly be founded."[10] But regarding the kinds of things which could possibly influence our decision, my view, I fear, will sound rather orthodox to such Oxford philosophers as Nowell-Smith and Hare.

Some philosophers, perhaps under the influence of Kant, draw a distinction between 'secular ethics' and 'theological

ethics' or, to use different terms, between 'sacred morality' and 'religious morality', and express their preference for the former. According to them, ideal life *is* religious life, and it is in the light of some such view that the statements "My work is my god" and "My party is my god" make sense. I have nothing in particular to say against this attempt to establish religion on the basis of ethics except that here the terms *god, religion,* etc. are being used in a very extraordinary sense which is not likely to be acceptable to those who are religious in the traditional sense.

Those who prefer religious morality to secular morality and define the latter rather contemptuously in terms of 'mere decencies and courtesies' do not generally deny its existence altogether but doubt its depth. It has been said that an ethical man "who sets himself to get on without religion may be like a man who persists in hopping on one leg along a road on which he might comfortably and quickly proceed by walking on two."[11] I am inclined to think otherwise: a man who declines to be moral unless morality is based on religion is like a runner, who has the option to run on two legs but decides to enter into a three-legged race under the impression that 'his' third leg will indeed quicken his pace.

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6

DEMOCRACY AND IDEOLOGY

I. Prefatory

THE REAL ISSUE underlying the relation between democracy and ideology is not easy to spell out. For the available views on the point are widely different. (1) Some persons have announced the *end* of ideology; (2) some others have been telling us all the time about the impossibility (of the very *beginning* of) ideology; and (3) there are still some others who think that it is impossible to be man without ideology. I count myself as an adherent to the third view (3) which, I must add, should not be taken as an implicit definition of man, for man's existential freedom is very limited, but not so is his ideological freedom. Before I explicate my own view I propose to sort and sift the issues together with the arguments (pro and con) underlying the controversy.

II. Terminological and Other Preliminaries

The language-philosophers of Oxford have taught us at least one good thing. Before we start supporting or opposing a view we must look into the words in which the views have

been expressed, and also take note of who have used them and in what context (or form of life). Ideology means so many different things to different persons, depending upon their context, points of view and ends in view, that it is of no use to discuss it under one common rubric. Similar, if not more serious, difficulty one experiences in ascertaining the 'correct' meaning of the term democracy.

Let us start with ideology. According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English,* ideology means (*i*) science of ideas, (*ii*) visionary speculation, (*iii*) manner of thinking characteristic of a class or individual, and (*iv*) ideas at the basis of some economic or political theory or system. I am sure even the apparently non-controversial dictionary meaning of ideology is acceptable to all people alike. For example, one might controvert (*iv*) and say that ideas are *not* there at the *basis* of some economic or political theory or system. Moreover, ideology may be taken in two different senses—positive and/or normative. One is well advised to remember that no ideology is exclusively positive or normative. What the political or sociological positivist understands by (*i*), (*ii*) and (*iii*), e.g. is markedly different from what his normativist counterpart understands by the same. An ideologist may or may not be regarded as visionary, it depends upon in what sense I or you use the term. If it is accepted that every man is more or less visionary or theorist, having in view the etymological kinship of the words *vision* and *theoreo,* I do not know how could one be less respectable than we are for having some vision or theory. Some political surrealists or positivists think that we are just what we are and nothing more, and similar is the case with our ideas and ideologies, i.e. these have absolutely no transcendental implication. This view must not be uncritically attributed to the Marxists

alone who hold that the ideologies of all classes except of course those of the proletariat, reflect, or are generated by, false consciousness. The controversy over the possibility of ideology is rooted in the old philosophical controversies over rationalism and empiricism in epistemology, on the one hand, and transcendentalism and immanentalism in ontology, on the other. I think the controversy is based on pre-reflective presuppositions about human nature, and other issues raised in this connection should be studied mainly in terms of that.

In a somewhat similar fashion, I think, it could be shown that different forms of democracy presuppose different views about human nature. If, for instance, one accepts the 'positivistic' image of man, i.e. man is just what he is and nothing more or nothing less, one shall uphold one type of democracy. But if one accepts the existentialist image of man, i.e. man *is* what he *is not,* one would favour another type of democracy. The fallibilist image of man entails a liberal democratic form of political society. For there is always serious limit of institutionalization of human activities. The proponents of the Marxist forms of democracy believe that this limit could be removed by sophisticated devices of social engineering or institutional manipulations of mass psychology. To some thinkers of conservative persuasion every *theory* of human activities is a suspect; and a democracy based upon an ideology is, according to them, abstract and does not faithfully represent or reflect the political experience of the social milieu. It is not surprising at all that the arch conservatives and the most radicals objectively agree in denouncing democracies based on ideology. In politics, as in philosophy, often the extremes meet to violate, if not to destroy, the golden rule (of justice). Not only the extremely conservative forms of 'bourgeois' demo-

cracy but also those of 'proletarian' democracy are unjust and encourage lawlessness (although ruthlessly suppressed in the short run) and bloodshed (in the long run). Unless we are indifferent to the basic continuity of the political values of this and future generations, we cannot morally endorse the extreme proposals to divorce democracy from ideology.

III. End of Ideology

When it was declared that might is right, the bell tolled for ideology.[1] Nobody knows exactly when, where and by whom the preference of might over right, of swords over words, was declared for the first time, but due to an unfortunate misunderstanding Machiavelli is often represented as the devil of the drama. The devil's fight against the ideologue is as old as man's fall from the heaven. In fact, the issue is basically conceptual and not historical; but abundant historical evidence may be cited to show that in all ages and in all countries there had been people to assert the end of ideology. It is a mistake to think that the rise of *real-politik* marks the decline or end of ideology and beginning of Nazism and Fascism. Thinkers like Bell and Lipset are definitely mistaken in their belief that the success of industrial revolution has rendered ideologies useless. Even the emergence of class from the imaginary state of natural or classless society, which is a theoretical analogue of man's fall from heaven, should not be regarded as the signal for the end of ideology. Without quarrelling over words, what I want to say is: even those who are accused of being enemies of ideology have their own ideology. Pointing to the facts (*i*) that while millions of people are not getting the bare minimum for a human living, billions and

