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THE Dr. S. RADHAKRISHNAN INSTITUTE
FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

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# PREFACE

The Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy conducted an All-India Seminar on "The Problem of Alienation" on 5th to 7th March 1979. Part I of this volume of the Indian Philosophical Annual contains some of the papers presented during this Seminar. Part II contains two special articles based on the lectures delivered by Dr. P. S. Pandmanabhan at the Radhakrishnan Institute on 13th and 14th September 1978 and a book review. We have included in Part III of this volume Tirumūlar's *Upadeśam* edited and translated.

We are thankful to the Government of Tamilnadu for financing this publication and to the Vice-Chancellor and other authorities of the University of Madras for providing the necessary facilities for the publication of the present volume.

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Madras
March 27, 1980

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN
*Editor*

## CONTENTS

PART TWO

SPECIAL ARTICLES



PART THREE

PART ONE

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR ON THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION

# 1

# THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION

G. SRINIVASAN

This paper intends to be a progressive analysis of the meaning of 'alienation' in the context of different types of philosophies; it seeks to describe how and in what sense 'alienation' is regarded as a problem, as a fact, as an ideal and so on, by different philosophers. Different views are compared throughout, but no attempt is made to arrive at 'any' final conclusion, even though the author's preference of a definite viewpoint is made clear at the end.

The dominant tendency of the traditional philosophical systems was to emphasise the final alienation of man from the world. This psychological tendency had its metaphysical roots in their analysis of the structure of human existence. They conceived the soul as the essence of man and this spiritual essence was regarded as having an eternal reality 'independent' of all temporal, actual existence such as the body, the sense-organs and the world of objects, both living and non-living. Further, the soul was conceived of as having its own inherent consciousness, knowledge, perfection and bliss, ungenerated and basically unaffected by the world. What the world with all its stimulations could possibly cause was considered to be 'alien' to the 'true' nature of the soul with the result that a 'bifurcation' came to be affirmed between spiritual reality and material existence, internal bliss and external misery, meditative knowledge and practical action. This 'bifurcation' of human existence in the world led to a life of withdrawal, contemplation and meditative knowledge in preference to a life of personal involvement, social participation and practical action. This in general formed the basic trait of the traditional systems starting from Plato in the West and the Upanishads

in the East. No doubt, these systems did try to concede *some* importance to social participation and moral action. But mostly this was in the nature of a concession given to such people as would be incap able of following the purely spiritual path of meditative knowledge with all its ascetic rigour. In such cases, it was also sometimes recognized that moral action would remove the 'hindrances' in the path of meditative knowledge;[1] but it was *not* recognised as 'indispensable' for the realisation of perfection; for, perfection or bliss was considered to be inherent to the nature of the soul and could be realised as such *only* through the path of meditative knowledge and not through action;[2] it was repeatedly asserted that 'ignorance' of the true nature of the self was the cause of misery, and ignorance could be removed only through knowledge and not through action.

The upshot of this philosophical position is that it affirms 'alienation' from the world as the final goal of human existence. But, peculiarly enough, 'alienation' according to these systems is a basic metaphysical 'fact' and an ideal to be realised, but not an actual, empirical fact or truth. Hence the basic problem according to these systems is not the problem of alienation, but the problem of non-alienation in the sense that non-alienation is an empirical fact which is to be 'dissolved' while alienation is an ideal to be spiritually realised.

In contemporary times, one of the philosophers who has highly criticised this traditional tendency is John Dewey and this is apparent from his *Reconstruction in Philosophy*.[3] He has pointed out that the traditional Platonic philosophies presented a strange reversal of truth in that they mistook a fiction for an ideal, and a real, empirical fact for a falsity. This was the result of 'wishful thinking' according to Dewey and he has tried to correct it in his 'Instrumentalism'. Thought, Dewey has pointed out, is essentially a means of practical action and not of metaphysical speculation. Action would necessarily mean social action for Dewey, since man is basically a social being; hence the purpose of a philosopher should be to analyse social problems, evolve plausible 'ideals' or modes of action to solve them, and work out their bearing on the practical problems of social life. In the context of such a philosophy, alienation from social life would be interpreted as an act of 'timidity' and 'escapism',

as a vice and not a virtue. Accordingly the problem would be to prevent the tendency towards such alienation which sometimes gains 'exceptional' mystic popularity, and the ideal would be to justify the attitude of non-alienation in the sense of social participation, involvement and concern.

While Dewey could thus be highly critical of the traditional philosophical attitude and its metaphysical basis, he himself could not propound any alternative system of metaphysics, nor was it his intention to do so. The result is that his emphasis on social participation and non-alienation lacks the badly needed foundation in an 'empirical' system of metaphysics.

In recent years, existentialism has focussed its attention on the problem of alienation. But its account of the problem is paradoxical because of the distinct individuality of each existentialist. However, it will be more worthwhile to probe into the meaning and significance of the problem of alienation in the context of existentialism.

Kierkegaard, who is considered as the founder of existentialism, did not differ much from the traditional thinkers as far as the problem of alienation is concerned. This was because of his basic theistic commitment and deep religious sentiment. In fact, he agreed with the traditional thinkers that the ultimate purpose of man should be to alienate himself from the world and commit himself to God. Thus Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel's absolutism and his attempt to restore to man his human dignity and individuality could make no difference to his emphasis on the need for alienation of man from the world and regarding it as the means of authentic existence. The traditional tendency thus repeated itself in the philosophy of Kierkegaard since the basic philosophical framework remained the same with the little difference that the 'religious dualism' of Kierkegaard came to replace the 'metaphysical monism' of Hegel.

Marcel, however, seeks to amend the position of Kierkegaard by pointing out that equal emphasis should be laid on man's commitment to God and his commitment to other fellow-beings. But Marcel's emphasis on man's commitment to his fellow-beings seems more like a 'desirable assertion' than a logical conclusion derived

from a metaphysical system, as there is no such system in his philosophy.

Thus the philosophies of both Marcel and Dewey seem to suffer from the same defect, even though their approaches seem to vary. Dewey's analysis of human existence may be said to be objective and from the standpoint of society, while Marcel's approach is subjective and from the standpoint of man's inner 'lived' experience; but neither supports the assertion of man's social commitment on the basis of a well-knit metaphysical system.

Karl Jaspers, however, probes deeper into the analysis of human existence; yet for the same reason, he becomes more paradoxical. Like Marcel, Jaspers stresses the importance of communication[4] between persons as being structural to the existence of each person; this obviously shows that alienation from others is 'unnatural' and undesirable at the level of human existence. But, when Jaspers speaks of being-oneself in the interests of exercising one's own freedom and choice, he finds no reason why it should not necessitate 'alienation'. In fact, he clearly sees such a possibility when he speaks of 'frustration' and 'the abyss of nothingness', and he even goes to the extent of regarding it as the means of encounter with 'Transcendence'.[5] The final note of emphasis thus seems to be on the 'not-undesirable alienation' in the philosophy of Jaspers, even though he starts with the initial emphasis on non-alienation through communication. These two are left unreconciled in Jaspers' philosophy, or at least, their relation is not made clear logically or ethically. This may be because Jaspers speaks of Being as 'discontinuous'; this seems to *explain away* the philosophical necessity to show any continuity of Being.[6]

In the philosophies of Sartre and Heidegger, however, the problem of alienation has received much greater attention and they could come into closer grips with the problem, though each in his own distinct way. Both Sartre and Heidegger accept that man's being-in-the world (*Dasein*) is basically being-with-others.[7] Alienation from others which may sometimes be practised to a certain extent is only an *arrested* mode of being-with-others, and it proves the basic structure of man's being-with-others and does not

disprove it. Hence the specific meaning and significance of alienation will have to be discussed only *within the context of man's being-with-others.*

Being-with-others may imply 'being lost' in a crowd, without any sense of personal freedom and responsibility; this 'lostness' implies a kind of non-alienation, which is referred to as 'unauthentic existence' by Sartre and Heidegger; and they regard 'being lost' as 'unbecoming' of the dignity of human existence. Hence a kind of 'ethical alienation' in which the individual becomes intensely aware of his own individuality, freedom and responsibility is insisted upon as the most desirable authentic existence both by Sartre and Heidegger. Sartre especially has dwelt at length on this point and describes how a man feels anguish, despair and forlornness when he has to take a momentous decision of immense consequences for himself and for others.[8] The feeling of alienation or 'loneliness' in this sense is a *condition* to be psychologically accepted while exercising the existential choice, and in this ethical sense, it becomes 'definitive' of man's authentic existence. According to this analysis, alienation *becomes* a problem only when one tries to avoid it. The solution for the problem lies in accepting it and facing it. Non-alienation is no solution to the problem as that would lead to unauthentic existence. However, both alienation and non-alienation thus have an ethical significance in the philosophies of Sartre and Heidegger.

However, while agreeing with Sartre on the ethical significance of alienation, Heidegger adds to it an ontological element as well by his distinct view of death. While Sartre accepts death only as inevitable *accident* in life, Heidegger regards it as the innermost, primordial potentiality of life.[9] Death begins with life and continues throughout life, undermining it all through. Human existence is being-ahead-of-itself towards death and authentic human existence consists in cultivating an anticipatory conception of death and living in accordance with it. In a life lived accordingly, the anticipated death introduces 'dread' and 'nothingness' which are the conditions of authentic existence. Living in constant anticipation of death, man naturally feels the 'nothingness' of all that is; 'disrelationship' or alienation from others comes to be experienced by him, even while his relationship with others is still an actuality.[10] Thus the

basic feeling of inevitable prospective alienation from the world undermines the feeling of actual non-alienation or being-with-others. But this prospective alienation is an 'ontological' concept in Heidegger's philosophy inasmuch as it pertains to the structure of human existence and cultivated by him in his ontological mood or dread.

Further, Heidegger's philosophy also has the promise of a metaphysical reward for a life lived in anticipation of inevitable alienation from others in the world. This reward however lies *in this life itself* and not after life as was promised by the traditional thinkers. Heidegger makes it clear that the anticipatory conception of death introduces the mood of dread into human existence, which in turn reveals the nothingness or the 'worthlessness' of man's being-in-the-world as such;[11] it 'devalues' man's possessions, decisions and relations even while they still exist as actualities. The whole world seems to be slipping away from oneself in this mood of dread.[12] This, of course, is the first phase of dread, but in its second phase, when man begins to face the mood of dread and probe into it, 'nothingness' turns out to be the medium through which he can encounter Being (*Sein*).[13] Nothingness and Being are thus not opposed to each other, since nothingness 'nihils' itself is Being according to Heidegger.[14] Thus alienation is not for its own sake but for the sake of encountering Being in Heidegger's philosophy.

In Sartre's non-metaphysical existentialism, alienation however can have no such metaphysical purpose, but only an ethical purpose, as explained above. Nevertheless, Sartre's view of alienation as the ethical condition of human freedom or choice has its own ontological roots in his 'dualistic' analysis of the universe into two 'opposed' principles, being-for-itself and being-in-itself. According to Sartre, being-for-itself or consciousness alone is basically purposive while being-in-itself is basically purposeless, and this analysis inevitably leads him to the 'questionable' conclusion that man is a purposive being in a purposeless universe.[15]

However, for both Sartre and Heidegger, the *problem* of alienation arises from the *non-acceptance* of alienation; Sartre pleads for its acceptance purely from the ethical point of view, while Heidegger pleads

for it from the ethical as well as the metaphysical view-points. Their views, however, differ from the view of the traditional thinkers, since they refuse to posit any reality beyond life and confine the significance of their statements to a philosophy of human finiteness. This seems to be quite obvious, but what is equally obvious and even more important in the context of contemporary philosophy is the fact that there are many other recent thinkers who are not traditionally oriented but who differ from Sartre and Heidegger all the same. A. N. Whitehead is one such philosopher and his view may be briefly stated here.[16]

In his organic philosophy, Whitehead has clearly pointed out that man who is a 'nexus' of actual occasions is a 'product' of the past universe and has freedom to act and create values for being absorbed through selection into the future creative process of the universe. Each man is thus part and parcel of an infinite creative process which we call the universe or Reality, and the question of alienation does not arise in this process. There is thus no 'bifurcation' between man and the universe; man is not a purposive being in a purposeless universe, but a purposive being in a purposive universe. This is because, according to Whitehead, freedom is not the sole prerogative of man as conceived by the existentialist, but belongs to the entire universe or each actual occasion which exercises choice in 'prehending' the past universe of actual occasions in accordance with its own subjective form. What exclusively belongs to man is only his consciousness, and in him, freedom comes to be combined with consciousness. But there need not be any necessary or binding relation between them, and *there can be freedom without consciousness* as found at the sub-human levels of existence. In this context, the basic point of relevance for us is that Whitehead is pointing out that freedom is basically rooted in the structure of the entire universe and not merely man, and therefore alienation in the sense of being a condition for the exercise of choice belongs to the entire universe and not merely to man. Therefore alienation in this sense is *not* peculiarly a human fact since it characterises all actual occasions. But it can *'become'* a human 'problem' because of the association of freedom with consciousness in man. It is only man who can *consciously* accept or reject a fact; he can accept a fact even if it is not a fact and can reject a fact even if it is a fact; in

other words, where errors in thinking are possible, problems do arise, and the problem of alienation is one such problem. For, in the universe, nothing is 'factully alienated' from anything else, and if man thinks or *consciously* feels that he is 'alienated', it becomes a 'problem'. Thus the basic position of Whitehead is that alienation is not 'factually' there in the universe, since everything is related to everything else; and as condition for the exercise of freedom, it is there in the entire universe and not confined to human existence alone. Sartre seems to have committed errors on both the points mentioned above: with regard to the first, Sartre commits an error of commission, in so far as he portrays human existence in the context of a dualistic philosophy; with regard to the second, he commits an error of omission, in so far as he restricts the exercise of freedom or alienation as a condition of ethical freedom to man alone. However, the most basic difference between Sartre and Whitehead is that of an atheist and a theist, which need not concern us here. What concerns us more in the present context is the basic fact of agreement between them in their affirmation that alienation must be *consciously*, accepted as a condition while exercising ethical choice and taking the responsibility of such choice on oneself with the full awareness of its consequences for the future mankind or universe; the non-acceptance of alienation in this ethical sense becomes a real problem.

Heidegger introduces the concept of death as the innermost potentiality of human existence and speaks of it as having an annihilating influence on human existence. But what does death actually annihilate? A man's death, no doubt, annihilates his *subjective* relations with the world. From this, Heidegger derives his conception of the 'devaluation' and 'nothingness' of all that is, as experienced in the interiorised consciousness of man and makes use of that mood as the medium for the encounter with Being; he even proceeds further and points out that the objective world of entities is a 'dissimulation' arising only out of the human way of knowing, which is all through 'ontologically' erroneous since it not only conceals Being but also projects the particulars of what is out of Being. The upshot of Heidegger's philosophy is his emphasis on a 'mystic' or inner encounter with Being on the one hand, and a 'devaluation' of the empirical, objective world on the other; both

put together would yield the inevitable conclusion of *'moodwise alienation'* from the world as the condition of authentic existence. This is a conclusion which Heidegger has emphasised a good deal, and if it makes his philosophy more traditional and less existentialist, Heidegger is even prepared to say that he is not an existentialist.

However, the point of relevance for our present purpose is that Heidegger could not build a system of 'empirical' metaphysics and the result is that man's ethical life becomes 'inconsequential'. This is because Heidegger, while emphasising the annihilation of 'subjective experience' in death, did not emphasise the 'eternality' of the ethical acts of man in terms of their consequences in the objective universe. He could not do this for the obvious reason that his philosophy does not provide the place for an 'eternal entity' or God who would not 'appear' as something else, or cause the 'disappearance' of something else, but would preserve the eternality of all that happens in the universe in terms of their consequences for the future. This would naturally call for a complex objective system of 'empirical' metaphysics which could not be worked out by Heidegger because of his overemphasis on the subjective mood of dread. In fact, the concept of dread with its feeling of 'vacuity' or 'nothingness' is born out of a lack of feeling of eternal significance of one's own acts in the universe. The subject perishes, no doubt, but only to become 'objectified' and remain for ever in the future universe through the acts it has performed. This is peculiarly the Whiteheadean conception of *objective immortality*, which denies to the concept of death, the undue significance given to it by Heidegger. For, it is always easier for a man to live an ethical or moral life with the feeling that what he does, will not be annihilated *even* by death, but will remain for ever in the universe. Furthermore, the question of alienation from the world does not arise in such a context, since each man is 'creating' the future universe just as he himself is a product of the past universe.

Thus Whitehead differs from all the previous thinkers by constructing an objective empirical system of metaphysics and putting the problem of alienation in a right perspective. Alienation for him is not a metaphysical ideal as in traditional philosophies, for he does not accept subjective immortality; it is not a 'fact' in the

usual sense of the term, since the universe is throughout a process in which nothing is alienated from anything else; it is not a problem in the sense of something to be dreaded first and then accepted as in the philosophies of Sartre and Heidegger. But it is a *condition* structural to the choice of the subjective life of all actual occasions including man in the universe.

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# 2

# FALLENNESS AND ALIENATION IN HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT

JOSEPH MANIKATH

Martin Heidegger is indeed one of the most important thinkers of our century. He was born in Masskirch, Germany on the 26th of September 1889, of Catholic parents. After having completed school studies Heidegger joined a seminary with the intention of becoming a priest, but he gave up the idea soon. He studied philosophy at the University of Freiburg where he had Edmund Husserl as his professor. He learned from Husserl the phenomenological method, though he adopted it to his own purpose.

In 1923 Heidegger was appointed Professor at the University of Marburg where he had contacts with Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich. While at Marburg he published his most important work *Being and Time* which made Heidegger very famous. He became Professor and later Rector of Freiburg University. Heidegger's sympathy with the Nazi regime while being the Rector of the University tarnished his image especially after the war. Heidegger has confessed that he never shared the fanatical excesses of the Nazi party. He died on the the 26th of May 1977.

Heidegger's study of contemporary man is of far-reaching consequences. He joins Nietzsche in reproaching the contemporary age when he says: "The most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking age is that we are still not thinking."[1] Real authentic thinking, according to Heidegger, disappeared from the West from the time of Plato when he introduced the dichotomy of the real and shadow, ignoring thereby the problem of Being. Pre-Socratic thinkers like

Parmenides and Heraclitus were the original and authentic thinkers, because they remained faithful to Being.

### *Man in Heidegger's philosophy*

Heidegger's study of man was not intended as a study in itself, but only as a starting point into the search for the meaning of Being. His main work *Being and Time* is an inquiry into the Being of man (*Dasein*).

*Dasein* which literally means Being-there was used in traditional German philosophy in the sense of "existence". To say that man is Being-there calls attention to his finitude as the one who always finds himself in a particular situation; at the same time, he is "there" in the sense that his "there" is disclosed to him and is his centre of reference. Although the term *Dasein* was traditionally used to refer to "existence" generally, Heidegger restricts it to human existence, and this very word "existence" is also used in a restricted sense for the kind of Being that belongs to *Dasein*. While atoms, mountains, trees, stars and innumerable things besides all *are*, man is distinguished from all the rest because he not only *is*, but has some understanding of and some responsibility for him who *is*. In this sense, he alone "exists", that is to say, he "stands out" (ex-ists) from the general run of beings as the particular being who has to decide about Being.[2] "*Dasein* is an entity for which, in its Being, that Being is an issue."[3] In restricting the expression "existence" to *Dasein*, Heidegger is not for a moment denying reality to beings other than *Dasein*. These are real enough, but they do not have the kind of Being that lets them "stand out" in the particular sense of existing.[4] In a restricted sense *Dasein* is that structure in man which asks the Being-question.

### *Existential analytic*

Heidegger makes an extensive analysis of *Dasein*. It is an examination of the ontological structure of *Dasein* whose essence lies in existence. So the analysis is called "existential". Since existence for Heidegger is that structure by which *Dasein*, thrown among beings comprehends their Being, only that is existential which pertains to *Dasein*'s comprehension of the Being-structure of beings, hence to the primordial constitution of *Dasein* itself. The term pertains to existence in its ontological dimension.

It is to be distinguished carefully from what is called "existential". For, existence, as a finite comprehension, is thrown among beings and remains always fallen among them with the need of achieving transcendence only through comportment (dealing) with beings. Hence, if by reason of its Being-comprehension *Dasein* exists in an ontological dimension, then by reason of its finitude it exists simultaneously in an ontic dimension as well, in continual engagement with beings, whether this engagement be imposed upon *Dasein* by circumstances, the result of unconscious adaptation to *milieu*, or the result of a free choice. This dimension of existence and all that pertains to it is called "existentiell", and is synonymous with "ontic".[5]

It is worthwhile insisting on the fact that although existential and existentiell in *Dasein* are distinct, they are not separate. They are different dimensions of a unique and profoundly unified phenomenon: finite transcendence. The function of the existential analysis will be to discern the existential dimension which structures existentiell everydayness. It must respect the unity of the phenomenon that it analyses. The existential analysis must be rooted in the existentiell; so, unless it discerns the existential within the existentiell, it remains groundless.

How will the existential analytic reveal the Being of *Dasein*? The existential analytic consists of detailed descriptions of some basic characteristics of human existence, and the test of his descriptions is to compare them with what we ourselves know of existence through our first hand participation in it.

Yet to furnish and to test a description of the basic structure of existence is not so simple a matter as it may sound when first mentioned. Existence is not an object that we can set before us and describe from the outside, as it were. We ourselves are the existents that are to be described and self-knowledge is notoriously difficult. Perhaps the existent has even a tendency to conceal what he really is, and so we find Heidegger saying that the phenomena have to be wrested from the tendencies that cover them up.[6] To permit the *Dasein*, then, to reveal itself of its own accord what it is and how it is, Heidegger will submit it to a phenomenological analysis and thus lay the Being of *Dasein* out (*Auslegung*) in full view.

*Starting point of Existential analysis: Everydayness*

How should we start with the phenomenological analysis of *Dasein* in man? We have already said that *Dasein* is a finite comprehending of Being. One of the consequences of this finitude is the fact that *Dasein* takes this prerogative of comprehending Being for granted and thus forgets its prerogative and thus forgets itself. The analysis of *Dasein* (finite transcendence) should start with the *Dasein* in that condition where it is most victim to its finitude: thrown among beings and immersed in them. *Dasein's* prerogative lies lost in forgottenness. *Dasein* is estranged from itself or *alienated* from itself. This is its every-day condition.[7]

Finitude, the propensity to forgetfulness, is as inevitable and as abiding as everydayness itself. It cannot be dissolved. It can only be over come. It is the task offundamental ontology to overcome it, to tear *Dasein* away from the forgottenness of its authentic self, to make it discern in everydayness the ontological structure of finite transcendence. This transcendence is designated by a familiar term congruous with the context of everydayness i.e., "to-be-in-the-world" (*in-der-welt-sein*).[8]

*Dasein as Being-in-the-world*

*Dasein* is always in a world and Heidegger talks of "Being-in-the-world" as the basic constitutive state of *Dasein*. It is thus considered in concrete, embodied existence, and not as a bare thinking subject. In its everyday circumstances it is discernible as a being whose nature is to-be-in-the-world. Heidegger does not waste time to prove that there is an external world. *Dasein* is from the beginning Being-in-the-world. It is this hyphenated expression Being-in-the-world that also determines the shape of the existential analytic, at least in its initial stages.

Although Being-in-the-world is a unity, we can distinguish three factors that go to constitute it. The first is the notion of "Being-in"; next there is the notion of world and finally there is the question of the self i.e., what does it mean to be a self, constituted by Being-in-the-world?[9] We shall consider these in order.

1. *Being-in*: It is not a spatial kind of relation with the world, as we usually understand the meaning of the word 'in'. It is a much more profound relation. As we can see from such expressions as "He

is in love" or "He was in the conspiracy", the preposition 'in' when used of personal subjects, is not limited to spatial relations, as it is when we say "There is water in the glass". This is more an "at home" or familiar relation with the world. It is an involvement or profound and intimate relation. This wider kind of "inhood" which is personal or existential implies the whole relation of "dwelling" in a place. We are not simply located, but are bound to it by all the ties of work, interest, affection and so on... The "Being-in" which characterises our everyday relation to the world is called by Heidegger "concern".[10] This fundamental kind of "Being-in" is very practical. It is not in the order of "knowledge" in the usual sense of the term, but of the nature of having-to-do-with these things and a dealing with them that is found simply in daily intercourse.

2. *World*: Heidegger approaches this problem by considering how we understand any particular object within the world, e.g., of a mountain.

a) Indifferent or impersonal approach (*Vorhanden*): minimal kind of relation.

b) Practical or instrumental relation (*Zuhanden*): think of the mountain in relation to our practical concerns.

The everyday world is therefore articulated in terms of *Dasein's* practical concerns. Each of them in it is understood as an instrument which can be used for the furthering and satisfaction of these concerns. But there is no isolated instrument. Each instrument has its meaning only within a context of tasks, and these tasks are themselves all interlocking. Every instrument implies a whole series of others, and eventually the whole instrumental system that practical human concerns have built up. For the most part, we take this system for granted. We only become aware of it when something goes wrong. For instance, when there is power failure, we suddenly realize how complex and interdependent is the man-made-world in which we live. "Thus the world is understood by Heidegger as a vast instrumental system, held together, as it were, by *Dasein's* concerns. It is in terms of this concern that things receive their significance, as they are incorporated into the world of man."[11]

This philosophical theory of the world might seem rather appropriate to the technological age, for man is in fact transforming the merely natural world into a world that is increasingly man-made and in which everything is considered as ready-to-hand in relation to human concerns. Even what is left of nature becomes a park, serving the purpose of recreation.

We have to remember here that Heidegger is talking of the everyday world, the world of routine tasks and conventional ways. As we shall soon see, he considers that we can easily lose ourselves in such a world (alienation), and in an authentic existence, man is open to dimensions of the world beyond the merely instrumental understanding of it.[12]

3. *Who of Dasein*: Is true selfhood really disclosed in everyday existing, or is this for the most part an inauthentic existence (self-alienated existence)?

Actually Heidegger does think that for the most part authentic selfhood gets suppressed in everyday Being-in-the-world. The *Dasein*, though it has constructed the world of its concern, becomes absorbed in that world. It ends itself to become part of the system, to be caught up in the process which it has itself originated, to become just another part of the machinery. This is an ironical destiny, yet it is one that has overtaken millions of people in industrial societies. Incidentally, it seems to be of such industrial societies, that Heidegger is chiefly thinking, and it is not so clear how some of his analyses would apply either to the pre-industrial rural societies.

But the main reasons for Heidegger's estimate of everyday exsitence lie elsewhere, and are independent of the above considerations. The instrumental world is a common world. We encounter in it not only the things which we use, but also other people. Heidegger holds that community or "Being-with" is a basic existentiale of *Dasein*. Just as there is no existence apart from a world, so there is no existence apart from other existents. But the other existent is not seen as an object within the world but as a co-*Dasein*. Thus we are related to the other existent not in terms of the "concern" by which we relate to things, but in terms of a personal concern or "solicitude" that characterises relation between selves.

An authentic solicitude for the other helps him to his freedom and to his own unique possibilities for selfhood. But more often the relation to the other is one of indifference or even an attempt to dominate him and to take his distinctive existence from his. In particular, the individual falls under the domination of the collective mass. His standards and his whole way of life are set for him by conventions of his society.[13]

To choose possibilities is what belongs distinctively to existing, but the possibilities of choice are taken away. Especially in the mass societies of the contemporary world, with their mass-products and mass-media of communication and entertainment, a kind of drab uniformity and conformism is imposed upon all. Yet if we ask who it is that has done this, it is impossible to identify anyone in particular. The indefinite, anonymous "they" have done it — *das Mann*, in Heidegger's expression. "They" are pushing ahead with the armaments race; "they" are spending billions on space exploration; "they"are saying that ..In all this, there is no genuine communication and no authentic Being-with-one-another. The self of everyday *Dasein* "is the they-self", which we distinguish from the authentic self that is, from the self that has been taken hold of in its own way.[14]

The existential analysis leads Heidegger further to discover *Dasein* as openness to the world. He tries to bring out clearly the ontological constitution of this openness. The three constituents for this openness are state-of-mind, understanding and discourse. Heidegger makes detailed study of these three existentials. They reveal the thrownness and thus the facticity of *Dasein*. With this is also revealed the possibility of *Dasein* toward Being. While state-of-mind reveals the facticity of *Dasein*, understanding reveals its possibilities. It is a project of possibilities.

The notion of projection helps us to explain more fully the never complete state of *Dasein* in its Being but always on its way, so that we can never, as it were, pin down and grasp its essence. We can say that at any given moment, *Dasein* is ahead of itself, for it has already projected itself into some possibilities of its Being. Thus we can also say that at any given moment, *Dasein* is more than it actually appears on inspection.[15]

*Fallenness and Alienation*

Before proceeding to examine the unity of *Dasein* as Care, Heidegger pauses to underline the abiding finitude of *Dasein*. We thus come back to the starting point of the existential analytic, i.e., the everydayness of *Dasein* lost in a forgottenness of itself. The genuine possibilities for disclosenness gets diverted in everyday existence. The author analyses this condition in detail. The various ways in which *Dasein* can be perverted are summed up by him in the phenomenon which he calls 'failing' or fallenness (*Verfallenheit*). These are three. a) *Idle talk* (*Gerede*): In fallenness *Dasein* gets lost from genuine contact with reality and enters into idle talk (opposite of discourse). In this there is no letting be of the thing as it really is. Instead, we understand it in the way that "they" have interpreted it. There is no genuine communication in this kind of talk either; instead of lighting up what is talked about, the language rather closes it off. Instead of leading to disclosure or unconcealment, it rather prevents it, talks the way 'people' or 'they' (*das Mann*) talk. b) *Curiosity* (*Neugiers*): He looks at things not in order to understand, but simply for the sake of curiosity. He does not understand things according to their structure but only superficial as "people" generally do. He sees what things look like, i.e., the new attracts for the sake of novelty. It is usually bound up with restlessness and distraction. c) *Ambiguity* (*Zweideutigkeit*): It implies the difficulty in everyday *Dasein* of discerning what is disclosed in genuine understanding and what not; all may look as 'people' understand things. The language itself gets passed along, and often it is attended by ambiguity. Instead of leading to disclosure and unconcealedness it rather prevents them.[16]

The word 'fallenness' means deterioration and to many it might suggest a comparison with the theological doctrine of the 'fall' of man. But Heidegger does not use the word to indicate man's spiritual state. He is rather pointing to ontological possibilities, though at the same time it seems clearly his belief that for the most part, in his everyday existence the *Dasein* is indeed fallen or deteriorated. This does not mean that he has ceased to exist in the special sense of the word, but it seems to point to a falling away from what is most distinctive in existence. There is on the one hand an

absorption into the world of objects (ontic world) through preoccupation with the tasks and concerns of the instrumental world; and on the other there is a deprivation of freedom through the dominance of the "they", the depersonalized collective anonymous mass.[17]

The 'fallenness' is an existential of the 'in-Being' and he describes in a most elucidating and impressive way this mode of 'inauthentic' existence and the structure of its inner movement.

The fallenness of *Dasein* is described by Heidegger in various ways. Its kind of motion is characterized as the "whirl" (*Wirbel*[18]) which swings it down into the 'das mann'....and thus be whirled into the inauthenticity of the 'das Mann'. It is a kind of tranquillizing,[19] for it takes away from *Dasein* responsibility and anxiety that goes with it. It is also *alienating*[20] (*Entfremdung*=self-estrangement) for it has diverted *Dasein* from authentic selfhood and also from authentic community. Further it is a scattering, for *Dasein*'s possibilities are dictated factors outside of himself and there is lacking the cohesion and unity that belong to authentic selfhood.

*From Fallenness to Authenticity through Anxiety*

According to Heidegger *Dasein* in its everyday existence is in a state of flight from itself (alienated) and loses itself in the ontic world of beings forgetting the ontological prerogative of being for Being (potentiality for Being). Heidegger compares this falling as a fleeing of *Dasein* in the face of itself—of itself as an authentic potentiality-for-Being itself.

What is that from which *Dasein* is fleeing? That from which the flight takes place must be of a threatening nature, even if it may not be of a concrete and definite type as in the case of fear. It is a flight from oneself and its authentic potentialities in the fallen state and seems to be grounded in anxiety.[21]

Anxiety, therefore, can be described as the ontological structure which is behind our everyday escape into idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity, which are dimensions of fallenness.[22]

In anxiety when *Dasein* flees from itself, the threat does not come from anything within the world, because it is precisely to these things *Dasein* flees. In anxiety everything in the world sinks

into 'nothingness'. Anxiety thus reveals to *Dasein* the impossibility of understanding itself in terms of the world. It individualizes *Dasein* as its own thrown possibility. Anxiety reveals to *Dasein* that it cannot understand itself from the 'world' and from the public explanations of other people. It throws *Dasein* back into its own ability to-be-in-the-world for which anxiety is anxious.

A fundamental characteristic of human existence emerges from expressions like "I am there"; "I am in the world". My existence is my own existence. My (individual) facticity is part of the disclosure of ontological anxiety, which presents *Dasein* to itself as an isolated possibility thrown into the world. However much my state of mind, potentialities (abilities), circumstances and so on resembled those of another person, there would still be the unbridgeable gulf between my existence and an existence that is his. Facticity is characterized by individuality. The uniqueness of the mood of anxiety is that it detaches *Dasein* from beings and *Dasein* in the world and brings it purely to itself as a single Being-in-the-world. *Dasein* is its Being-free for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. But this isolation is not for a renunciation of the world, but for an authentic existence in the world and not an inauthentic existence of 'das Mann' (people).[23]

Anxiety makes *Dasein* aware of its Being-in-the-world. At the moment of anxiety, the world of beings seems to lose its meaning, the world becomes 'uncanny' (strange, mysterious, weird) i.e., *Dasein* no longer feels 'at home'. "In anxiety one feels uncanny" ("*In der Angst ist einem unheimlich*").[24] One can dwell in "tranquillized familiarity" and be comfortable when lost in 'they' due to an unexamined and uncritical life of everydayness. "When in falling we flee into 'at home' of publicness (they); we flee in the face of uncanniness which lies in *Dasein*. This uncanniness pursues *Dasein* constantly, and is a threat to its everyday fallenness in the 'Das Mann', though not explicitly."[25] Now, if I no longer feel 'at home' in the world of everydayness, I am forced to focus on my own Being, and not on the 'Das Mann'.

It is not some particular situation that gets disclosed in anxiety (though it may be a particular situation that arouses it on any given occasion) but man's total situation as the existent thrown into a

world where he is and has to be. "When anxiety has subsided, then in our everyday way of talking we are accustomed to say that 'it was really nothing.' "[26] But it may be that this everyday talk of the 'nothing' says more than we are aware of, and is already an acknowledgement of the radical nullity and finitude of existence, disclosed in anxiety. It is as if *Dasein*, in its very Being, has an awareness of a standing threat to its Being.[27]

A study of both Kierkegaard and Heidegger makes it clear that one needs quite a lot of fortitude to be able to endure the kind of anxiety of which they speak — and presumably it is for this reason that we commonly try to avoid this mood or to tranquillize it when it threatens to trouble us. As related to death, anxiety asks us to face and accept the transient character of our existence, which is through and through finite and threatened with annulment. Anxiety as related to conscience — a responsibility which, the more deeply we feel it, the more it must destroy every trace of complacency (tranquillizing).[28]

### *Conscience, Guilt and Resolve*

When or under what circumstances will *Dasein* become authentic and thus overcome its self-alienation? When *Dasein* listens to the voice of conscience we may suggest. How then is the phenomenon of conscience understood?

Conscience here is not to be understood in the sense of a faculty of a soul, nor as we understood it in the moral sense, although the structure in question renders moral conscience possible. Conscience in the existential sense is that which in the state of everydayness gives *Dasein* to "understand" what it is and thus calls it to authenticity. Conscience is the disclosure to *Dasein* of what it ought to be, of its authentic self. One of the basic characteristics of *Dasein* is that it has a relation to itself. *Dasein* has an dea of himself, and can be either at one with himself or estranged, alienated from himself. He can either attain or fall short. Conscience is the awareness of how it is with oneself and it has the character of a call or summons.

In this call to authenticity who is it that is called? It is *Dasein* lost in the "they". Whereunto? Unto its authentic self

i.e., unto its own proper potentiality. And the call comes not with a cry or sound — but in stillness and silence out of *Dasein's* interior wellspring.

How is the apparent altereity of the caller to be understood? It will be clear if we recall the fact that *Dasein* in the ontic preoccupation of the everydayness is somehow an expatriate (alien). The "world" of everydayness is not its true abode. *Dasein* calls the *Dasein* lost in homelessness. No wonder that to *Dasein* lost in the "they" the call to return to the homeland (drive-toward-Being) seems like the voice of a stranger!

With this we achieve a certain clarity as to the structure of existential conscience: (1) Who is the called? *Dasein,* victim of the consequences of fallenness, (2) whereunto? To *Dasein* as authentic existence, i.e., as the anticipatory drive-toward-Being by which it is its own potentiality, (3) Who calls? *Dasein* disclosed by the state of mind of anxiety.

This conscience of which Heidegger speaks is to be distinguished from everyday conscience. This is simply the voice of society, or the 'superego' in Freud's terminology. It reflects the conventions that 'they' have adopted. So this everyday conscience is neither authentic itself nor conducive to an authentic existence. It is just another way in which 'they' stifle and dominate the individual, and take away his own possibilities from him. This may seem to be a somewhat dangerous doctrine which encourages the rejection of conventional morality. On the other hand moral progress only takes place when some individuals do follow insights of conscience that have broken free from conventional standards; and if Heidegger's doctrine seems at first sight to set the individual over against society, we have to remember his earlier statement that Being-with is a fundamental existentiale of *Dasein,* so that community would be an indispensable dimension of any authentic existence, and the conscience could not call to an authenticity that rejected community.

Nevertheless, because *Dasein* is in his everydayness lost in the collective inauthentic mass, the first step toward his authenticity must be to isolate him from the mass. It is here that we see the connection between conscience and death in Heidegger's thought, for

it is death, as the innermost possibility, that isolates the existent and permits him to be confronted with his true self. Conscience summons the existent to take upon himself the Being that is delivered over to death and to project himself resolutely on it. An authentic existence is in fact resolute as opposed to an irresolute existence. The latter is scattered, but the former keeps the end in view and in doing so achieves not only a wholeness but also, according to Heidegger, a certain joy in the dispersion of illusions and the exercise of a genuinely free existence.[29]

*Guilt*: What is it that the call of conscience gives *Dasein* to understand? It makes *Dasein* understand its "guilt" (*Schuld*, which means also what one owes to others, e.g., a debt). Heidegger first discusses its various ontic meanings. Its basic ontological meaning is "deficiency", a lack of something which ought to be and can be the ground of nullity (*Nichtigkeit*). That *Dasein* is guilty (*schuldig*), it is pointed out, does not result from one special fault or wrong done, but reversely, such fault is possible only on the basis of an original Being-guilty of *Dasein*. Within the idea of guilt lies somehow or other a 'not' (*nicht*) i.e., a limitation. Heidegger defines guilt as the ground of negativity. If in *Dasein* there is the ground for a negativity, i. e., limitation, *Dasein* is in the existential sense guilty.