billions of dollars and rubbles are being spent over production of nuclear arms which are of little use for any purpose other than diplomatic, such as preserving the sphere of influence or bullying the weaker neighbours, and (*ii*) that millions of innocent people have been killed in two global and several local wars (including the civil ones) in this century, some people wonder: if these do not mean the end of ideology, what else will? I still persist in thinking that what these facts prove is not the end or non-existence of ideology but rather the unfortunate success of bad ideologies which are very much in existence. The issue is not whether ideology exists or not; but from the moral point of view, the question is: which ideology should be *rejected* by us in the light of our reason and experience. Today the logic of rejection is more important than that of acceptance. For, given the limits and unreason in most of us, the socially realizable ideologies contain more disvalues than values. Even in our rejection of disvalues we need, and in fact do use, an unconsciously preferred schedule of values. Man cannot act without being aware of the content of his action. This act-conscious character of man lifts him above his animal immediacy and gives him a vision of his situation and makes him a theoretician, i.e. an ideologist, of his actions.

IV. Impossibility of Ideology

The very possibility of ideology has been contested from different sides, left and right. There is an old but well-argued view that that form of democracy or government is to be regarded as most rational and moral which is *solidly* based on past experience, i.e. customs and tradition, and not misguided by abstract imagination and fancy. Ideology

is condemned on the ground of being abstract and confused abridgement of experience. Moreover, it has been said that it explains nothing but merely recommends. Ideology is not based on genuine knowledge but only on some techniques of social engineering. Denunciation of ideology may be due to too much of abstract cleverness of its authors or their indifference to whatever is traditional or their uncritical faith in future. The backward-looking critic of ideology says that we are perpetual apprentices in the school of experience and patient seekers of the useful material of stable living, and we should not sacrifice the experience present, which might prove unhappy at times, pinning faith in an imaginary future which, we are told, would be full of milk and honey forever.[2] According to the conservative, every ideology, once it loses touch with experience and reality, tends to degenerate into a sort of utopia. Premeditated ideologies, e.g. Marxism and Democracy, are said to be of no use for us unless we can properly identify ourselves, and proper identification is nothing but to simply recognize what is our experience, the uninterrupted flow of our sympathies and antipathies abjuring all abstract principles and theories.

My main criticism against this conservative rejection of ideology is that it sweeps too much, and in the course of doing so achieves too little and, what is worse, indicts itself, of course unwittingly. To *conserve* experience, i.e. not to be victims of abstractionism or a priorism, we must have some *form*, and to have experience in this or that form, however concrete it might be, we are obliged to 'distort' it. In human case, the existence of unformed experience is impossible; it is the obligation of thinking that whatever we think we organize, transform and, therefore, partly distort. We cannot just help doing so. We do not merely float on or are not immersed in our experience, we

ordinarily either walk or at least swim over it, but at times fly over it and have a broad vision of our situation, past, present and future. The moments of 'flying' from or over experience, although infrequent, are when we reach the ideological height and defy the gravitational, i.e. traditional, inertia. Ideological breakthrough is generally personal and only rarely collective. There is a significant difference between the *initiative* action of a class or group and the creative action of this or that person. To conserve the ethos of solitude (i.e. personal ethics) is far more difficult than to conserve the ethos of relation (i.e. social ethics). The ideologists like Gandhi are, therefore, almost always lonely, more adored and admired than followed.

The forward-looking critic of ideology would, I fear, contest my view. The Marxist regards himself as a progressive critic of ideology. He thinks that all bourgeois ideologies, pernicious hangs-on of the past, are illusions, illusions because they do not reflect the consciousness of the proletariat class, i.e. the most progressive class of the time. False consciousness of the bourgeoisie is responsible for developing illusions as ideologies. The Marxist claims that his ideology, unlike the conservative's, is not the product of intellectual premeditation but very much influenced by the basic socio-economic forces. Marx writes:

> The production of ideas, conception and consciousness is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life.... If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscure, this phenomenon arises from their historical life-process just as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.... We begin with real, active men, and

> from their real life-process show the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process.[3]

Ideologies are not *direct* reflexes and echoes of the *material* life-process, but somehow reducible to the latter, i.e. not autonomous. For Marx, ideologies 'in themselves and detached from real history' are mere abstractions and have not the least value. At this stage the Marxist's argument reminds one of the arch conservative's. The bourgeoisie, divorced from material practice, create illusions and also passively receive the same. Engaged in material practice, the proletariat bring their ideas very close to their actions and experience and, therefore, suffer from no illusion. In the proletarian democracy alone, the Marxist claims, ideology is real and not illusory. It is true, the Marxist concedes, the consciousness of the non-proletariat classes, of the bourgeoisie, e.g. is *not absolutely* false. In the feudal society capitalist consciousness was, of course, true and the capitalist ideology real, but in a socialist society it is false and its ideology illusory. According to the Marxist: (*a*) consciousness is relative to our material existence, and, therefore, never absolute; (*b*) truth and falsity are also class-relative; and (*c*) the proletariat ideology (based upon the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat) is the only example of approximation to the truth. This absolute truth-claim of the proletarian ideology is to be understood against the background of the Marxist faith that the Marxist method of revolution can negate or alienate the alienation of the working class and thus start the process of *final* emancipation of mankind. Once the hollowness of the faith is exposed one sees not only the baselessness of this *absolute* truth-claim but also the suppression of the plain fact that Marxism gives a very one-sided ideological twist to our understanding of the present and past in the light of an ima-

ginary future. The Marxist ideologist is a futurist who requests and, if necessary, coerces us to mortgage all our 'illusory' ideologies and institutional powers to him so that he could show (obviously without any battle of ideas) that his ideology is best and absolute, both in theory and practice. Unless the institutions of criticism and opposition are effectively suppressed and/or silenced, the Marxist cannot establish in practice what he claims in theory, i.e. the absolute infallibility of his ideology. Man is always fallible, and so are his ideology and institutions. When the fallible wants to set up infallible ideologies and institutions, he encounters opposition and criticism from his fellow fallible creatures, and at this stage he might choose to do one of the two things, either (*i*) he might critically review his ideology in the light of oppositions and criticisms, or (*ii*) notwithstanding his own fallibility he might try to suppress *all* oppositions and criticisms, usurp all their powers and abilities, and teach the critics how to be good followers. While the democratic ideology, as I understand it, is based on human fallibility, the Marxist ideology, in a pronounced utopian vein, ignores the fallibility of human nature and stands for vesting a small party elite almost unrestricted powers in the hope it would be able to establish the communist utopia. The Marxist's anti-ideological argument is a part of its own ideology which is claimed to be the only possible absolute ideology.