*Dasein* is determined by a negativity: (i) as thrown, i.e., not the origin of itself, (ii) never overcomes its primitive helplessness (unto death) ('no more'). Existence as thrown is permeated by the 'not' of its origin. He never is and becomes a master of himself but must continually take-over his self. If there is a 'not' in its origin, then there is a 'not' in its achievement. This radical negativity penetrating *Dasein* to his depths renders him possible to fall into the negativity which constitutes its inauthenticity.

*Dasein* as such is guilty. The guilt consists in its finitude. The achievement of authenticity is not in the suppression of finitude but in accepting his self for what it is: a drive-toward-Being that is constitutionally limited. For *Dasein* to accept himself is to let himself be called, to become free for the call, to attend to the voice which tells him of his finitude. It is this 'readiness to be called' that

constitutes *Dasein's* choice of self. In this choice authenticity is achieved.

*Resolve*: Such a choice as referred to above is designated as 'resolve' (*Entschlossenheit*) by Heidegger. By resolve *Dasein* becomes willing to accept the state of mind corresponding to such an understanding, i.e., anxiety, that uneasiness born of *Dasein's* discovery of its own expatriate condition. In resolve *Dasein* attends in silence to a voice that speaks without sound and the attending is a mode that draws out of the superficial loquacity of everydayness a deep resounding word. Resolve gives *Dasein* a peculiar and authentic lucidity. It discovers in reality actual significant potentialities and deals with them purposefully.

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# 3

# THE CONCEPT OF ALIENATION — AN EXISTENTIALIST POINT OF VIEW

K. SARATCHANDRAN

Alienation (or estrangement) is the act or result of the act through which something, or somebody becomes (or has become) alien (or strange) to something, or somebody else.[1] In psychology alienation is understood as deviation from normality. To a contemporary psychologist alienation points to the individual's feeling of 'aloofness' towards society, nature, other people, or himself. According to some philosophers, 'alienation' means 'self-alienation' (self-estrangement): the process or the result of the process, by which a 'self' (God or man) through itself becomes alien to itself. Thus alienation is a term with many dimensions of meaning. In Marxian literature it is described as the process whereby man exteriorizes his essential powers, either in the world of objects or in that of phantasy in such a manner that these same powers eventually become autonomous and in their turn begin to dominate and enslave him.[2]

Hegel has philosophically elaborated the concept. He considers nature as the self-alienated form of the absolute mind. The absolute self is dynamic and dialectical, engaging itself in a circular process of alienation and dealienation. The development of self-knowledge of the absolute is through the finite mind. But the finite mind also becomes alienated because it is the characteristic of the finite mind to objectify itself. Every objectification is an instance of alienation from itself. It is the vocation of man as man to serve as the organon of the self-knowledge of the Absolute. To the

extent that he does not fulfill this function, he is merely a self-alienated man.[3]

Feuerbach rejected Hegel's view that man is the self-alienated absolute mind, but accepted Hegel's view that man can be alienated from himself. Nature cannot be self-alienated from the Absolute. God is self-alienated man. Man is alienated from himself when he puts above himself an imagined alien higher being. The dealienation or disalienation of man consists in the abolition of the estranged picture of man, God.[4]

To Marx, man not only alienates a part of himself in the form of God, he also alienates other products of his spiritual activity in the form of philosophy, arts and morals. He alienates products of his economic activity in the form of commodities, money, capital, etc. Man alienates his own products from himself, himself from the very activity of production, from the natural world and from other men. Capitalism is human alienation at its worst. One of the greatest contribution of Marx is that he made an exhaustive analysis of alienations inherent in a capitalist society. The various kinds of alienations are, in the last analysis one. They are only different aspects of man's self-alienation, alienation from his essence, his humanity, his historically created human possibilities.[5]

Most of the writers insist that the term is applicable only to man. Some apply it only to individuals, not to society. Some thinkers conceive it as a purely psychological concept referring to a feeling or a state of mind. To some alienation is a pathological state. Some others consider it is an objective fact, a way of being. It is often held that one should distinguish it from anomie (relative normlessness in social system) and from personal disorganisation (disordered behaviour arising from conflict with the individual).

According to Gwyn Nettler, an alienated person is "one who has been estranged from, and made unfriendly toward, his society and the culture it carries."[6] "The essential characteristic of an alienated man is his belief that he is not able to fulfill what he believes is his rightful role in society," says Murray Levin.[7] Alienation and estrangement, says Stanley Moore, "refer to the characteristics of individual conscionsness and social structure typical in societies whose

members are controlled by, instead of controlling, the consequences of their collective activity.[8] To Jean Yves Calvez, "alienation is a general type of situation of the absolutized subject who has given a world to himself, a formal world, refusing in this way the true concrete and its requirements."[9]

Authors have distinguished different forms of alienation. Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* seems to suggest a four-fold form of alienation : the alienation of man (1) from the products of his own activity, (2) from his productive activity itself, (3) from his human essence and (4) from other men. Melvin Seeman[10] distinguishes them as five: fearlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation, normlessness and self-estrangement. To Lewis Feuer, they are six: alienation of class society, that of competitive society, of industrial society, of mass society, of race, and of generations.

Self-alienation is the alienation of self from itself and through itself. While Hegel recognised self-alienated man and self-alienated God, Marx recognised only self-alienated man. Some speak of self-alienated nature also.

'Self-alienated' means 'internally divided', split into at least two parts that have become alien to each other. This is not a division carried out from the outside but is the result of an action of the self. One part of the self has more right to represent the self as a whole. The split is often described as that between man's real nature or essence and his factual properties or existence. The self-alienated man is a man whose actual existence does not correspond to his human essence.

How can the actual existence of man deviate from his real essence? Here three interpretations are possible: 1. Man's essence must be an eternal idea of man which is not realized by the alienated man. 2. Man's essence must be something actully belonging to him. In both cases, new difficulties arise. 3. The third interpretation seems to be most promising. It consists in saying that man's essence is neither an eternal idea nor a part of actuality, but the sum of historically created human possibilities.

Some philosophers, especially existentialists maintain that alienation is a permanent structural aspect of man's existence. Man is

necessarily alienated. He leads a non-authentic life. Opposed to this in the Marxist view held by Engels that self-alienated man will return to himself in future. Marx wrote about communism as the positive suppression of all alienation and the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his human (i.e., social) existence.

Let us analyse the existentialist thoughts of different thinkers separately to have a glimpse over their views on alienation. The central theme of Dostoyevsky's writings is freedom. Man is limited, but always tries to transcend the limitations. He is in revolt against society, against himself, not once but eternally. He wants to be completely free, he wants to realize his essence which is alien to him. Thus he becomes alien to his society. The only alternative is violence. Here we encounter the absurdity of the human condition. Golyadkin, the hero of *The Double* represents such a man.

Kierkegaard speaks of the dramatic confrontation of oppressing habits of life. Man exists only when he realizes himself, his inner personal existence. He speaks of certain unique personal experiences (he calls them existential) arising out of this dramatic confrontation. Design (*The sickness unto Death*) and dread (*The concept of Dread*) force one's mind to realize that he confronts a void and he alone is responsible for it. What he despairs are not the contingent facts; the individual despairs of himself. To see that he alone is responsible for this despair, is to recognise guilt which he did not give rise to.

Heidegger's views on alienation can be made clear only if one analyses certain terms which he speaks of in his work *Being and* Time. Man is always in the world. Things in the world could no more be a world without me than I could be myself without it. Things are 'stuff', for 'use' and not existing independently of us. This is facticity. I am cast into a world not of my making. But I am free to assimilate and appropriate my being, though within the limits of contingency. The appropriation is towards an inner personal existence, towards the being's own possibilities, towards a future existential time, towards the face of death, towards the destiny of its own being. This is transcendence or existentiality. This is the

anticipation of human being by itself and therewith of its world. But this personal drive to transcend, to understand and create gets forfeited to the world of things. The forward driving 'I' is sacrificed to the persistent 'they'. This is forfeiture and it is alien to the central task of being to become itself. Thus the human being tries to transcend this and that in order to realize itself, and at the same time the everyday mode of human life is in this and that. Here we find the alienation of self or being from the world of things and from itself. Can the self from its flight from itself turn back to itself facing its own being with authenticity? Dread, the only mood, conscience, the only phenomenon, and death, the only ontic state is the answer that Heidegger finds. Dread alone brings knowledge-the knowledge of being as 'being-to-death.' This is the authentic being. Being-to-death is the ontological possibility in which man finds his freedom proper; he is "set free from the illusion of 'they' in passionate self-assured anxious freedom to death." Conscience is the call of self to self out of forfeiture to authenticity. It reveals the double tension of forfeiture and authenticity. It challenges man to escape from enslavement into freedom, from facticity into existentiality (authentic existence). At the same time it tells me that I ought to face my own inner possibility, instead of forgetting myself, in this or that (instead of alienation from the world, i.e. instead of evading from facticity). Man is destined to realise something, but he is bound by something else. In the attempt of realizing the goal, the human being becomes alien to himself and to others or the world in general. This absurd condition is depicted in a similar way by Albert Camus.

To Sartre, alienation is inherent in the very structure of human consciousness. The meaninglessness of our existence consists in the contingency of the world and in our confronting the void. Being-in-itself (being of things), i.e., things, simply are: they are complete in themselves. Being-for-itself (being of people), i.e., human beings, are incomplete, they are confronting to avoid, an unmade future. We feel ultimate nausea or we falsify. To falsify is to be in bad faith. Sartre was unable to find an escape from this dilemma,—the absurdity of the human condition.

Once the meaninglessness of human life is understood, does it make sense to go on living? This is the probem, the problem of

suicide which according to Camus is the only serious philosophical problem he deals with in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. All interpretations of reality as value-supporting failed. None provides a basis for human values, for our personal ideals and for our judgments of right and wrong. Thus the tenability of any purposive or evaluative attitude on the part of human beings — the only moral beings — is called into question. This isolation of man as an evaluative and purposive being in a world that affords no support to such attitudes is the absurdity of the human condition. This is man's alienation from his background and the goal. There is a tension between the two poles — the human being and the world, the evaluative being and his background. Suicide is the result of this tension. Suicide is an admission of his incapacity to adjust himself to the tense situation'. Such an admission is inconsistent with human pride. The man in his 'world' — experiencing his own existence — is alien to the man in his full stature, i.e, the man with his human pride. Only by continuously living in the face of their own absurdity can human beings achieve their full stature. This is disalienation. But disalienation ends in suicide. Man is destined to do something or he is proud of doing something. This is the essence, the man, one of the two poles. But the world in which he exists, i.e., his concrete existence, is the other pole. These two poles are alien to each other. Any attempt of dealienation would be the experience of absurdity. The tension between the two poles, between the existential and the essential, between nihilism and ethical demands, is clear in the character of Meursault (*L' Etranger*- The Stranger). His duality of character represents two strange worlds. Suicide, Camus holds, is the suppression of one of the two worlds or poles.

The central expression in Kafkka's life, it seems, was alienation in its manifoldness. In his works, the conceptions absurdity and dread are fully explored. Without any reason, one day Josef K. (the main character in *The Trial*) finds himself arrested. He was given a chance to repudiate the jurisdiction of the court. But he marched off to his execution to die 'like a dog'. To the inescapable logic of the world he is 'outside the Law' and hence guilty. Man is alien to the world, the Law. In justifying himself before the Law he becomes alien to himself.

Buber's view of alienation and dealienation cannot be explained without examining the 'I-It' and 'I-Thou' relationships. 'I independent of any relationships can never be viewed. 'I' is significant only when 'I' is related to 'It' or 'Thou'. 'I' is not a pre-eminent reality. 'I' is shaped by its relation with either 'It' or 'Thou'. 'It' is the world of things and other men. 'Thou' represents the other man who responds to 'I'. 'I-It' relationship is not genuine because it does not take place between I and the It. When a thing or another person is an It to me I am perfectly alone. I observe them and I may note their similarities, etc. But all this takes place within me. That is why 'I' is alone in relation to it.

But I-Thou relation is a genuine one because it is between me and the Thou that addresses me. This Thou is not one thing among other things; the whole universe is seen in the light of Thou. I-It relation implies alienation of I from other things and other men. I-Thou relation implies that man is not alien. Each is the other's Thou. Life is an endless transition from the Thou to the It and back to the Thou. Thus, life is alienation plus dealienation. Spiritual tiresomeness overtakes the most authentic I-Thou relation and turns it into an I-It relation. So spiritual life is the means to dealienation.

Has alienation increased or decreased? Many contemporary philosophers and sociologists have found that alienation has constantly increased, and it is much deeper and more pervasive in contemporary capitalism and bureaucratic socialism. Bad faith as a result of alienation, even Sartre admits, belongs to the life of class-divided capitalist society.

Is dealienation or disalienation possible? Many of the exis tentialists consider it as a permanent structural aspect of man's existence. A ccording to the Marxists dealienation is possible. But two views are prominent among them. Absolute dealienation is possible according to some. To a second group only relative dealienation is possible. The latter view is more plausible.

Those who regard self-alienation as a psychological fact reject the relevance of any external change in circumstances. The economic determinists on the other hand, hold that individuals are

the passive produces of the social organisation, that the social organisation is determined by the organisation of economic life and that dealienation is affected by the abolition of private property. This view is too mechanical to be accepted. Dialectical materialists, as Marx has pointed out, hold that "it is men that change circumstances." A non-alienated individual is one who fulfils his historically created human possibilities. Dealienation of society is possible only when that of the individual is effected.

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4

# PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ALIENATION

T. E. SHANMUGAM

The term *alienation* in psychological literature is generally used to denote a sense of estrangement from other human beings and from society and its values. The other terms analogous to alienation are disorganisation, deviance, disintegration, pathology and abnormality. Terms like de-alienation and identity are used in relation to alienation. De-alienation refers to the technique or process by which alienation is prevented or removed, whereas identity means the opposite of alienation. Currently the term alienation is also being employed to describe objectively observable states of separateness occurring in human groups. The earlier usage generally emphasised a subjective individual condition.

Among the psychologists it is Freudians and neo-psychoanalysts like Horney (1963), Fromm (1955) and Laing (1967) who have used the concept of alienation. These authors opined that individual deviations are directly related to the impact of a disorganised society on the individual. This standpoint of implying social factors in individual deviance is not exclusive to these authors alone. But the importance they assign to social factors as sufficient explanations for alienation make their points of view different from others. Among the three psychologists Horney was least emphatic about the importance of social factors in alienation. Fromm goes a bit further and indicts society for its economic and humanitarian shortcomings. Laing goes to the extent of concluding that the whole question of alienation is simply social.

Frank Johnson (1973) opines that the separation of psychological alienation from social alienation is convenient from a descriptive, structural and analytic stanpoint. But, he points out that the dichotomizing of behaviour into subjective and objective levels of analysis in no way suggests that behaviours are not unitary phenomena. According to him psychological depictions of alienation centre on two levels of experience. First, that level which involves judgments concerning the subjective life of individual persons made by observers external to the person and second, that level involving judgments made by individuals who comment on aspects of their own subjectivity. He also states that psychological alienation is close to the state of self-alienation which refers to the awareness of separateness from one's own inner reality and he goes on to describe it in terms of experiences of deficiencies in existence, cognition, conation, feeling, recalling and behaving.

Though there are several viewpoints concerning the concept of alienation, an eclectic approach is still possible. This approach when guided by empiricism should become beneficial because it provides the requisite operational specificity to the concept. Only then it will be possible to analyse the concept into its components logically. Considering the implications of alienation and its impact on specific individuals, and societies in general, it becomes necessary to de-alienate people if the impact is detrimental to the individual or societies (as the case may be). In order to formulate intervention strategies to de-alienate people, a proper analysis and thorough understanding of the dynamics of alienation becomes imperative. Alienation may be intra-individual, inter-individual, intra-group and inter-group. Intra-individual alienation may result in the lack of integrated function of the three components of the individual, viz., the conative, cognitive and affective aspects. This may be caused by the conflict in terms of actual self and ideal self or cognitive dissonance or various types of conflicts, most damaging of all conflicts being approach-avoidance conflict.

Inter-individual alienation may be due to defective human relations starting with family members and extending to members of outgroups. Inter-group alienation may be due to class or caste groups, each with its own socio-cultural norms, coming in conflict with other groups.

In the case of intra-individual alienation both genetic and environmental factors are important. However it may be stated that the importance of genetic factors is rather negligible. The severely retarded and the people who have extra Y chromosomes are genetically susceptible to the feeling of alienation. There are cases of alienation due to brain damage or infection (e.g., GPI) and accidents. Alcoholic psychosis and senile psychosis are cases of alienation due to physiological causes. In all other cases of alienation, the factors contributing to it are in the social environment of home, school, office or factories and they may be de-alienated with suitable measures.

Alienation in an individual or in a group is characterised by anxiety, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism or loss of identity or beliefs and values. There are different degrees of alienation ranging from extreme withdrawal in schizophrenic condition to extreme aggression in an individual committing murders.

Several researchers in this field have contended that alienation should be construed as a subjectively felt state of mind, as an attitude. The proponent of this idea is Melvin Seeman (1959) who proposed five components as contributing factors for ailenation namely *powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation* and *self-estrangement.* He defines them as follows: *Powerlessness* is an individual's expectancy that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcome or reinforcement he seeks. In other words powerlessness is an attitude held by an individual that he is incapable of determining the outcomes of the activities in which he is involved. Integral to this attitude is the feeling of pessimism that all the outcomes are predetermined and nothing could be achieved by interfering in the process. *Normlessness* is an individual's expectancy that socially unapproved behaviours also are required to achieve given goals. In other words an individual by his past experience loses faith in the existing societal norms and value-system and becomes convinced that to achieve his goals he has to choose his own means, not caring for his immediate environment. *Meaninglessness* is characterised by lower expectancies that satisfactory predictions about future outcomes can be made.

In other words the person perceives that his ability to predict behaviour-outcomes is low. *Social isolation* is the absence of shared values in an individual or the presence of certain social stimulus which makes an individual feel isolated. In other words it is an attitude of an individual which keeps him aloof from his immediate social environment. *Self-estrangement* is illustrated by the person who makes an instrument of himself and is therefore estranged from himself. This last proposition of Seeman is similar to the description of self-alienation by Fromm.

This viewpoint seems to be gaining currency in recent times. Dean D. (1960) measured alienation as an attitude and attempted to relate it to political apathy of individuals. Bajrangi Lal (1975) measured four aspects of alienation viz., powerlessness, normlessness, ego-identity and disorganisation in an educational setting and concluded that alienation in the educational system is all-pervasive and intense. Michael J. Pravetz (1976) measured alienation within a social system. His findings supported the generally held hypothesis that structural aspects of social systems influence the probability that alienation will result. Thomas G. Cummings and Susan L. Manring (1977) measured alienation from work in a group of blue collar workers. They found significant associations between dimensions of powerlessness, normlessness and meaninglessness and the work-behaviour. These findings suggested that feelings of alienation may result in less effort and performance and more tardiness to work.

In India, an experiment was conducted by Indian Space Research Organisation. This was known as Satellite Instructional Television Experiment. Several investigations were carried out during the experiment. One particular in-depth study is worth mentioning here. One of the objectives of this study was to identify the various psycho-social factors responsible for possible individual alienation from SITE programmes. A systematic attempt was made to measure individual alienation and its components such as powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation and to relate it into mass media behaviour. The general objective of this study was to arrive at a solution to de-alienate people through planned communication strategies.

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5

# SCIENCE, PRAGMATISM AND FREEDOM — REFLECTIONS ON ALIENATION

MICHAEL LOCKWOOD

It has been said that astronomy is the oldest of all the sciences. To the Egyptians this science had practical importance as it was used in predicting the annual flooding of the Nile river. Such connections between the "clock" of celestial phenomena and the seasons, the tides, and flooding rivers, were progressively expanded until the course of innumerable individual lives came under the heavenly causal matrix. Thus arose astrology with all of its ramifications. It is a good question whether any civilization without astronomy would ever have developed a notion of *fate*.