V. Humans, Ideologies and Democracies

Human ideologies cannot be more perfect than their authors themselves are. The putative authors and executors of ideologies, i.e. class or party (in the case of the Marxist for

example) or tradition (in the case of the arch conservative) are not real ones. Every political system should be of such form that it could allow the expressions not only of the officially approved ideology but also of other ideologies which reflect human nature with all its frailties and nobilities. To say this is not to support a utopia or the survival of the physically fittest.

There is a *systematic ambiguity* in human nature. It is both rational and irrational; at times down-to-earth practical but it also likes speculation, vision and imagination, materially embodied and has also an immaterial dimension of existence.

Democracy without ideology is action without idea. It is not merely freedom that makes human action valuable, it is idea that informs the actor the logical map of its situation and lasting delight of pursuing the goal of action. Ideology pilots democracy not only in rough seas but also near the harbour, where in shallow waters it might get easily stuck up.

Institutions as such, however powerful and carefully planned they might be, can never insure the life of an ideology. Ideology fails less frequently than its author does; that is merely because the author-as-ideologist lives in a more abstract plane of action and existence, more abstract than the plane of the author-as-sociologist. Man takes little risk for his ideology. Ideology defines *ideal* inter-personal relationship, so even if in *actual* social life this relationship proves unrealizable, the ideologist might still persist in claiming that his ideology is not refuted thereby. 'Take-no-risk' attitude of the ideologist lifts his brain-child above the level of empirical corroboration and therefore of refutation too. Irrefutable ideology is another name of utopia.

Paradoxically enough, the conservative critic of ideology is also afraid of going beyond 'solid experience' and strongly against any sort of 'abridgement' of experience. This is also an example of 'take-no-risk' attitude. This shows once more, what I have said before, the meeting of the opposites in the world of ideas.

The democrat cannot but 'abridge' his political experience in the form of some idea, otherwise he cannot understand what he is doing and determine what he is going to do. Ideology is the ill-defined frame of action—the very reference of democracy.

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7

IDENTITY, INTEGRITY AND CULTURAL CONFUSION

> *There is this permanent spirit in things and there is this persistent swadharma or law of our nature; but there is too a less binding system of laws of successive formulation....yugadharma. The race must obey this double principle of persistence and mutation or bear the penalty of decay and deterioration that may taint even its living centre.*[1]—SRI AUROBINDO

I. PREFATORY

IN THIS CHAPTER, I propose to discuss (*i*) the theoretical basis of cultural confusion in general and (*ii*) some specific features and conditions of our cultural confusion. In what follows I shall not harp too much on the distinction between civilization and culture, or between culture in its broad social sense and culture understood in a more restricted sense, i.e. as activities of the culture elite.

Cultural confusion may be studied from different points of view—economic, ethnic, political, etc. But I shall start my analysis from the descriptive semiotic point of view, which seems to me very comprehensive and instructive.

II. Man and Sign

The most fundamental form of human activity is sign-using activity, and it can be shown that cultural confusion is mostly due to our inability to choose the right type of sign necessary to identify our cultural heritage and integrate it with other collateral and often interacting cultures of the modern world.

Man is a sign-using animal. Primary signs are necessarily social, i.e. embedded in a culture or *lebensform*, and not exclusively personal. Man is essentially social by virtue of his sign-using ability. Not only for inter-personal but also for intra-personal communication, whatever man does significantly he does socially. He who can communicate without being social is not man; he may be a god or a beast. Even our spiritual silence is surrounded, animated and illumined by multiple live wires of social signs.

The genetic study of sign-using behaviour, like the Social Contract Theory purported to explain the origin of society, is doomed to fail because of a simple category-mistake: by using social sign we cannot explain what is not social, e.g. the natural and the divine. This does not commit us to any significant form of solipsism. Some transcendental elements always impinge on our none-too-sharply demarcated social frontiers: their influence trickle into our signs, and in course of time we, using our own signs and symbols, assimilate them into our form of life. The vitality of a culture depends upon its power of integrating and assimilating what it receives from other cultures: and that in turn depends upon the depth and breadth of its self-identification.

Sign-behaviour may be theoretical or practical. But this disjunction is not exclusive. Integration (theoretical) of several factors into an equation and (practical) adjustment

of one's life with its diverse circumstances are not essentially different forms of sign-behaviour. The science of signs, semiotics, may be studied as a purely formal discipline and also as a descriptive one. Descriptive semiotics may be of great help for both conceptual and empirical understanding of human cultures.

Animal reactions and human responses are different forms of sign-behaviour, and the difference consists in the degree of mediacy. While the former are less mediate and more spontaneous, the latter more mediate and ponderous. By his superior sign-using ability man transforms natural stimuli into meaningful responses, and thus while an animal seeks satisfaction in organic reaction and remains tied down to the natural level of being, man has acquired the right to live a higher, i.e. social level of life. He lives, moves and enjoys or suffers his being in a significant and symbolic world as essentially constituted by language, myth, art, religion, science and metaphysics. It is by living a form of life that man can change it most successfully.[2]

The problems of alienation (Marx), the schism in the soul (Toynbee), and the (theoretical) unknowability of the self (Kant) show at least one thing in common: the essential (or the spectator's) image of man is and has to be replaced by the functional (or the actor's) one. Man's identity is in what he does with his signs, and not in his inactive and unresponsive 'essence'. The lived identity of man is in his language, art, religion, myths, etc. which fasten him to the soil and at the same time enable him to use effectively the symbols of abstract orders. Man's understanding of, and his communication with, the world and men around him are permeated by his signs which are not merely carriers but also wombs of concepts. His cultural confusion is basically due to his inability to use the suitable

signs for the communication of his experience of the world. Signs cannot always signify their designata with the (actor's) intended degree of success. The ideal of complete clarity in cultural communication eludes our grasp for ever. In between what man experiences and what he intends to communicate there remains often an incommunicable overplus, and that is due to the distinction between the concreteness of the use of the signs in the self and the relative abstractness of the same in others. Cultural communication is more like a romantic rapport between the lover and the beloved than a halting conversation in a foreign tongue.

III. Breakdown of Communication and Cultural Confusion

Wittgenstein suggests that sociologists who misunderstand an alien culture are like philosophers who get into difficulties over the use of their own concepts.[3] Signs or concepts are system-bound: a man born in and used to one system is likely to miss and misinterpret many things of another system. For example, phenomenologists and existentialists accuse logical empiricists of 'insincerity and lack of seriousness,' and the latter hate the former for their 'meaningless phrase-mongering'. It is a popular belief among the Europeans that there is no gentleman east of Suez. A somewhat similar but more serious misunderstanding of alien (and primitive) culture is to be found in the positivist-minded anthropologists like Durkheim, Frazer, Freud and Levy-Bruhl. To their eyes primitive culture appears 'mystical,' 'irrational' and 'pre-logical.' Levy-Bruhl is surprised to find that the people of an inferior society are not afraid of violating the fundamental laws of thought—not even the law of contradiction. This surprise is typical of the posi-

tivist scholars who are prone to intellectualize art, religion and the myth of primitive culture without caring to look into their non-intellectual inspiration and intention. Cultural phenomena must be understood in their appropriate form of life. Otherwise distortion, vulgarization and confusion are unavoidable.[4]

Our basic signs are representative, not discursive. If intercultural communication is confined to what is merely discursively projectable, then, of course, the myth, magic and ritual of an alien culture will appear 'meaningless'. Whatever of a primitive culture cannot fit in a discursive form of a modern culture should not be interpreted as inexpressible feeling or formless desire and satisfaction. This scissor-and-paste method must go.

Cultural confusion is a sort of category-mistake resulting from the misconceived attempts to understand the phenomena of one culture in terms of another and to transplant a set or sub-set of signs from one form of life into another. Alternativity of different sets of signs has to be recognized.

IV. The Anxious West

Some social philosophers believe that the end of Faustian (Spengler) or Western (Schweitzer) culture or the Sensate supersystem (Sorokin) is not far off.[5] Toynbee, Kroeber and Northrop are unanimous in their views that the Euro-American civilization is passing through an unprecedented crisis and that the centre of the 'world civilization' is moving towards the East, wherefrom once it moved to the West. I do not intend to play a second fiddle to this doomsday chorus. I do not know whether this crisis-dream is the result of some anxiety-neurosis. But I do believe that man's destiny is largely determined by man himself; and my refer-

ence to what the above thinkers say is more than of passing interest: we are not at all 'free' to remain indifferent to the influence of the gadgets of the Western civilization and the ideas of the Western culture. And that is due mainly to the machine which has annihilated the distance between times and places.

Machine, money, power and utility are dominant symbols of the affluent West. While millions of men in some parts of the world are afraid of poverty and death, their relatively well-off brethren in West Europe and North America are afraid of useless freedom and purposeless security. The tragedy of our times has become all the more poignant because though, thanks to the present-day excellent communication system, many of us know each other's weals and woes, we cannot easily give up the basic signs of our identity and integrate them with those of others. Consequently, cultural integration at the international level remains still a dream, and what happens is this: an individual Indian becomes Anglophile or an English indophile, or a French artist avoids the pursuant crowd of Paris and settles in Fiji to enjoy the privileges of anonymity, or a noble German missionary opens a hospital in black Africa to remove the pricks in the Christian conscience of the imperial Europe. Sympathy and charity, adoration and admiration, however genuine they might be, will not do. What is needed is cultural integration, and to make that possible the self-identifying signs must be plastic, assimilative and expressive, and not discursive. For the new leviathans of the modern world machine, utility, etc. are a must: and what these unlived symbols encourage most is national chauvinism and not 'useless' peace and understanding.

V. Identity, Integrity and Confusion

The problem of identity appears in the individual's life in late adolescence and early adulthood when he tries to form an idea of himself out of the signs and symbols drawn from his ancestry and environment and integrates it with his intended self-view-intended for himself and others. Given his identity and intention, the problem of integrity is how to live them in life.[6] The concepts of identity and integrity should not be transferred, without reservation, from individuals to cultures, because the analogy between individual life and cultural tradition breaks down at crucial points. Cultural tradition knows no adolescent crisis, has no gen-identity, cannot intend and is not confused except in a remote analogical sense.

The most significant feature of the cultural confusion in the West is the paralysing sense of purposelessness of life. Man does not know what is the purpose of his life: and it is only from newspapers, T.V. and books that he knows of what is called national purpose, such as victory in war, stronger defence, higher productivity, with which he cannot identify himself. So he retires (or is rather condemned) to his dignified loneliness. Human life is so extensively systematized, standardized, typified, and socialized that the flow of life and communication in between persons are being severely interrupted, if not altogether stopped. Man must either be indifferent to what happens around him or identify himself with some dead symbols—nation, class, religion, party, profession, etc. and allow his integrity to suffer. He has nothing to do himself, i.e. freely: everything is being done for him and over his head by machines, systems and types. He has a national heritage and family background (of which he could be proud of), he is perhaps

the head of a family (to which he could belong) and associated, by birth or otherwise, with many institutions, but he feels frustrated, and this feeling is eating up his ideas and acts of will. The vocabulary of alienation gets on expanding at an alarming rate—we get on having words like 'frustrated,' 'indifferent,' 'non-involved,' 'withdrawn,' 'disillusioned, and 'no, thanks'—and there is also that negative nod with a cynical smile on the face![7]

VI. Tradition and Cultural Confusion

Cultural confusion is found mostly among those who have no root in tradition. The relevance of tradition to a form of life may be viewed in the following ways.[8]

First, life is largely guided by traditions. Admittedly some of our traditions are not good and even not necessary, but that we still follow them is undeniable. The devious alley across the field is an example to the point. Some people obviously with no well-thought-out end in view had crossed the field in a devious track, others followed them later, so we now tend to follow the beaten track. Similarly, we are disposed or inclined to follow the traditions even when we are theoretically persuaded of their irrationality or uselessness. Tradition cannot be abruptly given up in practice.