We know that the early Greeks had a grasp of the heavenly mechanism, as Thales is said to have predicted a solar eclipse in the year 585 B.C.

Another framework which may support a type of fatalism is the belief in *karma* and the concept of rebirth. This may be illustrated in early Indian history by a Buddhist sculpture, a Gāndhāra panel dated *c.* second century A. D. This panel illustrates the Jātaka story of the Buddha and the White Dog. The legend is as follows. While he was in Śrāvastī, the Buddha once called at the house of a person named Śuka. Śuka happened to be away at the time the Master came. His white dog, however, barked furiously at the Buddha. The Buddha reprimanded the dog saying that it had been Śuka's father in a previous birth and had been reborn as a dog because he misused his wealth and was miserly. The dog

seemed to understand, because when Śuka came home he found his dog in an abject condition, and he demanded an explanation from the Buddha. The Buddha repeated what he had said earlier and asked the dog to show where he had buried his treasure in his previous birth. The dog showed the place. When they dug down, the treasure was found.[1]

The mixture of astronomy/astrology on the one hand and the pervasive belief in *karma* on the other, continues to have a powerful effect on the contemporary Indian scene. Perhaps a personal anecdote will illustrate.

Recently we were visiting a small town near Kumbakonam. Our host was the local Inspector of Police. While waiting for lunch to be arranged, he asked me what philosophy had to say about 'fate'. In answer I gave him a brief sketch of several theories in Western philosophy. When I finished, he proceeded to tell me his own experience of 'fate'.

An astrologer friend had told him in 1975 that he would be passing through a dangerous period. The astrologer warned him that within the next few months he might kill someone. The Inspector wondered how, as an Inspector of Police, he would be led to such an eventuality. However, it turned out that during that year he was involved in kisan rioting. He said that one event led to another and in the end in self-defence he had to use his weapon, not once, but five times, which resulted in the death of five young men. According to him the young people were drunk, and they were under the misguided impression that the police had orders not to fire and would have only blanks — they had been told this earlier by a political party leader.

Whatever the merits of the Inspector's actions might have been in the light of these factors, including the plea of self-defence, it was not long before he faced official sanction. Professional criticism, his own personal sense of remorse at having been forced to bring about the death of five persons, all conspired to produce in him a terrible sense of anguish. Surely this condition of anguish is what the existentialists have been writing about. But the resolution of it in his own life was not along existentialist lines.

One day, he picked up a piece of paper blowing in the street. It turned out to be a famous passage from the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Instead of tossing it away, he put it in his pocket. Later he read through it, and took the message to heart. The resolution of his extreme anguish came in the realization that the five young men who had died at his hands had, in effect, suffered the kārmic consequences of their own actions in previous lives. And he, the Inspector of Police, in the grip of astrological forces (as well as those of his own kārmic heritage), had become an unwitting agent in these tragic events.

What has all this got to do with the subject of alienation? Civilizations and individuals grow and develop world views which in one sense tend to create an overall sense of stability and order. But the seeds of alienation are sown within. Individuals recognize contradictions within their own society's or even within their own sets of beliefs. An example of this latter condition is strikingly shown in another cultural setting in the personal crisis which the young William James went through in his twenties.

The development of science has thus played an important part in creating world views of various civilizations. In what follows I would like to trace certain developments in science which have affected modern man's views concerning his own freedom, one of them being the influence which Newtonian mechanics has had in supporting a rigid deterministic outlook.

The development of science continued in the West for several centuries from the time of the early Greeks until its brilliant formulation by Newton in the 17th century. According to Newtonian mechanics, once the forces and the initial conditions are specified, it is possible to calculate the motions of particles into the indefinite future. In other words, the entire future course of the universe is both fixed and, at least in principle, calculable, if we know its present state and the forces.

The French mathematician, Pierre Laplace summarized in 1825 the development of deterministic mechanics:

> We must envisage the present state of the universe as the effect of its previous state, and as the cause of that which

> will follow. An intelligence that could know, at a given instant, all the forces governing the natural world, and the respective positions of the entities which compose it, if in addition it was great enough to analyze all this information, would be able to embrace in a single formula the movements of the largest bodies in the universe and those of the lightest atoms: nothing would be uncertain for it, and the future, like the past, would be directly present to its observation.[2]

Because of the success of Newtonian mechanics in describing the motions of objects from planets to missiles, it became accepted widely as the last word in scientific explanation.

Einstein was to shatter this belief in the perfection of Newtonian mechanics. However, the goal of reaching understanding of the ordered regularity of all events was as much Einstein's goal as it was Newton's. In an essay written for a conference on science, philosophy and religion in 1940, Einstein expressed his feelinges thus:

> The more a man imbued with ordered regularity of all events, the firmer becomes his conviction that there is no room left by the side of this ordered regularity for causes of a different nature. For him neither the rule of human nor the rule of divine will exists as an independent cause of natural events.[3]

Different men considering this conception of the universe have reacted quite differently. William James, the American Pragmatist, reacted strongly to any conception which led to a block universe—a closed, deterministic system. It is well known that around the age of 28, James suffered a psychological and philosophical crisis. In his diary on April 30, 1870, he wrote:

> I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier's second *Essais* and see no reason why his definition of free will—"the sustaining of a thought *because I choose to* when I might have other thoughts"—need to be the definition] of an illusion. At any rate, I will assume for the present—until next year—that it is no

illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will.[4]

The psychological depths to which James plunged were expressed by him in a manner worthy of the best existentialist writing:

> I went one evening into a dressing-room in the twilight to procure some article that was there; when suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. Simultaneously there arose in my mind the image of an epileptic patient whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves against the wall, with his knees drawn against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them, inclosing his entire figure.....This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. *That shape am I*, I felt, potentially. Nothing that I possess can defend me against that fate, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him .....After this the universe was changed for me altogether. I awoke morning after morning with a horrible dread at the pit of my stomach, and with a sense of the insecurity of life that I never knew before, and that I have never felt since. It was like a revelation; and although the immediate feelings passed away, the experience has made me sympathetic with the morbid feelings of others ever since.[5]

James's good friend, the elder pragmatist, Charles Peirce, carried out a robust attack on the block universe—the *bête noire* of James. Peirce formulated a theory of 'absolute chance' which he named Tychism. This theory was mooted by him in 1887:

> The endless variety in the world has not been created by law. It is not of the nature of uniformity to originate variation, nor of law to beget circumstance. When we gaze upon the multifariousness of nature we are looking straight

> into the face of a living spontaneity. A day's ramble in the country ought to bring that home to us. (6.553) [6]

By the term 'absolute chance' Peirce meant the existence of real indeterminacy as opposed to an indeterminacy arising merely from our ignorance. Indeterminacy owing to our ignorance was well recognized by scientists in such fields as the kinetic theory of gases. When dealing with the collective behaviour of innumerable molecules of gases, it seemed impossible that the scientist could determine the position and velocity of individual gas molecules. Therefore the kinetic theory of gases was established on the basis of statistical methods. But, theoretically at least, it was supposed that a superhuman intelligence with supherhuman techniques would be able to track the exact position and velocity of each and every molecule. Peirce's theory of Tychism would differ from this classic view by denying that gas molecules have any *exactly* predictable behaviour.

Peirce advanced several reasons for believing in the objective reality of 'absolute chance'. First, he mentions growth and evolution:

> Consider the life of an individual animal or plant, or of a mind. Glance at the history of states and institutions, of language, of ideas. Examine the successions of forms shown by paleontology, the history of the globe as set forth in geology, of what the astronomer is able to make out concerning the changes of stellar systems. *Everywhere the main fact is growth and increasing complexity.....* Consequently the rule of mechanical necessity meets in some way with interference. (6.58; italics added)

It has been pointed out that Pierce is here contrasting irreversible processes (such as growth, evolution and increasing complexity) with reversible processes (of mere mechanical action).

Next, Pierce emphasizes variety:

> By thus admitting pure spontaneity or life as a character of the universe, acting always and everywhere though restrained within narrow bonds by law, producing infinitesimal departures from law continually, and great ones with infinite

> infrequency, I account for all the variety and diversity of the universe, in the only sense in which the really *sui generis* and new can be said to be accounted for. (6.59)

Pierce then goes on to other points, one of which is basic:

> Necessitarianism cannot logically stop short of making the whole action of the mind a part of the physical universe. Our notion that we decide what we are going to do, if, as the necessitarian says, it has been calculable since the earliest times, is reduced to illusion. Indeed, consciousness in general thus becomes a mere illusory aspect of a material system.... *Necessitarianism* enters consciousness under the head of sundries, as a forgotten trifle; its scheme of the universe would be more satisfactory if this little fact could be dropped out of sight. (6.61)

Peirce's views are thus, in fact, a remarkable anticipation of the basic issues raised by the introduction of the quantum theory.

J. Bernstein has made the following relevant comments on the rise of quantum mechanics:

> The concepts of the quantum theory really set twentieth century physics off from anything that precedes it. This may seem like a strange observation after one has been exposed to the somewhat startling conclusion of [Einstein's] relativity theory. But the relativity theories, both special and general, are set in a philosophical context of a causal description of events occurring in space and time or space-time. Einstein's space-time consists of points whose position and times are to be determined by classical procedures using rulers and clocks of a kind that any nineteenth century physicist would be confortable with. [But:] *Quantum theory...denies the uuderlying validity of such descriptions* and, in so doing, has changed and influenced the whole epistemological basis of science.[7] (Italics added)

The basic problem raised by quantum mechanics was the schizophrenic nature of light—which behaves both in wave-like fashion and as made up of discrete particles.

Einstein spent a good deal of his life trying to understand this 'schizophrenic' character of light. Here is an interesting anecdote told by Philipp Frank. He relates that in the 1920's,

> Einstein began to be much troubled over the paradoxes arising from the dual nature of light.... His state of mind over this problem can be described by this incident: Einstein's office at the university [of Prague] overlooked a park with beautiful gardens and shady trees. He noticed that there were only women walking about in the morning and men in the afternoon, and that some walked alone sunk in deep meditation and others gathered in groups and engaged in vehement discussions. On inquiring what this strange garden was, he learned that it was a park belonging to an insane asylum ..... The people walking in the garden were inmates of this institution, harmless patients who did not have to be confined. When I first went to Prague, Einstein showed me this view, explained it to me and said playfully 'Those are the mad men who do not occupy themselves with the quantum theory'. [8]

May we suspect that. with all due respect to Einstein's genius, future developments of physics and philosophy will make way for a view of indeterminacy, spontaneity and thought, which will not be seen as being comparable to the mental disorder of schizophrenia, but rather acknowledged as fundamentally important elements of a rational and intelligible universe.

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# 6

# TECHNOLOGICAL ALIENATION

H. Skolimowski

## INTRODUCTION

My talk will consist not so much of reflections of a philosopher on what other philosophers have said on alienation, but rather of reflections of a philosopher on present realities. I will argue that modern alienation is a specific outcome of a historic process which engulfed Europe in the post-Renaissance time. Alienation in my opinion is the result of a particular conjunction of mechanical specialization and the meterialist world-view. Alienation is the daughter of those two parents.

## I

The roots of modern alienation lie not so much in the economic system of modern Capitalism, but in the secular ideology which began to emerge in the Western Thought in the post-Renaissance era. In the ultimate analysis these roots are spiritual or religious, not economic. When the Western man began to seek the independence from the Gods beyond, and craved for the fulfilment here on earth, that was the beginning of the process of alienation in the modern sense. What man thought as the liberation from the tyranny of institutionalised religion, turned out to be an estrangement (from his own essence) and the enslavement to gadgets through which the liberation was to be carried out. Quite crucial in this process was the development of the secular world view, in which the universe began to be viewed progressively as a huge mechanism to be manipulated through the increasingly specialised sciences and increasingly powerful technology. It was thus an ever growing specialization combined with the conception of the universe as a quarry of raw materials to be used for our immediate gratification that set the Western man on

the path of material progress that ultimately led him to the barren land in which he is stripped of this spirituality and often of his humanity; of his own essence.

As human beings we are extremely diverse and integrated organisms. We were not meant to specialise. "If Nature wanted us to specialise she would endow us with a microscope in one eye and a telescope in another eye". (Buckminster Fuller). While forced to specialize and develop some aspects of his being, Western man finds other aspects of his being in the state of atrophy. When a variety of aspects of man's existence are denied and blocked, the organism becomes frustrated. And this is resolved either through violence or through withdrawal, the latter leading to alienation. Violence and alienation are two symptoms of the same cause; two sides of the same coin - of man being denied the fulness of his existence through being reduced to specialised functions of modern society. But there is another important component of the secular world view which indirectly but profoundly contributed to the rising tide of alienation in modern world. This component was to do with the very assumptions of the secular view, in which spiritual and religious phenomena are considered as non-existent. If man is a spiritual, cultural and religious being (in addition to being a physical, biological and economic entity); if, in other words, the historic ascent of man and the evolution of his uniqueness means that we must acknowledge in man the spiritual, cultural and religious aspects, then the secular world view, by denying these very aspects, pre-empties man of something important, something which is indispensable, for his full experience as a human being. If such is the case, then the very assumptions of the secular world view, particularly when it started to gravitate more and more towards aggressive materialism, were bound to spell out trouble. Combined with the increasing specialisation, the materialist world view was bound to empty out modern man of his inner life, and ultimately of a larger purpose of his existence. This discussion could be summarised by means of a simple equation.

Materialism plus specialization = modern alienation. It is in this context that we must view economic forms of alienation. particularly as expounded by Karl Marx and his followers. Actually Marx did not discover alienation. Nor was it Hegel. It was Jean Jack Rousseau

who became alarmed by the fact that the tools of civilisation began to backfire and started to estrange man from Nature and his own essence. Therefo re he called for a retreat from civilisation and back to Nature. At his time the articulation of the materialist world view was not as advanced as a century later, when Marx arrived on the scene. Nor was the process of specialisation pushed forward as ruthlessly as it happened during the Industrial Revolution. Therefore Rousseau was a bit vague and nebulous about the causes of alienation. However in some important aspects he went deeper than Marx by suggesting that it is the very process of civilization that estranges man from himself. We should also remember Rousseau was full of noble sentiments and ideal notions, such as the "Social Contract", the "Sovereign", and the "Laws", which at times acquire in his writings a metaphysical, if not a mystical dimension. These concepts are, as it were, ideal forms, not unlike Plato's ideas or forms; almost sacred. And it is through these forms that the social contract holds society together. Thus Rousseau was far from being a thorough - going materialist reducing everything to the interaction of material and economic forces.

With Karl Marx we witness raw materialism in action. He did not believe in any social contract, which for him was a mere deception contrived for the sake of exploitation of lower classes. Class warfare, not a social contract, was Marx's motto. However this was not quite so at the beginning, with the young Marx, who was very much an idealistic moralist, despairing over the annihilation of human dignity. In actual fact Marx's early incantations are very Rousseaunian not only in tone but in wording as well. Only later when Marx became obssesively preoccupied with economics, only then the idea of surplus value, and the notion of buying and selling of labour were elevated as all important metaphysical principles. Let us be clearly aware that much more is involved in the process of production that leads to alienation than merely selling and buying of labour. Men have been selling and buying labour from time immemorial. Even a priest is 'selling' his labour when he serves his community. It was a *particular* process that made buying and selling labour in the 19th century factories so dehumanizing and alienating; it was a process of growing specialisation in which human beings were progressively reduced to cogs in the wheel.

The process of alienation through work, by selling and buying labour is only one aspect of the total phenomenon. Wherever there exists excessive specialization, there is alienation; wherever human beings are cut off from the sources of spiritual sustenance, alienation creeps in. The Soviet Union and the Communist countries have supposedly liquidated the capitalist system of production, and therefore the process of selling and buying of labour. Yet alienation was not removed. This has been explicitly acknowledged by the Marxist philosophers themselves. Adam Schaff, a prominent Polish Marxist, wrote a book, *Marxism and the Human Individual* in 1965, (translated into English in 1970), in which he acknowledged the (various) forms of alienation that exist in communist countries (for which, incidentally he was severely criticised by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Poland!). A few years earlier Leszek Kolakowski made similar analyses of Marxism, also in Poland. The point is not that the communist system is imperfect in Russia or in Poland. The reasons are more fundamental. In the absence of any meaningful metaphysical framework in which man's transcendental and spiritual quests could find their fulfilment, and while operating within the framework of a ridiculously constrained value-system, "love to the proletariat and hate to the capitalist," Marxism is impotent to provide an antidote to alienation. Ultimately Marxist eschatology turns hollow as it is unable to sustain the complete human being in his quest for meaning. I am aware that in the young Marx there are utterances which seem to deny this contention. The young Marx has suggested that man must liberate himself *through* technology, and then liberate himself *from* technology. He has also remarked that in the Communist society, a man will be a versatile being: a farmer in the morning, a poet in the evening, while catching fish in the afternoon. This is an idyllic picture. This is not the tradition of Marxism that has been pursued in the Communist countries. Nor could it be, as Communist countries are as hell bound on specialisation, material progress and concomitant alienation as are the Capitalist countries.

In order to succeed as providing a viable future for the whole of humanity, Marxism would have to dismantle its materialist foundation; Marxism would have to be spiritualized.

You may ask how the Communist countries are coping with problems of alienation. In Poland there is the Catholic Church

which is strong not because it is strong in itself, but because it has been made strong by the weakness of communism; people flock to it as an antidote to alienation caused by communism. In Russia, the antidote to alienation is Vodka and Dostoyevsky.

## II

Let me now move specifically to the problems of technological alienation. It should be clear from my discussion so far that the more advanced a country is technologically, the more alienated are its people; for technological advacement means high specialization and high compartmentalization; in other words, a high ratio of the disintegration of those integral wholes which are otherwise called human beings. No wonder therefore that the United States is the country most plagued by problems of alienation (and violence, as the two go together). Perhaps there is a poetic justice in this state of affairs. Those who are affluent materially must suffer for it mentally.

But the real issue is much deeper. And it touches the very roots of man. Are we the kind of creatures that can achieve fulfilment and meaning in life through material gratification alone? The second part of the question is: Is technology omnipotent enough to satisfy all our needs and to resolve all our problems? From the perspective of time we can now see that the answer is negative to both questions. And yet for quite a while, particularly in the West, the positive answers were assumed to both questions. Indeed even now, after amassing a considerable evidence that the material plane is not enough and that technology is not omnipotent, people in the West still somehow expect technology to fix it all. This is no doubt the residue of technological thinking which has crept deep into the recesses of their minds. This paradox of knowing that technology cannot provide it all, and yet expecting it to do, the source of considerable schrisophrenia in the West. We know that technology is guilty of many human, ecological and social devastations; and yet when we turn for a remedy it is almost invariably to another technique, another technology. People in the West have hardly the courage to go to the deeper causes or say to themselves: "We have met our enemy; it is us."

But there is also a considerable ambivalence towards technology in the East, including India. India too is very proud of its

technological achievements. It also wants more and more technology. People in India and other countries of Asia do not seem to realize that they too are possessed (or at least are beginning to be possessed) by the Faustian syndrome: more gadgets, more material wealth. I am not saying that they should crave for poverty. But I am suggesting that in this uncritical embrace of technology, the East (India among other countries) is importing not only particular gadgets, but is also swallowing the entire ideology: the ideology of power, the ideology of salvation through material means alone.

For technology as evolved in the West is no longer an assembly of gadgets. It is now so interiorized that it has become a form of consciousness. In the West, particularly in America, when people think of technology, invariably though unconsciously, they think of 'power and manipulation.' Martin Heidegger has suggested that technology is now part of the being of man. I prefer to think of it as a part of our acquired consciousness. There is no doubt in my mind that technology in the West signifies not the use of this or that set of tools, but *a whole set of mental dispositions*, a whole way of viewing things, of viewing the world, of viewing people. Skinner's behaviourism which claims that the inner life of people is a fiction and therefore we should only try to modify their physical behaviour, is not a minor aberration of the western mind, but is a necessary consequence of the technological way of thinking.