Secondly, the role of tradition in culture is analogous to that of myths or theories in the field of sciences. Both myths and theories purport to bring about some sort of uniformity or orderliness in the natural and social phenomena. Myths perform the function of theories at a different (not necessarily lower) level. The positivistic theory of theory-construction misses the cognitive import of the myths couched in metaphorical and emotive language. Myths—being criticised and tested—assume the dignity of

theories. Uncriticisable and untestable theories become mythical in course of time. It is our critical vigilance which alone can infuse theoretical dignity into tradition and preserve its practical usefulness, particularly in the face of new and challenging experiences.

Finally, traditions, like theories, offer us something to start and operate with. Social progress without traditional background is impossible. The tabula rasa theory breaks down both in epistemology and sociology. With an empty world around you and a clean canvas before you, you just cannot paint anything. This is an extremely important truth which the ultra-revolutionaries and the political canvas-cleaners forget in their utopinian zeal for completely changing the identity of a culture. That is why an era of revolution is often succeeded by an era of revision. We must avoid the extremes of bloody revolutionism and irrational traditionalism, futurism and revivalism: we must not repeat the mistakes of the French encyclopaedist and the Trotskyites or those of Burke and the apologists for conservatism.

Transcendence of existing conditions in a moderate degree gives us an ideology; and when it purports to be wholesale we get a utopia. And if we insist on conserving whatever we have and are, then our culture, in the face of modern challenge, will start disintegrating.

VII. Confusion at the Top

Let me say straightaway that cultural confusion in modern India is confined, thanks to English education, primarily to the educated few, and that the vast masses of uneducated people, very much involved in other pressing problems, are confused only to the extent the influence of the former trickle into their life. With the increasing mobility

of population from rural to urban and industrial areas and spread of education this confusion will, of course, spread.

The root of our cultural confusion is what is often loosely called English education. Nobody will be so foolish as to deny the immense benefits that we have derived from it. It has proved to be more than a form of education: with some of us it has become a form of life. The brilliant students of Dirozio, for example, found in English education more than an orientation—a new identity. Oppressed under the fossilized culture of the 19th century these angry youngmen were indeed in search of a new identity, and wanted a mighty instrument by which they could break through the petrified shell of the moribund Indian culture and come out of it forever. It is in English education that they found that mighty instrument. To them English meant a *lebensform,* and not merely a form or medium of instruction. By taking drinks (not soft) and beef openly, and hoping even to dream in English language they believed they would succeed in coming out of the dead form of life and establishing the *bona fides* of their new identity. They did not think of integrating the old with the new culture. Some of them went the length of embracing Christianity; some others were accommodated in the liberal Brahmo fold. Their cultural confusion is symbolic, i.e. representative, and it has been persisting ever since in different forms, crude or sophisticated.

VIII. Two Cultures

By two cultures I mean one that came upon us from the West and the other of our own soil marked by its inexhaustive capacity to assimilate what comes from outside without giving up its basic view of life, basic forms and rhythms

necessary for the expression of the experiences of life, and the inspiration of giving shape to its ideals of individual and social living. India is not, as it appears to many of her foreign critics, a land of gigantic polytheism, rank superstition and prejudice, useless rituals, of Gurus, Fakirs, snake-charmers, rope-tricks and that inevitable Royal Bengal Tiger. And it is a pity that many of us took our first, and perhaps the only, lesson in Indian culture from the pseudo-accounts of it given by the Western critics who unfortunately could not get into the ingoings of the objects of their uninformed criticism.[9]

In the wake of the foreign rule came an alien culture and developed an alien understanding of Indian culture, and its influence was mixed—both enlightening and confusing. It dispelled our ignorance about the world beyond the seas and about many good things we lacked, but confused us in that it did not help us to strike a balance between our traditional heritage and what was modern. We were persuaded to accept the dominant symbols of the *vaisya* (bourgeois) culture. Education was for the privileged few: it was little else than their job-requirement. A new class started emerging: lawyers, doctors, professors, civil servants, etc. were its distinguished members. They had little or no connection with the vast masses of the land; they used to send their children to English schools and then, if possible, to Oxford or Cambridge, Gray's Inn or Lincoln's Inn, and they prized most whatever was English. And the patriots of the time used to address 'the people' in English. This is no reflection on their patriotism, but it is an unmistakable reflection of their cultural confusion. Consequently they failed to communicate with the people of the land, and their influence was more or less confined to the educated urban population. The new class could not identify

itself with, but merely patronized, the culture of the people and, therefore, largely failed to express their weals and woes. What we really needed at the time was to discover our own Indian identity and it is only on that basis that we could possibly achieve an assimilative, and not a mere additive, integration.

In marked contrast to this confused trend of identification and integration, we observe a parallel healthy trend represented by such great souls as Rabindranath, Gandhiji, Sri Aurobindo and Abanindranath, each of whom was outstanding in his field, endowed with creative genius of the highest order. They could achieve greatness because they had, among other things, profound acquaintance with our own cultural heritage.[10] And they discovered such dynamism in the depth of our culture that they easily succeeded in assimilating the best elements of the Western culture. Gandhiji was the first national leader who could fully communicate with the people and identify himself with their cause. Deeply influenced by the *Upanishads*, the classical Indian literature, the diverse forms of our folk culture, the plains, hills, skies and rivers of India, Rabindranath created a new world of beauty whereto distant skies sent their illumining light and distant seas their greeting breeze. Quite conversant with the foreign forms of art, Abanindranath could attain the highest and best form of his artistic genius only through Indian themes and styles. Sri Aurobindo has shown clearly, drawing numerous examples from every aspect of Indian culture, that our basic symbols—*dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha* are neither supra-worldly (ascetic) nor sub-worldly (hedonic) but so potent in their ingoings that in terms of them we can rightly understand and assimilate whatever the civilization of machine, money, power or efficiency and utility have to offer us.

Referring to the above master-minds what I have tried to say, but could not spell out, is the very core of my contention: those who have not realized their *swadharma* (i.e. identity) cannot assimilate (but are overwhelmed by) the *yugadharma* and the result is cultural confusion. I am sure those who have the necessary learning (which I lack) in the fields of Indian art, architecture, music, literature, etc. can show in detail how the impact of alien culture has alienated us from our own culture in the British past. It is high time now that there should be alienation of this alienation, but not without grasping the logic of alienation.

IX. The Different Faces of Our Confusion

The British have withdrawn and we are now politically independent. But our cultural confusion persists. A distinguished Indian anthropologist ruefully remarked: "Our boys can correctly tell you the details of European dresses and dishes but don't know what their fellow-countrymen in different parts of India eat and wear." This is typical of our cultural confusion.

You will find many educated men who agree in principle that for pedagogical reasons mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction but send their children to English-medium schools, so that (I presume) they could learn the correct accent and by virtue of that might get good job or recognition in 'society'. I know of cultured men (incidentally admirers of Tagore and Mahatma) who decorate their parlour among other things with some art objects of distinct Indian motif, but right from the architectural design of the house and household furniture to the arrangements and fittings of the bath and privy I find, to my utter dismay, nothing really Indian around them. If questioned, they try

to defend themselves rather apologetically on utilitarian grounds. It is a pity that we forget that the finest flowers of culture are often 'useless'.

Is not democracy 'useless' in the present context of India? A little analysis will show, I fear, that those who are denigrating our democracy most are using it best. The accent of our culture is now aesthetic, and not ethical. We always talk nice and do not care to see if we are talking truth. The sociological and intellectual composition of the ruling and opposition parties is all over the country the same. The familiar faces of industrialists, doctors, lawyers, professors and retired executives are to be found everywhere—from cultural show to circus show, from posh bar to political party—right or left. If they have crowded now more in one party than in another, the excuse is simply utilitarian.

We have got a political system which we did not deserve. The masses are not participating in it; the social elite is using it to its own advantage. By our action and disposition we have not yet succeeded in giving the desired content to the democratic form of our government. The line of communication between 'we' (the people) and 'they' (the power elite) remains snapped: even among 'them' there is no other unity of purpose than reaping the poor harvest of the incoming affluence; and there is no charisma to inspire, unify and lead 'us' and 'them' together. Our political system, like our educational system, has little relevance to the needs of the soil. Our political confusion is a part of our overall cultural confusion.

Naturally the picture is not very different in other forms of life—theoretical and practical. What Europe thinks today we rethink tomorrow, perhaps days after tomorrow. In Philosophy, for example, our point of departure is either Wittgenstein or Husserl, and we are not quite clear how our lived

life and its problems might have relevance to our philosophies. Some of us are parroting the texts of classical systems, and some others parading their acquaintance with the jargons or logical tools of the contemporary Western philosophers. We are indifferent spectators of a drama which is being enacted over our heads by others. We have no problem of our own. Our identity is parasitical, and our integration (at its best) additive and syncretic.

X. Identity, Integrity and Rational Commitment

I do not claim that I am above the confusion. I feel I am involved in it. But every self-reference, logicians know, is not fallacious. I beg you to take my analysis not as a piece of exhortation, but rather as a confession—a confused man's bid to free himself from this confusion through some rational commitment.[11]

A rational commitment is not an irrevisable principle or faith to which one, in the face of a challenge or crisis, might easily retreat. It is not 'the last resort of the scoundrel' or the dogmatist. Nor is it a principle or ideology wherefrom one, in the face of a challenge or crisis could retreat without changing his identity and integrity. Each of us needs a social commitment which must not be a smoke-screen for escape of the dogmatist and the opportunist. If we denigrate everything and commit ourselves to nothing, we show ourselves to be irresponsible and worthless. Every commitment is not a shackle to be afraid of. Rational commitment is criticisable—substantially contestable, though not necessarily verifiable or falsifiable. Many of our theoretical commitments are not verifiable: most of our practical or valuational commitments are neither verifiable nor falsifiable. The illiberal criteria of rationality exclude all non-

discursive signs and symbols found in myth, religion, art, mores, etc., in terms of which we discover our basic identity, and encourage sterile culture positivism. Whatever might be my identity, as a social and rational being my basic obligation is to critically review it in the light of new facts and arguments, and not to justify it blindly; and it is when we constantly discharge this obligation, our developing identity enables us to achieve dynamic integration and avoid cultural confusion. Self-critical vigilance is the price of liberty from cultural confusion.[12] Thus we could develop open mind, open society and critical fraternity of all social beings, including the critics and enemies (but not avowed destroyers) of open mind and open society.

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8

UTILITY AND CULTURE

> *Each individual embodies an adventure of existence. Disinterested scientific curiosity is a passion for an ordered intellectual vision of the connection of events ...(and) the goal of such curiosity is the marriage of action to thought.*[1]—A. N. WHITEHEAD

THE RELEVANCE of philosophy to education may be studied, broadly speaking, from three distinct but related points of view—metaphysical, epistemological and socio-ethical. The metaphysical question is: what is the identity of the person to be educated? The epistemological question is: given his identity, how is the person to be educated truly? The socio-ethical question is: given his identity and assuming that he intends to know what is true, what socio-ethical norms and values should he try to follow? To see the intimate relation between these three questions an adequate theory of signs and symbols is absolutely necessary. In this chapter I shall try to show that (1) in learning and education the importance of language (of course in its extended sense) is as basic as human existence; (2) different levels and types of education and learning involve thinking and acting according to appropriate signs and symbols; and (3) granted (1)

and (2) the dichotomy between utility and culture is false. If the supposed polarity between personal utility and social utility, personal culture and social culture, may be shown to be false, that will indicate the ideal to be followed in the field of education.