Technology, as developed in the West, is not neutral. It is in my opinion a rather superficial view which maintains that technology is to be judged according to its uses. When woven into the tapestry of the secular world view, which in its development emptied out man of his inner life—particularly his ethical and spiritual life, technology cannot but be destructive of man's higher values. No way has yet been found to prevent that, which means that the detrimental consequences of technology are not incidental but endimic; they lie in the very nature of the phenomenon, as it is functioning within a certain world view.

Many thinkers have been alarmed at this imperious and demanding nature of technology. Among these thinkers one should mention Ortegay Gasset, Oswald Spengler, Martin Heidegger, and more recently Jacques Ellul. Ellul has been particularly prophetic in his

book, *The Technological Society* (1965, originally published in French in 1954). He maintained that the imperative of technology, based on the drive towards increasing industrial efficiency, would prove stronger than the respective ideologies of Capitalism and of Communism. He also maintained that in due time this technological imperative would make the two blocks converge more and more. This is indeed what we are witnessing nowadays.

When one talks about technology as a global phenomenon, as a form of Western consciousness, as a demurge of our times, one does not postulate a sinister monster that literally devours people and society. It is more subtle than that. The hypothesis, however, — that he (the devil) did not have to destroy man; instead he gave man modern technology — should perhaps be given some serious thought. Let me say a few words about those subtle aspects, or subtle manifestations of the total phenomenon of technology. In the United States specialisation is developed to a high degree. And not only people in automated factories imprisoned to the conveyer belt suffer. Their stories are horrific enough. I have had some students who during summer holidays worked on the assembly line at Ford, and GM auto factories in Detroit. The work is so intensely repetitious and monotonous that one has to make one's mind numb, otherwise one gets crazy. It is not easy to get used to this routine. Workers who have done it for years do it because "the pay is good", and often because they support their children who are at the university and of whom they are very proud as they will not have to spend their lives at the assembly line. Often too "the good pay" they receive, all goes to local bar owners: apparently they "bomb" themselves every lunch time, drowning their misery in beer.

This dehumanising aspect of the assembly line has been universally recognised. Some auto factories, Volvo in particular, came out with an idea of a completely automated factory, in which everything is done by the machine, and workers only watch the process. The result has been unexpected. The workers seem to hate this kind of jobs even more. According to statistics the number of absentees and of unexplained vandalism in these automated factories is exceptionally high. The theory is that this is a result of alienation. Man wants to work, instead he is only watching the automaton. Now, many

other aspects of life are equally specialised and often automatised in the States. If in the States one has a problem with oneself, one goes to psychiatrist. Indeed whoever can afford it, has his own shrink, a permanent crutch on which to rely in life. If one has a problem with one's marriage, one goes to a marriage councillor. If there are some other problems, one calls on a social worker. The army of specialists is at your service. May be, they cannot help you with your deeper problems, but this is another matter. In a sense one should not have *deeper* problems in the technological society. Deeper problems are beyond technology and the specialists it provides. Technology is preoccupied with the question: How to? It implicitly assumes that the world is a mechanical aggregate in motion and that there is a technological fix for any problem. In this overall mental climate, (and it is mental climate that penetrates after a while the recesses of one's mind), one can understand why many Americans prefer a prefabricated crummy meal served to them while they wait in their automobiles in so-called drive-in-restaurants instead of sitting comfortable in a more human atmosphere surrounded by human beings. It is all a part of the glorious mechanization of the world.

That they later scream inside, feel empty and alienated is another matter. It is a curious spectacle to watch those thousands of automobiles on American highways, which as a rule, you see one person locked in his steel and glass capsule; and often hating everybody else around as he is in a hurry and under pressure, and everybody else's presence on the freeway is an obstacle. No such luck in Indian buses where you are surrounded by other human beings, and often too much so. In highly developed technological countries one is surrounded by objects and machines, and when he transacts with human beings they so often function as specialists. In developing countries, particularly predominantly rural countries, on the other hand, one is surrounded by people and plants and trees and things growing (with which they breathe the same rhythm of life). At this point of our analysis, *alienation may be called separation of life from life itself.* This is what one is struck once again in the technological society: withering of the variety of life under the impact of artificial environments and under the impact of increasing

mechanisation; also withering of human beings whose wholeness is multilated by artificial boxes of the technological order.

The villagers in the state of Tamil Nadu and other provinces of India may be poor and destitute, but they are not alienated. They are constanly surrounded by other human beings and saturated with human warmth; also continually connected and saturated with all forms of life.

## III

The technological *Weltanschauung* produces alienation not by chance, but by necessity. It is in the very premise of the technological world view that it wants to subdue and conquer nature, that it wants to establish the mechanical order over and above the natural order, that it creates artificial, technology-made-environments and eliminates natural environments. Technology-induced changes in man's environment and in man's life are felt as unbearably constraining, as estranging man from his own essence; hence alienation. The technological society is an extension and indeed a crowning point of the western secular world view, an integral part of it. Alienation therefore must be viewed as an inherent part of the western secular world view. No remedy for alienation can be found as long as the West is locked in a cosmology which insists on the mechanistic nature of life to be understood by the process of increasing fragmentation.

We are all aware that countless remedies have been attempted to combat alienation in the United States. In a curious way America has become one therapeutic ward in which everybody tries to heal and integrate himself. This alone shows how insufficient the technological world view is.

Now in the very recognition of the phenomenon of alienation we witness an explicit rejection of the millennium promised by the technological world view. If this world view were to provide fulfilment and gratification, it should not have brought about alienation. Furthermore, if we look more penetratingly at the concept of alienation, then we see that its recognition denies the validity of the technological world view in yet another way: alienation is an estrangement of man from his essence; from his

inner being—the kind of things that the technological *Weltanschauung* does not recognise! The recognition of alienation presupposes the recognition of the universal human nature, which is rooted in intrinsic values—trans-economic and trans-physical.

Ultimately all forms of alienation are forms of spiritual estrangement of man from himself. One cannot understand the meaning of alienation of man from his essence, or from his being, or from other *human* beings, or even from society, if one does not grasp and perceive the spiritual matrix of man's existence, and his trans-physical and trans-biological quests. Traditional religions were integrative, anti-entropic, holistic, in short, anti-alienational. The cosmos conceived as one integrated whole, as envisaged in so many religions, was a reassuringhy anti-alienational device; for one then *belonged* to the cosmos at large, to the human family.

In so far as the secular world view became a new cosmology—in fact a new religion with its explicit and implicit eschatology: salvation through material betterment alone, it disconnected man from the rest of the cosmos and fragmented him and the entire universe, into small discrete bits—all for the sake of mechanical control and manipulation; and ultimately material gratification. In summing up, technological alienation is the result of the failure of one particular form of modern religion which is called technological universalism. It has been argued here that man has alienated himself from himself because of his nature. In my opinion modern man has become alienated from himself because he has been *too much* helped by the machine, which has disengaged him from life.

It has been said in this symposium that man is not what he is, but what he ought to be. I do not find this formulation particularly helpful. I rather prefer Goethe who said:

> To treat man as he is
> Is to debase him
> To treat man as he ought to be
> Is to engrace him.

Because in the technological society man has been too much treated *as he is*, he has been debased and alienated. To treat man as he ought to be requires a transcendental frame of reference.

A form of religion therefore seems to be necessary to secure the essential well being of man in this world.

## IV

As a post-script let me add three foot-notes concerning the various discussions of this symposium:

1. It strikes me as a bit odd, if not altogether out of place, to to talk about alienation in Gandhi's thought. If anything, Gandhi's philosophy was an antidote to alienation. If so, it does not make sense to talk about alienation in Gandhi; for his life and his philosophy were the opposite of alienation.

2. It appears to me that Hegel, Feurbach, Marx and Engels got it all wrong about religion and alienation. Their conception of religion was but a caricature of religion. They had in mind one particular form of religion (Christianity of a certain period of its deveiopment), forgetting at the same time that there have been great many other religions; and furthermore, forgetting that traditional religions were usually acting as integrative and connecting forces, and thereby were producing social and individual cohesion, not alienation. Hegel was very fond of talking about *Zeitgeist*. It seems to be that he, as well as Feurbach and Marx, became possessed by the *Zeitgeist* of their period, the *Zeitgeist* of unfolding ruthless materialism. And this seems to have blinded them to the positive and salutary aspects of religion.

3. There are various forms of slavery of which the conceptual slavery is not the least important; its tentacles are as insidious as they are invisible. It seems to me that after having become liberated politically from the West, India still remains in the intellectual and conceptual slavery — using the concepts, methodologies and the whole conceptual apparatus of the West, without realizing that this is lethal, as in the long run it spells out a total dependence on the mind of the West. The West is intellectually and spiritually at a low ebb. For India (the country of such a great intellectual, cultural and spiritual heritage) to imitate the West at this time is not only a shame but a crime. To be truely free the Indian mind must think on its own: creatively transforming all the heritage of the Indian and western culture.

# 7

# THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

S. P. DUBEY

## I

Alienation or estrangement is a unique problem that the modern man has been facing acutely for almost the last five decades. Although the origin of the problem can be traced back to the Judaeo-Greek period, it forced mass-concern after the publication of Karl Marx's (1818-83) *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* in 1932. Sensitive minds were compelled to take a 'close look' at the problem because of the analysis of 'alienated labour' by Marx. Marx took the word from Hegel (1770-1831) for whom every objectification is an instance of alienation. Marx was also influenced by Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804-74) who had rejected the Hegelian view that man is self-alienated God. Feuerbach treated God as a superimposition and maintained that dealienation consists in the abolition of that estranged picture of man which is God.[1]

The problem of alienation is visualised by the sociologists, psychologists, economists, theologians and philosophers of almost all industrial societies. It is generally agreed that the modern scientific and technological society has contributed its own bit to make the problem a grave one. The rapid growth of industries around the globe is overpowering human values and man finds himself aloof in the crowd. The interpretation of the technological society by the French sociologist Jacques Ellul or the presentation of the philosophy of the mass age by the Canadian philosopher George P. Grant and many others shows that the sense of alienation is rapidly growing in modern societies which seem to have no control over the disease.

The sickness is widespread in the North American or the North Atlantic arena. But the so-called under-developed or developing countries also are not free from the infection because of their adopting the 'technological culture'. India too faces the problem, but with lesser acuteness. Since the ancient tradition of this land has been strong, and the onslaught of technology is less severe, she has been able to retain the heritage and has now reached a stage when she can suggest a solution to the problem.

In the present paper an attempt will first be made to introduce the problem of alienation in modern times while tracing out its history in the Western tradition. Next, it will be our concern to present the problem of alienation in the technological society. Both the views, viz., the possibility of realizing the Kingdom of God through modernization and the other, the likelihood of the extinction of human values and humanity itself, will be considered. In the end the problem faced by the Indian Society will be examined and a portrait of an unalienated man, as found in the person of Mahatma Gandhi will be presented. It may be noted at the outset, that the Indian religio-philosophical tradition, metaphysically, does not treat the problem of alienation as fundamental. The problem has its origin in the West. But it has crept into other areas also, including India. What is interesting to note is that our tradition and the modern understanding of tradition by Gandhi and Radhakrishnan, can provide a lasting solution to the problem. The influx of the Western youth to our religious places is an indication of the fact that even other countries have realised that the cooling touch of our tradition is lacking badly in the Semitic cultures.

## II

The term 'alienation' is used as a noun as well as an adjective. The adjective 'alien' means "not one's own," foreign, differing in character, repugnant. The noun 'alien' stands for stranger or not naturalised. Consequently, alienation means estrangement. Other words like powerlessness, normlessness, insanity, social isolation or cultural estrangement are also used to convey the sense in various contexts.

The origin of the concept can be traced back either to Greek philosophy or to the Biblical tradition. The Platonic view regarding

the natural world as an imperfect picture of the world of ideas or the Biblical notion of the Fall of Man (*Genesis*, 111) could be taken to be the earlist examples of alienation. Harvey Cox, in his *The Secular City*, notes that the three pivotal elements in the Biblical faith have given rise to three aspects of secularisation which is one of the major factors of alienation (of course not for Cox): the disenchantment of nature being with Creation, the desacralization of politics with Exodus, and the deconsecration of values with the Sinai Covenant.[1]

The concept of alienation is also present in the Plotinian teaching when Plotinus (205-70) talks of the series of emanation from the One. He recommends turning our mind away from the inferior things of sense toward the inner reality of our soul (*Enneads*). St. Augustine (354-430) also shows awareness of the problem of alienation when he notes the disorder present in the world which could be put to order in the 'City of God.' And we find an altogether different approach in Martin Luther's (1483-1546) protests against the legitimization of man's endeavour to get on in the world with unquestioned loyalty to the Church and turning towards conscience and direct faith in the words of God.

For Hegel alienation was an ontological concept rooted in the nature of man's existence in the world. Man's creations (art, language, science etc.) stand outside him as alien objects, as objectifications of mind and conscience.[2] Feuerbach and Marx transformed the ontological concept into a secular and materialistic idea. For the former the sources of alienation lay in religion and overcoming of alienation required a humanistic religion of man, not of God. According to him man is alienated from himself when he creates and puts above himself an imagined alien higher being and bows before that. As against Hegel, Feuerbach maintained that man is not self-alienated God; in fact God is self-alienated man.

Marx partly agreed and partly disagreed with both the forerunners. He agreed with Hegel that the self-creation of man is a process of alienation but did not agree with him that objectivity is to be abolished. He also agreed with Feuerbach's criticism of religious alienation but considered religious alienation as only one form. He holds that philosophical, economic, social and personal alienations could not be ignored. They are the products of man himself and

have become independent powers and man is alienated from his essential nature - has become a non-man. A non-alienated man, for Marx, would be a man who fulfils himself as a free, creative being of praxis.

## III

Several attempts have been made to define alienation. For the psychologists it might be "a state of a person who has been estranged from, made unfriendly toward, his society and the culture it carries."[3] Sigmund Freud takes it to be the split between the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the human personality. Sociologically, "the essential characteristic of an alienated man is his belief that he is unable to fulfill what he believes is his rightful role in the society."[4] Philosophically, alienation may be taken to be "self-alienation." It takes two forms. In the one the self becomes alien to its own nature and in the other the self becomes alien to its source - God or the Absolute - as is found in Hegel.

*The Dictionary of Philosophy*[5] provides a non-disciplinarian definition of alienation by taking it to be "an act, or result of an act, through which something, or somebody, becomes (or has become) alien (or strange) to something, or somebody else." In addition to this comprehensive definition we find another attempt at providing a definition (which is also comprehensive) by the Josephsons when they define it to be "an individual feeling or a state of dissociation from self, from others, and from the world at large."[6]

Although alienation is generally treated to be undesirable and an evil, it cannot be taken to be exclusively evil. It is, at times, the basis for creative insight and the impetus for social change. In traditional societies, especially of Greece and India, the concept of obligatory retirement or withdrawal from active social life, in the interest of society as well as of the individual, was prevalent. The person entering *vānaprastha* or *saṁnyāsa* opted for alienation from society for spiritual persuasions. He used to contemplate or get engaged in creative work. Certain groups of persons were also left alone for doing creative acts like book-writing, music, poetry etc. But this kind of alienation is not the one which becomes a problem Persons concerned did not have the feeling of estrangement in such

situations. On the other hand, they had a feeling of fulfilment. The problem of alienation arises when social surroundings force man to feel impotent or useless either to himself or to society and he has no hope for the future and no place to retire peacefully.

If we consider the causes of alienation we shall find that generally five causal theories are advanced for alienation. The first one is an economic theory associated with Marx and his followers. Here man is taken to have always been alienated because of uneven economic distribution. Abolition of private property and formation of human community are the only methods to reach dealienation. The second theory is a psychological one and is advanced by Freud and others. According to this theory alienation is due to the split between the conscious and the unconscious aspects of our personality. The third theory points out sociological factors for alienation and is associated with the names of sociologists like Durkheim and Riesman. Here the outwardness of man is due to social factors. Historically, man has proceeded from 'tradition-directed' to 'inner-directed' to 'other-directed'.[7] The fourth theory finds the cause for alienation in unplanned growth of technology. For Jacques Ellul the technique, and its substitution of 'know how' and 'know why', impose routine and rigidity on every activity it touches; it erodes moral values and leads, in the end, to complete dehumanization. Eric Fromm and Herbert Marcuse (b. 1898) indict modern civilization for failing to realise the potential (creative) of human nature. Man in the capitalist market-place has become estranged from himself. The fifth theory, i.e., the philosophico-existential, is associated with Soren Kierkegaard (1813-55), Albert Camus, Martin Buber (1878), Paul Tillich (1886), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905) and others. For Sartre alienation is a natural state of affairs in a world bereft of meaning and purpose. The absurdity of existence is held to be fundamental. Earlier, Kierkegaard stressed the importance of subjective experience. Attaining an adequate sense of the self in a world dominated by purposelessness and despair was the central theme for Heidegger, Sartre and others. The Jewish existentialist Martin Buber talks of two primary relations. The 'I-Thou' relation works in the realm of poetry whereas the second type of relation, viz., the 'I-it' operates in the world of science. The 'it' of the second relation can be replaced by 'he' or 'she'. And the 'I' of this group is not the

same as the 'I' of the first relation. Only in the second relation alienation is possible. In the first type the relation is close and intense.

Whatever be the causes of alienation, there is no doubt regarding the fatal consequences of it in most cases. Psychosis, suicide, delinquency, psycho-somatic disorder, wildcat strikes, ethnic prejudices, civil riots, student unrest etc., are the familiar consequences of alienation in general. Sometimes a different type of consequence also takes place, e.g., passive political awareness and protest. The total reaction of an individual is sometimes expressed at the time of election in democratic countries (cf. *The Alienated Voter* of Murray B. Levin).

## IV

Alienation has been classified by several scholars in various ways. Of them the fourfold classification of human alienation by Karl Marx is well-known. He speaks of alienation of man from the products of his own activity, from his productive activity itself, from his human essence and from other men. Frederick A. Weiss holds on to a three-fold classification of alienation, viz., self-anesthesia, self-elimination and self-idealization. Ernest Schachtel refers to a four-fold division, slightly different from that of Marx. He speaks of the alienation of man from nature, from fellowmen, from his own manual work and from himself. Melvin Seeman classifies alienation into five categories on the basis of consequences. Powerlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation, normlessness and self-estrangement are the consequences. Lewis Feuer classifies alienation into six types. These are alienations of class society, of competitive society, of industrial society, of mass society, of race and of generations.

It seems to us that there three criteria for classifications can be identified. They are made either according to the nature of that which is alienated, or according to the way in which alienation takes place, be it through its own activity or through the activity of another. In the first case we distinguish between alienation of things and of selves. In the second we distinguish alienation from something else or somebody else and from oneself. In the last case we distinguish between alienation through others and alienation through oneself.

## V

Of all the types of alienation mentioned above, the concept of self-alienation is the most important one. Although we find self-alienated animals (coward lion) or self-alienated plants (stinking rose), the concept of self-alienation is basic to man only. To be self-alienated means to be internally divided, split into at least two parts that have become alien to each other. In self-alienation the division of the self into two conflicting parts is not carried out from without. It is the result of an action of the self. Further, the division does not usually annihilate the self. Of the two parts of the self, one part at times claims to represent the self as a whole, so that by becoming alien to that part, the other part becomes alien to the self as a whole.

The two parts of the self are sometimes described as representing the real nature of man and 'existential' or the 'factual' property possessed by it. The *Bhagavadgītā* presents this division in a slightly different form by describing the divine and the demoniac properties of the individual. But if we ask about the essential nature of the first part, difficulties arise. Is the essence eternal or part of our actuality? Is alienation an imperishable property of man or is it just one stage in the history of man? The existentialists take it to be a permanent feature of the human situation. But the Marxists believe that communism is a positive antidote to alienation.

If we assume that the history of man is nothing but a history of his experiencing self-alienation, the question immediately arises as to whether it has gradually decreased or increased. The progressivists hold the former view whereas several other sociologists and contemporary philosophers subscribe to the latter view. There can be other groups of persons who might maintain that quantification in the realm of alienation is not easy to maintain. Whether absolute elimination (or perfect dealienation) is possible or not is another perplexing question. The radical socialists maintain that it has already been eliminated (we can see how true this claim might be), at least in the socialist countries. For them the visible instances of individual alienation are insignificant and are explained away as the remnants of capitalism. Others realize that total elimination is an impossibility but relative dealienation is possible. It is possible

to create a basically non-alienated society that would stimulate the development of a non-alienated, really human individual. S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) conceives of such a society when he advocates a religion of the spirit. According to him to assume helplessness even in the face of a sweeping current is to embrace a philosophy of despair. Mankind's highest destiny is to become more human and spiritual. If society is to recover its health, it must regain its faith. Our society, for him, is not sick beyond saving. What we need is the faith which will assert the power of spirit over things and find significance in a world in which science and organization seem to have lost their relationship to traditional values.[8]

The means for overcoming alienation (or self-alienation) differ according to one's view of the essence of alienation. The psychologists suggest that the individual should put in his own moral effort, a revolution within the self. The economists lay stress on the elimination of private (or state) properties (as the case may be). The sociologists would suggest cross-cultural comparisons for removing the feeling of alienation in various societies.

## VI

Though sociologists belonging to the capitalist and the socialist worlds differ in regard to many aspects of the problem of alienation, they agree that it is the capital, and the outcomes of the capital, that creates alienation in general. But the assumptions underlying the agreement are totally different. The socialist group (of the Marxian variety) treats alienation as a normative concept. It is the instrument for criticizing the establishment. The American empiricists (such as Robert K. Merton and Talcott Parsons) emphasize such an alienation in a socio-psychological fact.

Capital, being the major factor in the growth of alienation, has its source in the Protestant Christianity and the outcome of capital is the technological society. Max Weber (1864 - 1920) has shown the line of development of capitalism from the Calvinist theology where 'calling' is a strenuous and exacting enterprise to be chosen by man and to be pursued with a sense of religious responsibility. The pursuit of riches, an earlier enemy of religion, is now welcomed as its ally. And "Capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, and for ever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise."[9]

The French sociologist Jacques Ellul (b.1912) analyses the outcome of Capitalism in his *The Technological Society.*[10] He observes the technological phenomenon with great care and visualises its dangers to the individual as well as to society. In his work he examines the impact of the technological onslaught on politics, economics and the totality of relationships in our society and concludes that it erodes moral values and leads to complete dehumanization and alienation. And the danger is that all this occurs not by design but by 'drift' inherent in the very nature of the technique.

J. Ellul agrees with Marx that technical progress is a function of bourgeois money; but parts company with Marx when the latter preaches that "technique' could be liberating. The exploitation of the workers, for Marx, is not because of the technique, but because of the masters who handle it. For Ellul there exists a danger to human life in the very nature of the technique. Technique, for him is the "totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency in every field of human activity." It is a complex of standardized means for attaining a predetermined end. The technical man is fascinated by the results, by the immediate consequences of setting standardized devices into motion. He cannot help admiring the spectacular effectiveness of nuclear weapons of war. Above all, he is committed to the never-ending search for the one best way to achieve any designated objective.

Agreeing mostly with Ellul, George P. Grant (b. 1918) notes that two characteristics distinguish the technological culture.[11] Firstly, it concentrates on the domination of man over nature through scientific knowledge. Secondly, some men dominate over others. The conquest of nature has taken us to the point where we can destroy the human race. Grant observes both the repressive and the liberating factors in the technological culture. For him technology also creates the natural conditition for universal liberation. The young people of big cities express the liberating freedom. They are immensely open to good and evil. Since our educational system is not ready to meet their demands, they feel alienated. And this very alienation, Grant hopes, will drive the best of the students to philosophy. These young people in America are

the evidence of the rise of profounder philosophical thought in that society.

Ellul, Grant and Economist Barbara Ward[12] (of England) are all agreed that it is the North Atlantic countries that have produced the technological society and carried the evil along with them, to other parts of the world, mainly through colonialism. Although the archaic societies had some techniques at their disposal, they could not produce this type of society. The Hindu society could not devote a life-time to exploring an illusion. The Chinese culture also, in spite of orderly government and rational rules, turned its back on sciences and preferred instead the consideration of human relations and urban life. But the emancipated and self-confident merchant (Protestants) combined new technology and expanded saving.

There are some scholars who treat the rapid growth of technology as the fulfilment of divine wishes and the coming of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Arend Theodoor van Leeuwen (b. 1918) of Netherlands, Harvey Cox of Harvard and Victor C. Ferkiss of Georgetown feel that modernisation is not simply because of Christianity, but is the actualization of the expectations of the prophets. Leeuwen, in his *Christianity and the World History*, notes that the problems created by technological societies are nothing but the *krisis* which in the biblical sense signifies 'judgment', 'justice', and 'salvation'. He treats the medical sciences (Penicillin injection) and the modern education (tablets of alphabets in the printing press) as the greatest carriers for modernity which brings the East and the West together.[13] Harvey Cox also considers the emergence of secular urban civilization and the breakdown of traditional religion as "epochal opportunities to be embraced", and not the sinister curses to be escaped.[14] Ferkiss takes the astronauts to be the culmination of a long process of social development. In them the technological man seems to have come of age.[15]

Whether the modern technological society is the fulfilment of the Gospel or not, one thing is clear, viz., that it has been the product of those countries which have subscribed to that faith. And the other truth, which also is beyond doubt, is that technology is the real metaphysics of the twentieth century (Ernst Jünger). The third truth found in the analysis of the predicament of man in the

modern society (by Marcuse) is that man has become unidimensional. The technological progress, extended to a whole system of domination and coordination, creates forms of life which appear to reconcile the forces opposing the system. Marcuse notes that the mental faculty of man is in danger of being obliterated.[16]

## VII

The technological society has pervaded over the capitalist, the communist, and the third world countries. The alienation of man, in somewhat different forms, is visible in all the three blocks. The young hippies are coming from the North Atlantic countries to India; sensitive scientists and thinkers are running away from the iron-curtains to capitalist areas (even at the risk of their lives) and the under-privileged young minds are being drained towards the West. The last instance might not be a good case for alienation but its ultimate result is bound to be the same.

The Indian society has a two-fold choice: that between the two ideologies of capitalism and communism (seen mostly as a tug-of-war) and the other between tradition and modernization. It seems that Indian leaders have carved out a path which goes through all these four hillocks. The socialistic pattern of society does accommodate both the virtues of capitalism and communism and yet tries to remain free from the evils of both. The elements of traditionalism and modernity also have a meeting-point on the Indian scene. In the spirit of *Mālavikāgnimitra* of Kālidāsa, this society does not take everything to be good simply because it is old, or unworthy because it is new. Great men accept the one or the other after due examination; only the fool has his understanding misled by the beliefs of others.[17]

To the outsiders the situation in India is baffling. Lady Barbara Ward sees the old traditional world dying but the new radical world is not yet born; [18] hence the gap between the rich and the poor nations is widening and giving scope for frustration. Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, on the other hand, finds India to be more modern than the most modern countries of the West. Awareness and technology - the two basic constituents of modernity- are said to be adapted by this traditional society with an amazing,

speed. The dynamic quality of freedom within the modernizing, process, for him, enables the process of reconciliation of the moral with the technological.[19] And to a formidable extent Indian society has reconciled modernity with tradition and technology with morality.

This type of reconciliation is discernible in the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi. In him we find the portrait of an unalienated man. Barbara Ward notes that 'It was rare for a country to achieve the national coherence that was achieved in India under the leadership of Gandhi in whom ancient wisdom and the modern idea of equality could coexist, and around whom old and new were able to unite.[20] Gandhi's rootings in the tradition and openness to the new are basically due to his two-fold faith, one in his own Hindu tradition and the other in the doctrine of Love in Christianity. Due to his unshaking faith in the true nature of the soul, as depicted in the *Gītā*, he could stand erect amidst turmoils and conflicts and due to his love of humanity he permitted technology as a means to eradicate physical misery and poverty.

The two concepts of *sthitaprajña* and *lokasaṁgraha* in the *Bhagavadgītā* form the basis of the Gandhian approach to social problems. The text tells us that when a man puts away all the desires of his mind and when his spirit is contented, the individual is called stable in intelligence. Further, he whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrows and is free from eagerness toward desires, he from whom passion, fear and rage have passed away, he is called a sage of settled intelligence.[21] And in Gandhi we find all these virtues. Fascinated by the qualities possessed by him, R.C. Zaehner compared him to Yudhiṣṭhira. He notes that "Yudhiṣṭhira was steadfast, self-restrained, chaste, patient, ever devoted to *dharma*, high-mettled; he honoured and gave hospitality to guests, relatives, servants and to all who went to him; truthful, generous, ascetic, brave, he was at peace with himself, wise and imperturbable; himself the soul of *dharma*, he never committed an injustice out of desire or yielding to impetuosity, out of fear, or to promote his own interests. The same was true of Mahatma Gandhi, the Yudhiṣṭhira of his age. He was in history what King Yudhiṣṭhira was in myth."[22]

The other factor of the *Gītā* that inspired Gandhi was that of the *lokasaṁgraha* (Chapter III, 20). Gandhi was fully conscious of social obligation. Therefore the sense of alienation could not arise in his scheme. And the loving concern of Gandhi even for the last man (*antyodaya*, in the spirit of Ruskin's "*Unto The Last*") kept him active till he breathed his last.

Gandhi's life depicts the portait of an unalienated man. It is a model for every frustrated person. Martin Luther King tried to imitate this model actively in the Western society and Vinoba has been trying to do the same in the Indian Society. It occurs to us that if the youth of the East and the West follow the model set by Gandhi, the sense of alienation in the midst of technological turmoil will diminish. If they are made acquainted with the spirit of the *Bhagavadgītā* in the earlier phases of their alienating contexts, the problem of alienation will not assume uncurable proportions. The man will cure himself without any external aid if he is told what essentially he is. If we are the children of Immortality (*amṛtasya putrāḥ*), no disaster on the phenomenal plane can inject within us the sense of alienation.

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# 8

# THE SOCIAL ORDER, ALIENATION AND EDUCATION

D. Raja Ganesan

## 1.1 *Survey of the Sources of Alienation in a Social Order*

For the purposes of this study 'Social Order' is conceptualised as follows:

It points to "ascertainable patterns of regular structure, process or change occurring in and resulting from human interaction." It includes "both regularities of....'pathologies or disorganisation' as well as those regularities of interaction that meet with the approval of...consensus in a society or are . functional."[1]

The normative dimension is in terms of 'social integration', especially the dimension of cultural integration; within it cultural integration represents the 'consistency of normative patterns with one another.[2]'

Again, the concept of social order used here has an 'utopian flavour' as well as an 'empirical content'. It refers to the social order as it is in India and as it should be. The 'discrepancy' between the two is a source of social tension. It calls for normative social change.

This situation of 'social tension' is the focus of this study. It consists of

> the disequilibrium of social strata, the ambiguity of social values, the uncertainty of social behaviour and the inaccurate performance of social functions which arise at the beginning of the modernisation process... (It) is the crisis of a society in transition from a traditional, predominantly agricultural state into a 'modern', predominently industrial state ... This situation may be understood as social

disintegration or, somewhat weaker, as 'social tension'. The notions of dis- and reintegration imply the existence of an integrated, established society and the possibility of the future existence of such a society but with a different structure. It implies, further, a period of non-integration which may be of different scope. That means that a given societal structure and given behavioral patterns lose their stringency before new values and new structural elements have become strong enough to establish a new social order.[3]

Of course, certain regions and sectors of the Indian society are already modernised. But in such cases there is found alienation between the *elite* and the rest of the community.

It is relevant to note here that a comprehensive programme of education for the total development of the child, with one fifth of the time devoted to cultural activities from Class I onwards is contemplated in India so as to avoid alienation from the traditional culture.[4] For the purposes of this study, the social order is analysed for sources of alienation in terms of Talcott Parsons' systems approach to the study of society.[5]

Accordingly, the potential sources of alienation in a social order can be broadly analysed as

1. The Culture
2. The Social structure and
3. The Personality of the Individual.

A fourth possible source of alienation (though it can be subsumed under 'Culture') may be referred to as the 'human condition'.[6]

'The human condition' refers to man's metaphysical predicament, his stature as a 'cosmic exile' vis-a-vis the universe. Its connotation includes the ultimate inscrutability of the moral order. It is, as Talcott Parsons puts it, "the problem of meaning, the problems of undeserved suffering and of evil; the discrepancies between expectation systems which are institutionalised in normative orders and the actual experiences people undergo." It includes the intransigence of the cosmos in whose bosom man has his being.

Historically, the horizon of man's command over nature — the cosmic order — has been steadily expanding. But it is an asymptotic process, to be carried on for ever.

While what has been understood and conquered is no longer a source of alienation, the unchartered regions are potential sources of alienation. In its boundary, thought flounders and man is baffled. It is the line from which man has to make the "leap of faith" whenever he takes decisions in 'ultimate' situations.

But the 'philosophical' belief system of every culture, its world-view, recognises and accommodates such contingencies. In the nature of things, such beliefs are 'non-empirical and residual'. In terms of modern science they are "beliefs which are neither verifiable nor disprovable by the procedures of science."[8] But, when it becomes possible to bring an item of belief under the scrutiny of the procedures of science and disprove it, that belief is no longer an article of faith, above the scrutiny of reason, but becomes a superstition. And superstition is a sign of alienation of a community from the world.[9]

By accepting superstitious beliefs which are by definition irrational, man is violating his nature as a rational being. This point has its implications for education, which is concerned, among other things, chiefly with 'the development of reason.'[10] We are suggesting in this paper that in so far as Vivekananda offered even propositions of religion as hypotheses that can be verified by everyone in his personal experience, an educational theory based on his philosophy has significant contributions to make in solving the problem of alienation.

Thus, alienation arising from the metaphysical dimension of the human condition can be considered under culture. Every culture may be placed at a point in a continuum ranging from mal-integration, through non-integration, to perfect integration. "A culture is integrated to the extent that its patterns of behaviour are interrelated."

Daniel Bell's critique of American culture can be quoted here as an illustration of mal-integration in a culture. Bell observes that the economy demands of the individual discipline, rationality and

differential allocation of rewards (on the basis of efficiency), the state promises equality, and culture encourages individuality and unrestrained exploration of experiences.[12]

The relation between education and industry, Kneller points out, is an instance of non-integration. The two are major foci of American culture. But the curriculum is not geared to industry; nor has industry taken the initiative to sponsor appropriate educational developments.[13]

Two points can be cited as potential sources of alienation in the contemporary cultural *milieu* in India. The cyclic conception of time and the *karma* doctrine are key elements in the world-view upheld by the traditional Indian culture.[14]

'Living' in the present rather than in the past and 'planning' about the future, accepting fixed schedules, observing punctuality, and believing in man's ability to learn and exert considerable control over his environment[15] are traits of modernity. The Nation is committed to modernisation. There seems to be a contradiction here between tradition and modernity.

We propose to critically examine the view that a reconciliation has been achieved between them by Swami Vivekananda and also to build a theory of education on the basis of such an attempt at integrating tradition and modernity.

It must be added that "no culture ..is ever wholly integrated... Since integration is never complete and since culture is not rationally planned but the product of a long and complex history, every culture contains inconsistencies."[16] Thus culture itself becomes a source of alienation.

The social structure as such can also be a source of alienation. While discussing the social structure as a source of alienation, the cultural element present in it, must be discounted. This point will be made clearer while discussing an illustration.

Alienation due to social structure may be explained as follows:[17] The social structure may be conceived as consisting of institutions. It can be analysed in terms of roles, which the individuals have to play.

It is well-known that an individual has to play a number of roles. Consistency across the variety of roles an individual is required to occupy is a *cultural* problem. But matching the roles and traits of an individual is a *social* problem. Mismatching between the roles and traits of an individual is a potential source of alienation. However, if the social structure is open, highly differentiated and conducive to high mobility, mismatching between roles and traits can be minimised. A highly differentiated social structure may provide a variety of roles and each individual may find a role congruent with his constellation of traits. Of course, it also depends on the way the roles have been organised. An open structure and conduciveness to mobility will enable the individual to change quickly from roles that do not fit his traits.

The nature of the social structure should be conducive to mobility and the promotion of cultural values. For example, American society has an image of an open structure. The traditional Indian society, on the other hand, is described as a relatively closed structure. 'Caste' has been the critical factor (of course, it is a moot point whether caste is a cultural phenomenon arising from the traditional world-view or whether it is a social institution, a historical accident, without any sanctions or foundation in the traditional world-view. Vivekananda subscribes to the latter point of view).

The degree of differentiation in the social structure is again an indication of the level of social development. Social development is dependent on the rate and stage of normative social change. To the extent that Vivekananda's conception of man is conducive to mobility the educational theory derived from it might be considered significant in minimising alienation due to social structure.

But, mere differentiation of the social structure into very many roles may not by itself minimise alienation. How the roles have been meaningfully organised is a question of importance. This point can be clarified with the help of an illustration.

While discussing alienation from work, Marx makes a favourable comparison of the mode of production in the ancient Indian village community with that in the modern factory. In the former,

the craftsman is the master of his tools and his time. In the latter, the worker is not. The former is an instance of the '*sociae* division of labour' the latter one, of the '*manufacturing* division of labour'. In the social division of labour the mode of production *per se* does not engender alienation. That is, the social structure as articulation in the institution of work is not an alienating factor.

But in so far as the craftsman inherits his trade as a Hobson's choice and is locked into it for life by the institution of caste, alienation due to mismatching between role and traits, is irremediable. One critic of Marx even states that the latter is presumably less intense than the former.

If a craftsman in the ancient Indian village community was alienated, his alienation had its source in the culture inasmuch as caste had its sanction in the culture. (It may be reiterated here that Vivekananda disagrees with this view). He did not suffer from any alienation in the work process. The industrial worker on the other hand, is free to sell his labour where he can, but he is engaged in a fragmented work process which is intensely alienating. The latter alienation is inherent in the social-occupational structure of work.

Again, Paul Goodman's 'Growing up Absurd'[19] brings home the importance of the organisation of social roles as against mere multiplication and fractionation of roles. He indicts the American society as not providing children and youth with meaningful, rewarding and integrated roles that cater to 'basic human nature.'

It must be added that the scope for improving the design of social systems in the direction of eliminating alienation is virtually limitless. However, in the same breath, it must also be stated — paradoxical as it may sound — that alienation can be eliminated from the social structure but asymptotically. This is because social organisation will have to accommodate incompatible human needs.

The *personality* of the individual is also a potential source of alienation. The analytical distinction between culture, social structure and personality as different sources of alienation, must be reiterated here. However, personality is not only a source of alienation by itself but is also invariably one of the poles of the phenomenon of alienation, whatever be the original *source* of alienation — culture,

social structure or the human self. Alienation engendered by culture and social structure is eventually manifested only in and through the personality of an individual. Again, from the perspective of education vis-a-vis alienation, personality is the exclusive locus for working out a solution to the problem of alienation.