II. Human Learning and Language

Education may be said to be the ways of 'getting the got' or 'opening up the open'. It is insight which helps man most to learn. The method of trial-and-error is the paradigm of sub-human and not human learning. But the difference between these two methods is not as radical as it is ordinarily believed to be. In either case, learning consists in 'seeing' the object in its appropriate context. While humans can, animals cannot, appreciate the endless complexity of their context. This seems to be primarily due to superior symbolic ability of man.

What man can learn 'depends' upon what he is. His ability 'depends' upon his existence. This dependence is not ostensively demonstrable. But man can 'see' it himself. The depth of human existence or personality knows no bound. Yet, placed under practical obligation, man always identifies himself either in thought or, what is more frequent, action, and sets a temporary limit to his own existence, and, if asked, can declare the exact verb-word designating his mental mode or process of self-identification. Man exceeds his own existence and realizes the ever-changing character of his self-identity in language and by symbolic activities—symbolizing and referring to the endless complexity and depth of his existence in the (symbolic) world, i.e. society. Man transforms himself and all that

he finds around himself by the available form(s) of his life, i.e. language. Language is a social institution; and there is nothing private in it. Human personality (or existence) is embedded in language. It is in language that man both learns and unlearns, gets and forgets, and somehow preserves even what he has forgotten for the time being. Viewed thus, language may be said to be race memory or social form of life which can be reviewed or relived at different levels of abstraction or concreteness. It is in language and its different levels that human existence knows the joy of adventure of thought and action. Fine arts, humanities, science and technology represent different forms of utilization of human culture.

Human education should be so designed as to enable man to utilize his culture and to culturize his utility. The anti-thesis between liberal education and technological education rests upon a very wrong assumption, viz. while the former is concerned only with culture, the latter only with utility. The utilities which are not culturized tend to degenerate into mechanical habits; and culture, unless somehow utilized, becomes somewhat like an exhibition show-piece and ceases to be part of human life.

A comprehensive philosophical theory of education must go deep into two fundamental issues: (1) human existence and (2) its relation to language. It has been rightly observed by Heidegger that "language is not something that man, among other faculties or instruments, also possesses, but that which possesses man."[2] Unless the instrumentalist or pro-naturalist theories of language are eschewed, the correct relation between (1) and (2) cannot be grasped. And in that case, the ideal relation between utility and culture will continue to remain a highly controversial issue.

III. USING THE 'USELESS'

Right from the beginning of human civilization enough has been said by the wise men of east and west both in favour of and against using knowledge. But I think every age and society in general, and every man in particular, has its or his right to re-define the ideal relation between praxis and theoria, value-laden action and vision. Every action (together with the course chosen for its performance) has a value component in it, and that act of choice implies comparison and discernment in the light of a unitary vision. It is not at all without philosophical insight that such distinguished marginal utility analysts as von Mises and Hayek have laid so much of value-accent on economic actions.[3] Human actions are positive only in rare cases; ordinarily they are normative. Man identifies himself in thought and action. By action he intends to fulfil what he lacks. But intended actions are bound to be frustrated, i.e. remain unfulfilled, unless actions are significantly initiated and executed having their norm and intended end constantly in view. Human world is a world of significant thinking and doing. Here we use what we are and be what we are not.

To be what we are not, we have to both think and act, follow and expand our thought by action, act in the light of thought, and it is in action that many of our riddles or antinomies of thought are solved (or dissolved). Although I do not believe that all our 'riddles' of thought may be 'dissolved' by language analysis, I do believe that an adequate theory of human learning (both theoretical and practical) cannot be developed unless the importance of signs and symbols is properly realized.

The distinction between sign and symbol is relative. Symbol is relatively abstract sign, and sign relatively con-

crete symbol. Without symbols and signs, numbers and pictures, diagrams and words, we cannot learn. There are various ways, abstract and concrete, of grasping reality in symbols. Both aesthesis and mathesis are preserved or conserved in symbols. It is no wonder that the Pythagoreans were struck by the 'magic' of numbers—the 'magic' which enables the abstract numbers to hold sway over the concrete flux of reality. From Plato and Aristotle to Kant, Russell and Wittgenstein many great thinkers have thought much over the 'magic' underlying the relation between 'matter' and 'form'. Only few—very few—deny the necessity of 'form' to know 'matter' or to identify what 'matter' is.

It is not only for organization of 'brute' physical facts that we use mathematical formulae, even sonorous musical harmony is amenable to quantitative treatment. We do utilize, and cannot help utilizing, the abstract for the concrete, form for matter, and norm for action. A little analysis shows that one is not alien to other. Had it not been so any form could be successfully brought to bear upon any matter, or, to change the domain, any norm could be applied to judge any action. The relation between form and matter, norm and action, is to be construed not in terms of instrument or convention but in terms of intention. Every form is form-of and every norm norm-of. If form could not somehow inform us of its matter and norm could not intimate us of the actual and possible domains of its application, we could totally dispense with them in thought and action. However, it must not be thought that forms and norms necessarily enter into the constitution of our thought and action; it seems that they only regulate thought and action.

I have already said that learning is a way of 'getting the got,' getting in a 'new' way what we have already got in some other or 'old' way. Even the ways in our (i.e. human) cases cannot be absolutely new. This is due to tradition. Forms may be, in fact are, transformed and cannot be created *de novo* without paying a very high price. Frequent and radical 'revolutions' in the field of learning augur only bad days for students and teachers, particularly the former. To be informed of an object or a technique is not to learn it. To learn is to grasp, to go into the 'heart' of the thing and to realize all that it means. To learn, often we have to unlearn much of what we have learnt. Reorganization entails at least partial rejection. We do not learn whatever we tumble upon. We learn what we somehow already have and are. We are practically obliged to use what is seemingly old and useless. To get anything new we use what we have already got, and, what is more important to note, what we lack and therefore intend (to get) is known to us. It is like studying the same (yet not exactly the same) history at different levels—school, college and university or research.

To think either that theory is useless and practice useful or that technological education is useful and liberal education useless is not so much to espouse a wrong view as to miss the very foundation of education. If education is concerned, to quote Whitehead, with 'life in all its manifestations,' then we should not draw a sharp line of demarcation between liberal and technological, or scientific and humanistic education, or between general and highly specialized education. One is as useful as the other, but the main question, which often goes unanswered, is: useful for whom—the man to be educated or the society to be benefitted? The ultimate choice must be personal as far as that is allowable.