Before discussing personality as a source of alienation, the distinction between the concepts, 'individual', 'character' and 'personality' must be clarified. 'Personality' is the most inclusive of the three and thus has the widest connotation. It subsumes 'character' and 'individual'. 'Character' refers to the modifiable component as against the congenitally fixed one within personality.[20] The term 'Individual' refers to a human organism which has certain 'basic aspirations for recognition, desire for companionship, etc. which are unique to the organism. These 'basic human needs' have "attributes of their own, not determined by the social structure, cultural patterns or socialisation processes."[21]

These basic human needs are autonomous and partially incompatible with one another. To the extent the autonomous, basic human needs are incompatible they are a source of alienation. Again, they are a source of *irreducible* alienation.[22] Such a feeling of alienation arises at the metaphysical level. Creativity, commitment and discipline are the solutions to it. It may be mentioned here that Swami Vivekananda has emphasised commitment (social effort)[23] and discipline (that is, integration at the level of character).[24]

'Character' can also be a source of alienation when it is developed in such a way that only certain aspects of personality are developed at the cost of others. David Riesman's 'tradition-directed', 'inner-directed' and 'other-directed' character types are examples of alienation engendered at the characterological level.[25]

Finally, personality, considered as the sum total of basic human nature, congenital dispositions and charaterological modifications is also a distinct source of alienation. Specifically, when the characterological modification sought to be developed in the personality is incompatible with its congenital disposition, alienation is engendered. To the extent that the education imparted to an individual does not

recognise and cater to his 'individual differences' (this phrase is used here in the psychological sense in which it is used in education), it contributes to alienation. While developing Swami Vivekananda's educational theory, his recognition of the importance of catering to individual differences must therefore be considered from this angle.

These are the 'internal sources' of alienation. It must be reiterated here that personality is also the locus of alienation engendered by culture and social structure in so far as it has internalised the mal-integrated patterns of a culture and subjects itself to the contradictory role demands in a social structure.

Thus, culture, social structure and personality can be viewed as distinct sources of alienation in a social order. The level of integration of a culture, differentiation and mode of organisation of roles in the social structure, incompatible basic human needs, characterological modifications which are violative of basic, universal human nature/needs, as also genetically engendered individual differences in the personality, are the specific conceptual regions within each source where we can look for the genesis of alienation.

1.2 *How Alienation arises in a Social Order*

The sources of alienation as analysed in the previous section have only the *potential* to engender alienation. For a complete understanding of the phenomenon, the causes, the dynamics and the modes of resolution of alienation must be studied.

The cause of alienation refers to that specific event that triggers the dynamic of the alienation experience. In general terms, 'thwarting' is the 'psychological' event in which every instance of the alienation-experience begins. It is assumed that for an individual, alienation develops within the context of an ongoing relationship between himself and some other entity — a person, group, society or culture. The experience of alienation essentially involves a disillusionment process. It may be stated that "the experience of alienation is brought about through a decline in the quality of one's relationship within a particular context and this perceived deterioration evokes dissatisfaction with the present situation and a yearning for something better which has been either lost or, as yet unattained." As the subject becomes aware of his simultaneous proximity to, yet

dislike of, a particular contextual referent, his recognition of this discrepancy will lead to frustration. The persistence of frustration, arising from the 'constraint' imposed by an unsatisfactory context, should activate motivation for action — for example towards dissociating oneself from the context, searching for alternatives or aggression.

Social change, the context of the study, may lead to 'thwarting' when the individual is trapped in a situation which falls within the region of intersection of two different social institutions which are undergoing change. One of them may demand adherence to old norms in action while the other may demand the adoption of the individual to new norms.

To give a concrete example involving education: A first generation college educand who is encouraged by the norms of his poor group culture towards inter-caste marriage is heading for alienation inasmuch as his uneducated parents, to whom he is psychologically close, cannot brook it.

1.3 *Classifying the Varieties of Alienation*

Classification of the varieties of alienation can be made on the basis of a survey of the positions of typical thinkers who have dealt with the theme, Hegel, Marx and Sartre.[27]

For Hegel, alienation is nothing but 'developmental estrangement'. It is a phase in the growth and development of the individual, to be overcome by '*bildung*' or education/enculturation. According to Hegel, alienation can be completely overcome. But, Hegel has not reckoned with the contingencies of a decadent culture and 'sick' institutions.

Marx seems to over-emphasize the aspects Hegel had overlooked, viz., that alienation is due to the institutional structure of a capitalist society. For Marx such a social structure is a historical phenomenon to be overcome by revolutionary praxis. In the millennium after revolution, according to Marx, there will not be any alienation at all.

Sartre holds that alienation is inherent in the very structure of human consciousness. It lurks in the very attempts to convert existence into a permanent ontological hybrid of being-in-itself and being-for-itself. This attempt is foredoomed to failure because of the irreducible ambivalence of being. In other words, Sartre's

conception of alienation derives from autonomous and totally inompatible basic human needs. It cannot be overcome. "To be a self is to be a stranger," sustaining being in perpetual tension. The response to such a radical alienation is to summon the 'courage to be'.

The evolutionists and pragmatists do not seem to have dealt at length with the concept under the self-same nomenclature of alienation;[28] but their emphasis on 'creativity' and 'problem solving' respectively can be valid responses to alienation.

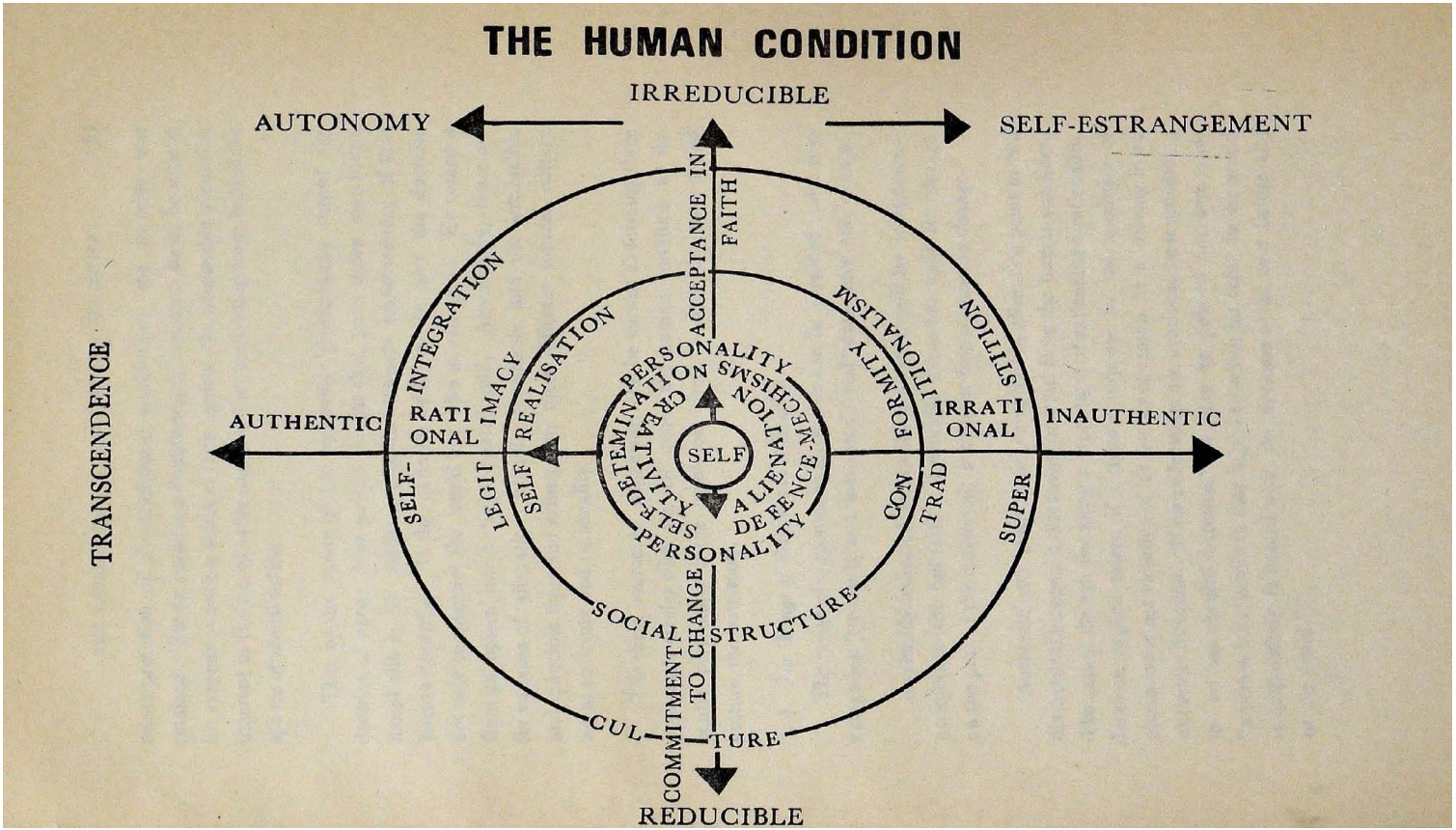
The varieties of alienation may first be classified into two major categories, irreducible and reducible. The former calls for 'acceptance' either by summoning the courage to be or 'residing' in the shelter and serenity of faith. Here it must be added that Vivekananda too concedes that "belief in a personal God is not at all indispensable." But he has pointed out that faith in a personal God makes it easier to bear irreducible alienation.

For reducible alienation the appropriate solution is 'change' — either of self or of society depending on the legitimacy or otherwise of the demands of social institutions on individuals.

It must be added here that the borderline between reducible and irreducible alienation is *not* sharp and thin. It is a region of subtle shading often with fluctuating boundaries. 'Creativity' mediates between them.

At the next level, the classification scheme is applied to sources of alienation. Here, the irreducible alienation at the metaphysical level of the human condition is subsumed under culture. It is better for ordinary men and women to adopt the same stance against irreducible alienation as it prevails in one's cultural tradition. Of course, such acceptance is provisional and subject to the scrutiny of reason. One may be able, by virtue of one's creativity, to 'reduce' the region of irreducible alienation through innovations.

For example, Swami Vivekananda found that the doctrine of *karma*, as it came to be interpreted in the culture of his society, had degenerated into a defence mechanism — of rationalising psychic inertia, an alibi for the legitimation of the closed social structure and the root of a pervasive superstitious fatalism. In his creative


THE HUMAN CONDITION
IRREDUCIBLE
AUTONOMY
SELF-ESTRANGEMENT
TRANSCENDENCE
AUTHENTIC
INAUTHENTIC
IRRATIONAL
RATIONAL
SELF
PERSONALITY
SOCIAL STRUCTURE
CULTURE
ACCEPTANCE IN FAITH
INTEGRATION
REALISATION
FORMALISM
SITUATION
SELF-
LEGITIMACY
SELF
CONFORMITY
TRADITIONALISM
SUPER
CREATIVE SELF-DETERMINATION
ALIENATION MECHANISMS
SELF-ALIENATION
DEPERSONALIZATION
COMMITMENT TO CHANGE
REDUCIBLE

reinterpretation of the traditional world-view, the doctrine was retained. But he made it a double-edged weapon: *karma* became in his exegesis at once a shield of faith against the irreducible alienation inherent in the moral order and also the motivating force behind the sphere of moral action.

Thus by the power of his creativity Vivekananda turned the doctrine of *karma* from a dead weight that pulls down man into a moral ally in his spiritual progress towards transcendence of that human condition. In the parlance of Marx, he used the doctrine not only to interpret the world but also to change it. He turned it from an 'opium' into a 'sugar-coated pill'. Accordingly, there are six varieties of alienation, broadly classifiable into the irreducible and reducible types and arising from three different sources, culture social structure and personality.

The three sources of alienation can be viewed as forming three concentric circles with the self under the human condition as the centre; personality is the innermost circle, society the second and culture, the outermost.

1.4 *The Range of Responses to Alienation*

The range of responses to alienation can be classified under four categories: 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' and 'acceptance' and 'change'.

As already indicated, irreducible alienation calls for acceptance—acceptance with full faith. Reducible alienation calls for 'change' on the part of the individual; it calls for commitment to change.

'Authentic' and 'inauthentic' categories of alienation point to two diametrically opposite directions for 'exit' from the human condition. The axis of the exit lies along a continuum of rationality-irrationality. In more explicit terms: if a man's response to the condition of alienation is not violative of his facutly of reason, he is striving in an authentic direction. If his endeavours are irrational, he is proceeding in an 'inauthentic direction.' It may be pointed out here that "a person is authentic in that degree to which his being in the world is unqualifiedly in accord with the givenness of his own nature and of the world."[29]

Reason is one of the necessary conditions for an authentic response. An authentic response must also optimise the scope of total freedom in the social order.

Eventual transcendence of the human condition in all its dimensions is the goal of authentic striving. It "amounts to the resolution of the subject-object split, the self-world dichotomy ... as one approaches the stage of letting go to the suchness of Being without striving against it, one is attaining full authenticity." Again "authenticity does not call for one to abandon the familiar world, rather to recognise he is very much in the world indeed, while yet recognising that the famillar world is our incomplete arena for the human experience ... . this is the meaning of the frequently used phrase 'He was *in* but not *of* the world.'"[30] Transcendence may be described as being free from the human condition.

In each of the three dimensions of the human condition — which are also the sources of alienation — different concepts mediate between alienation and freedom.

In the dimension of personality, it is 'discipline'. Discipline consists in choosing a hierarchy of values for structuring character. It is the shaping of the various tendencies inherent in man into a positive, coherent pattern. It is the stage of 'self determination' in the dynamics of personality development.[31] Character as the modifiable component in personality has significance for education.

Now to consider social structure: Here the mediating concept between alienation and freedom is 'legitimacy'.[32]

In the third dimension of culture the mediating concept is 'integration' — integration of human experience, individual as well as collective. This discussion can be summarised in the form of a diagram.

1.5 *Integration of the Positive Responses into a Conception of an Ideal Character vis-a vis the Problem of Alienation*

The direction, namely authenticity, and axis — rationality — of the range of positive responses to alienation can be integrated into the concept of the 'autonomous' character. Thus the concept of

'autonomy' consists of rationality and authenticity. To some extent they overlap.[33]

The 'autonomous' are not necessarily rebels. They are 'those who on the whole are capable of conforming to the behavioural norms of their society, but are *free to choose* whether to conform or not.'[34]

The freedom implied in their concept of autonomy is not the freedom of anarchy. In that case authenticity would degenerate into eccentricity. It is freedom tempered with reason. To be autonomous in a normative sense means that one acts as a rational person, in accordance with rationally justifiable norms whose justifiability one recognises and accepts for oneself precisely because and in so far as one is rational.[35]

This freedom is derived from an enlarged *awareness* of alienation perspectives on one's own situation. Riesman rightly points out that the greater the stage of social development the greater the possibility of varieties of experience and the greater the leisure to contemplate change.[36] This line of thinking reinforces the imperative for normative social change in the Indian context — towards modernisation. Choosing the appropriate life-style after deliberation on a wide range of alternatives — and expressing it in one's own choices, is in the direction of authenticity. That is, one is acting authentically if one is expressing one's own self in action. Appropriateness consists of rationality and the maxim of the moral law.

The idea of 'one's own self' involved in authenticity needs further clarification.[37] The 'self' may be 'the self as it is' or an 'ideal self'. Here again, the function of education is to cultivate the 'ideal self' out of the actual self.

The hypothesis of this study is that if the actual self is cultivated rationally through lifelong interaction with its moral environment, it can find scope for expressing uniqueness, exercising its historical role of contributing towards progress in the direction of normative social change — modernisation in the context of this study — and simultaneously gain in the direction of transcendence.

Again, such cultivation need not involve alienation from the world-view of the traditional Indian culture. In other words, the autonomous character need not reject *in toto* the world-view upheld by the traditional culture — especially those elements in it which are related to irreducible alienation. They can be retained as articles of faith in so far as they do not contradict reason. Thus, education that aims at autonomous character is likely to provide the solution of the problem of alienation.

To the extent that the 'autonomous character' implies the exercise of rationally scrutinising contradictory human needs, the legitimacy of the role demands and the consistency of the elements of traditional culture (with his personal experience) can also be hoped for. He is leading an authentic existence within the human condition given to him in terms of his historical and socio-cultural environment. Whether he accepts, modifies or rejects the tendencies, or demands a world-view of his culture is beside the point. What is important is that his awareness should 'arise' before he accepts, modifies or rejects them.

1.6 *The Context of the Study*

The concept of the 'autonomous' character is the ideal educational solution to the problem of alienation wherever it may arise. But the concept is only a framework for an educational theory. The content of the theory should, however, be derived from the concrete socio-historical situation for which education is a preparatory endeavour.

The modernisation endeavour in contemporary India is the context for the study from which the content of such an educational theory must be derived. The modernisation process is a cause of alienation. The cause works through the culture, the social structure as also the personality and engenders alienation through all the three sources. To the extent that modern values and attitudes are not compatible with tradition, modernisation is likely to be a source of alienation. It is widely alleged that the following elements in the traditional world-view are incompatible with modernisation: immanent conception of God, cyclic conception of time, and doctrines of *māyā*, *karma*, rebirth and caste.[37] Acceptance of tradition involves belief in these doctrines.

The following are the traits of a modern man:[39]

1. openness to new experience.
2. readiness for social change in terms of social organisation.
3. readiness to form opinions on issues which arise not only in one's immediate environment but also outside it, also tolerance for a variety of opinions.
4. not merely having opinion but being energetic in acquiring facts and information on which to base them.
5. being oriented more to the present and the future than to the past, and accepting fixed time schedules willingly.
6. belief in man's ability to learn about and control his environment, and advancing one's own goals in life.
7. orientation to long-term planning both in public affairs and in private life.
8. belief in calculability or trust in a reasonably lawful world under control.
9. valuing technical skills and accepting them as a basis for distribution of rewards.
10. educational and vocational aspiration.
11. awareness and respect for the dignity of others especially of weaker and subordinate persons.
12. understanding the logic of the rational organisation of the production process.

Two more traits that are deemed relevant are universalism and optimism.

### 1.7 *The Source of Solution*

Swami Vivekananda is deemed the point of confluence of Eastern and modern wisdom. He preached a 'religion of work'. He appreciated the greatness of nations and had a vision of man, founded on the bedrock of faith in the Indian conception of man, but

summing up in himself all the best qualities in the various national cultures.[40]

He began his philosophical career with scepticism. He was also a powerful personality who had an acute 'need for an internally generated coherence of experience.' When he was confronted with the traditional world-view, he had a freer relationship to it. He incorporated elements of the tradition discriminatingly so as to form a coherent world-view.[41] Once he had discovered such a coherent view, he went about preaching it. It is hence postulated that his conception of man can accommodate and sustain autonomy, tradition and modernity.

An educational theory built on such a conception of man would provide a solution to the problem of alienation in the context of social change in contemporary India.

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9

# THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION IN HINDUISM WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DHARMA AS AN ETHICAL CONCEPT

SOMEN DAS

In this paper, I will attempt to deal with the problem of alienation in Hinduism in terms of *dharma*, conceived as an ethical concept. I have made an attempt to understand the problem of alienation within our own socio-religious condition in India. I am aware of the multifarious meanings of *dharma* and V. P. Varma has rightly stated, "*Dharma* is perhaps the most comprehensive concept in the entire history of Hindu thought."[1] For this paper, my main focus is on the ethical import and implications of *dharma*. Secondly, it is important to remember that it will not be possible for me to discuss the long history and evolution of *dharma*. Consequently, I will confine myself to the fundamental thrust of the concept in modern times, and its concomitant impact on the issue of alienation. References to the past will be made only as a background. Thirdly, I am aware of its various usages in the six orthodox and three heterodox schools. But in this paper I will be concerned with the mainline thinking prevalent in India. Having stipulated these limitations, I would now proceed to present my basic thesis which is that the concept of *dharma* at one level has been the cause of alienation while at the other level has been the cause of overcoming alienation. It is this paradox of the concept which I will investigate and endeavour to substantiate.