The limit of allowance is neither fixed for ever nor can be decided *a priori*. The children should not be used by their parents to fulfil their own unfulfilled hopes and dreams of life, enhance their social and economic status, and assume status symbols. Irresponsible talks of status-seeking elders create an unwholesome social atmosphere wherein the youths feel inclined to believe that what matter most in life are money and status. If the only 'practical' function of education is to cater to job requirements, then I can easily imagine that continued unemployment or underemployment of engineering graduates, for example, will develop an unfavourable attitude among students and their parents towards technological education. The value of education is not to be judged, at least not primarily, in terms of use. But this does not mean that every type of valuable education must be useless. In spite of Russell's brilliant advocacy for 'useless' knowledge, one can easily see that what he means by 'useless' knowledge constitutes a very important part of our culture. Some aspects of culture may certainly appear to be useless to some people, but that does not prove that culture has no utility. Every form of utility is not sensible and there are forms of utility which only sensitive souls can perceive.

IV. Insight and Use

If in the wake of revolution in science and technology some hard-boiled scientists and technicians start talking about the futility of teaching fine arts, or if prejudiced professors of humanities say, as at times they do, "engineers and doctors may know their subject, but they are not cultured folk," we should not blame either science and technology or fine

arts and humanities. For any one's careless reaction one's subject of study should not be held responsible. I have heard serious persons remark that we need first-grade students only in the field of theoretical disciplines and that the technical fields may well be manned by second-grade students. This view is not only false but also uninformed. How should we classify mathematics? Is it a mere technique of compounding tautologies or manipulating symbols? What do then such expressions as mathematical discovery or mathematical insight really mean? To praise 'practical' knowledge and denounce theory, to harp too much on the utility of science and technology and the futility of 'arts,' forgetting all the time the interrelations between theory and practice and between science, arts and fine arts, is all gibberish. What we really need is a creative dialogue between the persons engaged in different fields of study. Education should be so designed as to enable us not only to see a thing but also to see it through. When the specialist of one particular branch of knowledge or learning is aided by the freshness of the approach and outlook of men of other branches, the former may get out of his old rut of thinking and the result prove both interesting and fruitful.

Education is not a fact-finding operation. Facts are relevant in education in so far as they test our views, rightly shape our personality and enable us to enjoy leisure creatively. 'Culture-vulture' is a much despised creature: he who dabbles in every subject is never taken seriously by experts in any subject. Aimless accumulation of information, instead of helping our thought and action, tends to paralyse them. If information remains inert and unutilized in our culture, the mind becomes a sort of 'blooming buzzing confusion',

Education should be left neither to 'natural spontaneity' nor to the state authority for catering the spartan needs of the ruling class or clique. There is nothing wrong in utilizing education and its serene shrine, culture; but the question is: who is utilizing what, and for what purpose? Plato has been squarely criticised by Popper for having advocated a collectivist, tribal, and utilitarian theory of education. Although Plato speaks of the necessity of blending the fierceness and gentleness in the character of the rulers for keeping the state stable and identifies the gentleness with the philosophic disposition of human soul, "he is not at all biased in favour of the gentle element of the soul, or of musical, i.e. literary education."[4]

Whitehead's assessment of Plato's theory of education is opposite to Popper's, and I understand this opposition more in the light of the former's Platonism than in that of the latter's anti-totalitarianism. And I must not conceal that in this controversy my sympathy lies with Popper. Even a pro-Platonic thinker like Whitehead had to concede that the 'total neglect of technical education' is 'an evil side of the Platonic culture'. This evil is attributed to "disastrous antithesis...between mind and body...between thought and action." Body is not an instrument of mind; it is mental; and mind is embodied. The basic individual is person, neither body nor mind. His identity is not disclosed exclusively either in thought or in action. Thought is tested and liberated in action, and action 'steadily buzzed' and guided by thought.[5] Product of action, thought produces action. Result of thought, technique makes deeper thinking and subtler action possible. To understand and to extend the uses of the 'magic' of number or to invent ma-

chines in order to economize the steps of human thought and action is not merely a technique to be scoffed at.

Both thought and action have two related aspects: grasp and employment. There is a non-demonstrative core in every act of grasp; but the same is not true, at least not obviously, in that of employment. Great discoverers and inventors are not guided by sure rules of thumb. They are guided by a sort of insight into the logic of the situation. And there cannot be any method of discovery to replace this insight. Deductive logic or mathematical reasoning is of importance not only to utilize (or put in practice) what we get through the insight but also, in a limited way, to get at the insight itself. What exactly an insight is like cannot be said clearly, except that it is a sort of what Einstein calls Einfuhlung, intellectual love of reality. One of the main objects of education is to develop this insight. Although this love of intellectual, i.e. not obviously tagged to an immediate utilitarian end, yet it carries somehow within it the clue to its being applied. Every culture is environed by its own 'techniques,' but its core or life-centre seems to be non-technical.

V. Work and Play

Education is not a job voucher. It helps us to work and work well. Education imparts refined culture, makes us articulately aware of what we already are, and enables us to utilize and subtlize that culture in practice. Our work does not bore us and, on the contrary, tends to become our play, when our work follows the 'steady buzz' of our own intended existence belonging to a tradition and longing for an ideal. Born in language, we cannot identify our existence outside our language. This explains why one's mother-

tongue must be recognized not as the natural medium of instruction only but as the basic form of all learning. Rightly understood, it is not a question of choice but of recognition. The fact that language is used does not prove that its only identity is instrumental. What is 'natural' at the pre-reflective level may appear 'instrumental' at the reflective level. Signs and symbols are connected and graded forms of lived existence. The more clearly we can see through the connection and graduation of the different forms of our life, the more intimate and rational becomes the relation between our work and play. Education, to quote Shaw, is indeed, "a commonwealth in which work is play and play is work." Aesthesis, mathesis and tekhnikos are like a three-pronged form—three at the lower end and one at the upper. The dichotomy between liberal education and technological education is false. The line of demarcation between culture and utility cannot be clearly drawn; one constantly shades into the other.

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