Before we proceed any further it is important to indicate the meaning and importance of the concept of alienation. The centrality

and significance of the problem of alienation is brought out very well in the words of Robert A. Nisbet, a leading sociologist, who said, "If in renaissance thought, it was the myth of reasonable man which predominated; if in the eighteenth century it was natural man; and in the nineteenth century, economic or political man; it is by no means unlikely that for our own age it is alienated or mal-adjusted man who will appear to later historians as the key figure of the twentieth century thought."[2] We know to a certain extent the social, political, economic and psychological reasons for the reality of alienation in the age of science and technology in which we live. In this paper we are seeking to understand the problem from a religio-ethical perspective. Alienation, from this perspective, is the result of an understanding of a concept which has created a state of mind that finds the social order rather disruptive and dislocating.

The concept of *dharma* is central and crucial in the total life of India. It is pervasive and has permeated all levels of life. It has supported, sustained and shaped the Indian ethos. It has decisively and definitively nurtured and nourished the kind of situation obtaining in the country. Its importance has been expressed by many scholars. Radhkrishnan says in *Religion and Society*, "It is of protean significance."[3] In another place he comments, "Next to the category of reality, that of *dharma* is the most important concept of Indian thought."[4] Therefore, it is necessary to consider its impact on the Indian Society in the context of alienation and its resolution.

At the human and historic level, *dharma* has been conceived as a code of conduct or a mode of life, understood with reference to the need of the harmonious functioning of society. It is not possible or necessary to deal with all the varied expressions of the concept within the Indian *milieu*. For our purposes, we will limit ourselves to the problem of alienation in terms of *varṇadharma* and *svadharma*. This is the level of *dharma* which I can characterise as deontological, meaning obligations and duties. It has the character of the imperative. This kind of thinking accents on the scheme of life in which duties are performed and actions are undertaken in conformity with *dharma*. Therefore, the ancient Indians ordered and organised life, both at the individual and corporate levels, according to this princi-

ple. One of them was *varṇadharma*. We will deal with this *dharma* first because this was a strong determinant of the individual and collective life of the people.

The Hindu pundits conceived of the caste-structure as best suited to maintain social cohesion and harmony of the heterogeneous population of India. Consequently, for good and for bad, this became the basic social pattern of Indian life. The whole of Indian society is grounded and founded on this age-old system. It is not necessary for me in this paper to portray the structure of caste as it is very well known to you. But I would like to indicate and suggest the ways in which it engendered alienation and thereby endangered the life of the majority of the people at the operational or empirical level.

Generally, it is believed that the system originally began with all good intentions. It was a serious attempt to incorporate everybody into the society without total absorption or complete annihilation as it has happened in other parts of the world. Scholars maintain that *varṇadharma* enabled the preservation of Indian society and culture in spite of all the vicissitudes of its long history.

Basically, the system is based on heredity and the rules about endogamy and exogamy. The structural distance between the various castes was defined in terms of pollution and purity. Within this matrix, strict rules were stipulated about commensality and connubiality. There was differential treatment meted out to the various castes according to their position in the hierarchy. In the process of its evolution, it institutionalised, systematised and legitimised inequality and discrimination on the basis of birth and heredity. There was a relative recognition of the castes except the Brahmins who enjoyed an eminent status. The people in the lower castes are always aspiring to be born in the highest caste in the next life. We can understand the system basically within the deontological mode. The *dharmāśastras* and *dharmasūtras* stipulated stringent duties and obligations for the various castes. Each had their predetermined injunctions (*vidhis*) and prohibitions (*niṣedhas*). The *Manusmṛti* is one among them which uses the concept of *dharma* in this sense.[5]

The worst sufferer in this context were the ones who came to be known as the untouchables, the *mlecchas* — the wretched of the earth. They were not eliminated absolutely but the recognition that they received was extremely limited. They were relegated to the lowest status in the Indian society in a systematic and sustained way.

Due to modernisation and the recent independence of India, the plight of the untouchables is considered to be improving. Indians like Gokhale and Gandhi fought relentlessly for the uplift of these people. Gandhi, among a few others, articulated the conscience of India on this issue. He called them *Harijans*. For him, this system was a blot on Hinduism. He later said, "I do not want to be reborn but if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable..."[6] But unfortunately, in spite of all the provisions for the security of Harijans, atrocities against them are still rampant. Rage and outrage have been expressed against the injustices but they have not brought about sufficient change in the outlook and attitude of the people.

Modern anthropologists, sociologists and ethnologists have made extensive empirical studies about the condition of the caste-system in the many villages and towns of India. Their general consensus is that the stratification is not as rigid as it was conceived in the past. On the contrary, they have discovered an active mobility within the system. It must be remembered that 'caste' is at best an ideal nomenclature. It is a kind of a mnemonic or a taxonomic device, providing a ready-made scheme of classification. In fact, operationally, it works not on the *varṇa* model but on the *jāti* model. The former takes into account only the attributional (ritual) factor. In the structural sense, *jāti* is defined by Bernard S. Cohn as a "system of actual or potential networks of affinal and cognatic kinship ties."[7] Stephen Tyler maintains,

> The system of *jāti* is another expression of that universal Indian mode of thought which not only maintains that there is a relativity of human potentiality but also insists that differences among humans are attributable to inherent degree of purity and pollution.[8]

Mention has already been made to mobility within the structure Srinivas has made a study of this phenomenon which he designates as 'Sanskritization'. For him it is a process by which low Hindu caste, tribal or other groups attempt to approximate the life-pattern and belief-system of a high and frequently, "twice-born" caste. It is important to note that this process of Sanskritization which brings about change and mobility is within the all-pervasive social structure of India. Essentially, it is an affirmation and not a negation of the system. It brings about only a positional and not a structural change.

How do we understand the system in the context of alienation? Basically, *varṇadharma* engendered alienation. This alienation was of fundamental nature. It divided the society into numerous fragments and fractured the life of the people both internally and externally. Radhakrishnan maintained that the fourfold division of the Indian society is for the purpose of the holding together of the human race in its evolution. Obviously, this holding together was not on the basis of equality as it developed in our history. The concept of *lokasaṅgraha* was propounded in ancient India, particularly in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* but it came in direct conflict with the caste system. The idea of welfare was confined to a limited segment of the Indian society.

Among the Indian scholars, there is a clear recognition of the differential norms on which this system is built. Radhakrishnan asserted, "In the natural hierarchy there cannot be one moral standard for all."[9] According to him, nature cannot be rushed and therefore the caste system became necessary. This kind of thinking postulated the ethics of pluralistic morality as maintained by Benoy Kumar Sirkar.[10] This kind of thinking has brought about alienation of people who are made to believe that they are so very different that they are incapable of doing something which only others can do. It has inculcated in the people, the spirit of elitism, heirarchy, submission and even of resignation. Yogendra Singh rightly says, "Hierarchy was engrained not only in the system of the caste and sub-caste stratification but also in the Hindu concepts of human nature, occupational life cycles and the moral duties."[11]

At the level of human nature alienation becomes intrinsic where a person becomes alienated within oneself. At this juncture, a brief discussion on *svadharmas* would be useful.

The concept of *svadharma* was related to *varṇadharma*. It was the internal and subjective principle which had to do with the individual life of the people. The ancient pundits of India not only stratified society as a whole but also engaged their minds to the task of stratifying the individual's life internally. *Svadharma* is a principle by which this was done. *Svadharma* in turn, is based on the concept of *guṇas* which I do not need to elaborate here. According to this kind of thinking people are endowed with three kinds of dispositions or tendencies from birth namely, *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*. There is a hierarchy involved here also. It was believed that each caste was endowed predominantly with one of the *guṇas*. They do not seem to perceive these qualities in various mutations and permutations. This is rather a static understanding of human nature. It is possible for a person to change the combinations of the tendencies with which he is born. It is true that a person is endowed with certain natural traits but with education, it is possible for that person to change his character and personality. Human nature is not fated or deterministic as the theory of *guṇas* suppose. In such a situation there is a subtle kind of social conditioning in the negative in which you are made to believe that you are something which you may not be. In this sense alienation beeomes intrinsic — one is made to negate one's own essence. This alienation becomes crucial when we realise that one's *svadharma* is decided on the basis of this and concomitantly one's position in the caste hierarchy. The three are integrally interrelated in the determination of a person and not just his position in society.

At this juncture we need to ask what constitutes alienation? It is not self-evident. Fundamentally, alienation occurs whenever and wherever there is a negation of freedom and responsibility. Freedom constitutes one's true essence. One can be a person only because one is free. Freedom belongs to the transcendence and mystery of the human person. We understand freedom as one's capacity to decide and act voluntarily and volitionally in the ultimate sense. It means that one can decide one's own decision and act on

that decision although there are other factors and forces at work in that decision. Freedom is the very condition of man and therefore it has to do both with one's being and doing. Somebody has rightly said that moral life or habits are not motor habits with automatic reflexes. They are free, intentional and deliberate.

Another factor that constitutes alienation is the contradiction of responsibility. In our time, the normatively human is conceived in terms of responsibility besides other factors. It is rightly maintained that the capacity to respond, to govern one's action in accordance with decision and purposes, to be accountable for what one does are part of the human as against the animal mode. Now we need to ask how much freedom and responsibility is exercised within the *guṇas-svadharma-varṇadharma* syndrome. It may not negate freedom and responsibility absolutely but inherently such a combination of concepts cannot maximise freedom and responsibility. In such a situation, the human powers have been atrophied, they become "thingified" used as means and not ends in themselves and has affected adversely the spirit and quality of the Indian people. They are considered as objects and not subjects. Man becomes fungus or cauliflower as Sartre would put it, rigidly determined by the conditions of birth, heredity and environment. Life loses its authenticity and becomes a mere 'construction' of the society. When this social stratification is internalised, this hierarchy becomes entrenched and ingrained. In such a process, one is alienated from oneself and loses one's selfhood or personhood. It becomes a problem of identity crisis because one is confronted with the preservation of one's humanity and individuality. In this scheme of life, human beings are considered prisoners of causality and determined by antecedent causes in the absolute sense. We are "thrust into existence" in the midst of all kinds of determinations but that cannot and should not inhibit or prohibit the exercise of freedom and responsibility, lack of which is indicative of alienation.

Fundamentally, we can affirm that the *guṇas-svadharmavarṇadharma* combination alienated a person structurally, systematically and intrinsically. One was alienated from oneself, from others and from the total scheme of life. The question now we need to ask is how inherent is this kind of thinking in the concept of *dharma* itself. To a great extent such a historical phenomenon could be interpreted in

terms of the exigencies and contingencies of time. We can also understand the process to a great extent, within the categories of Peter-Berger — externalisation, objectivisation, and internalisation.[12] In the beginning, the Indian society was the product of the Hindu mind but gradually, it attains to such objectivity and facticity, that the Hindus become the product of the society, which they had originally planned and ordered. Berger calls this process as man's "great propensity for order" which is a kind of "prototypical human gestures."[13] Whatever explanations we may give, we have to concede that at the historical level, or using the spatial language of horizontal, *dharma* functioned as the mode of alienation in India. How can the same concept serve as the cause of the resolution of alienation? It is to that we will turn our attention now.

*Dharma* is the principle of overcoming alienation. For this we need to remember its Sanskrit root, *dhṛ*, which means to hold and uphold or to support or sustain. It is the norm which sustains the universe, the principle of a thing in virtue of which it is what it is. It is indicative of the ontological foundation of morality and ethics. From the time of the Vedas, this is a definitive and a decisive assertion in Hindu ethics. It is reaffirmed in modern times.[14] *Dharma* indicates the cosmic order which imposes on man a universal norm or principle. It suggests that 'is' and the 'ought' are not disjunctive or disjointed. The cosmos is integrally and intrinsically related to the nomos. It is suggestive of the fact that morality is woven into the texture or structure of reality. On the basis of this understanding of *dharma*, the modern Indian writers are able to postulate an eternal moral law. Balbir Singh, in his book, *Foundations of Indian Philosophy* states, "Moral law is central to the conception of reality in India."[15] He repeats it in his book, *The Conceptual Framework of Indian Philosophy*. It is basic to the constitution of reality as conceived in India.

Mahatma Gandhi was an ardent advocate of *dharma* as the moral law. Much of his political and social activity was prompted by this conviction. He believed in the ordered governance of the universe which gives rock-bottom unity to the latter.[16] Radhakrishnan was a serious exponent of *dharma* as the moral law. For him it is the warp and woof of all that lives and moves. He categorically asserted in his work *An Idealist View of Life*.

> If the authority of the moral law is to be justified, if the ultimateness of man as a moral being is to be vindicated, the world process which has resulted in the function of human personalities has significance and the structure of things is spiritual. [17]

Rabindranath Tagore put it in a poetic way and said in his speech on, Nationalism, "The moral law, which is the greatest discovery of man is the discovery of the wonderful truth that man becomes all the truer the more he realises it in others."[18] This affirmation of the moral law of the universe is the affirmation of the ontological foundation of morality. According to modern Hindu ethics one's ontology forms and informs what one does in the world. The former shapes and supports how one decides and acts. Vision and action go together. Radhakrishnan maintains,

> The question is inevitable whether the ethical ideal is a mere dream or has the backing of the universe. Is man ploughing a lonely furrow in the dark, or is there a transcending purpose that is cooperating with him in his quest for ideals, securing him against the ultimate defeat of his plans? Are the values mere empirical accidents, creations at best of the human mind or do they reveal to us an order of being which is more than merely human, a spiritual reality which is the source of the significance of what happens in the temporal process?[19]

How does this kind of orientation cause the overcoming of alienation? In this context, a person finds an objective and wider ethos and meaning. This gives him an ontological grounding for morality and ethics. He is able to transcend the immanent dimension of morality. It gives him a cosmic significance to one's decision and action. He is not lost in the relativity of history. In such a situation, the moral agent cannot easily become a captive of his own context, suffering from what Berger calls, "a myopia of historical and social vision."[20] In the context of this higher *dharma*, morality cannot become unduly subjective, individualistic and relativistic. It would be possible to avoid what Robert Bellah calls, "the disruption between impulse and control"[21] or as Martin Marty says, "to provide

one with a ballast which puts life on an even keel."[22] Because of this objectivity and transcendence, we cannot become inordinately emotional. *Dharma* would enable us to overcome alienation when we realise that moral life is both visceral and cerebral. In this cosmic *milieu* one does not suffer from alienation from others, from nature and the whole universal process. At this juncture I would like to discuss briefly about unity.

One very important content of *dharma* is the principle of unity. Modern Indian scholars postulate oneness of all as a normative content of *dharma*. They conceived of the concept as a principle of unity, which is both a fact of the universe and a goal of humanity. This understanding is intimately associated with the etymological derivation of the word, *dharma*, which is holding and upholding the interrelatedness of all that is.

Gandhi mentioned this principle of unity frequently in his exposition of *satyāgraha*. For him, this was an article of faith. On the basis of the potential unity of humanity he could make an appeal for non-violence. People are existentially divided but essentially are in unity. That gives meaning to our search for unity and harmony. Gandhi said, "None can be born untouchable, as all are sparks of the same fire."[23] Thus we realise that at the meta-ethical level, the notion of *dharma* has been very much formed and informed by non-dualistic thinking. It has very much shaped the meaning and content of *dharma*, understood from an ethical perspective. It is not possible here to enter into a detailed discussion about dualism and non-dualism. But it is important to mention that excessive preoccupation with radical kind of dualism has led to an arbitrary dichotomy and consequent alienation between man and man and between man and nature. To a great extent, many of the problems faced as a result of the ecological imbalance and the environmental collapse, could be attributed to the one-sided view of reality, which has been predominantly analytical and radically dualistic. Therefore, I would agree with Robert M. Pirsig when he says,

> We take a handful of sand from the endless landscape of awareness around us and call that handful of sand the world.....Classical understanding is concerned with the piles and the basis of sorting out and interrelating them. Romantic

> understanding is directed toward the handful of sand before the sorting begins. Both are valid ways of looking at the world.[24]

From the perspective of *dharma*, alienation between people and nature is overcome because it enables us to have an awareness of totality and inclines one to a vision of wholeness. As a moral agent, it is imperative to have a vision of the interrelatedness of all in our knowledge, and approach reality both analytically and synthetically. From this point of view we do not conceive of the relationship as man and nature but as man in nature, where nature is not abused and exploited — as something only to be conquered. In such a situation, depletion of the resources results and "limits to growth" debate becomes a necessity.[25] Consequently, modern industrial civilization is losing its self-evident justification. For this reason, much of human development is characterised as anti-development. In such a predicament, the concept of *dharma* is a good reminder of the unified vision one should have of reality. Observance of this principle will enable man to safeguard what Max L. Stackhouse calls, 'the principle of proportionality' and which according to him, provides a balance between the disruption of natural environment and the capacity to build a new, more comprehensive economic-system.[26]

Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Tagore were very much concerned with the overcoming of alienation in operational terms also. They were able to visualize the possibility in terms of *dharma*. Sri Aurobindo had a vision of unity transcending race, caste, colour, creed and country. He was not content with narrow nationalism that absolutises one's own country to the exclusion of all other countries. For this reason, he sought to work for internationalism. His idea was "the hope of the kingdom of heaven within and the city of God upon earth,"[27] which he expounded in his book *The Human Cycle*. He envisioned the possibility of unifying mankind into a single nation and hoped for a larger whole that would encompass smaller units. He posed the crucial question and answered it himself in his book, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, in which he wnote :

> The central question is whether the nation, the largest natural unit which humanity has been able to create and

maintain for its collective living is also its last and its ultimate unit or whether a greater aggregate can be formed which will englobe many and even most nations and finally all in its totality.[28]

Radhakrishnan dedicated his life to the cause of realising the ideal of human unity, which would overcome alienation. He wrote "We outgrow individualism and espouse the cause of our fellowmen because we and our fellowmen are the expression of the same spirit."[29] He viewed *dharma* in terms of relationship. He wanted the synthesis of the East and the West, both at the practical and philosophical levels. He summoned humanity to a realisation of a commonwealth of spirit. It is not a call to a barren unity but a unity-in-diversity.

Tagore was acutely conscious of the alienation of humanity in its varied forms. He addressed himself to it in his own poetic way in his book, *The Religion of Man.* For him, *dharma* is the principle of unity. As a poet, he discerned this unity in nature — in forms, colours, sounds and movements, which he has mentioned in many of his poems. For him, relationship is the fundamental truth of the world. *Dharma* is the principle of relationship.[30] His vision of overcoming humanity's fundamental alienation is embodied in his *Universal Man* who would be all that is true, good and beautiful. According to him, life is a movement towards greater and fuller unity and wholeness. This is the creative ideal of *dharma* which civilization needs to express. He did not accept contradictions as absolute, final and ultimate. On the contrary, he thought that in love all contradictions of existence merge themselves and are lost. The question is how seriously Tagore reckoned with man's fundamental alienation. He seemed to take a romantic and a naive view of contradictions or alienation. It cannot be wished away or overcome by a fiat.

We must realise that his yearning for overcoming alienation did not remain at the poetic level. He was prepared to work for it at the empirical level. He was interested in overcoming alienation in the real world. Therefore, he worked for it in terms of the caste system, Hindu-Muslim hostility, nationalism and East-West relationship.[31]

During the middle years of his life, Tagore decided to establish a university that would epitomise and symbolise his urge to overcome existential alienation at the various levels we referred to. At this place he wanted the people of the world to meet and work out an operational synthesis on the basis of which reconciliation would become a reality. He wanted it to be a meeting place, where the "unlosable essences" could be preserved and conserved, where as Ernst Hocking said, the Universal Man could find a home and a lodging. But much of Tagore's dream remains a dream because people continue to live in alienation. Herein lies the problem inherent in the very understanding of alienation and its resolution cherished by Tagore and other leaders of modern India. It is necessary to work out systematically, rationally and rigorously the normative content of what should constitute overcoming of alienation within the context of the all-pervading *dharma.* We need to know how much of pluralities can he subsumed and assumed under this understanding. How does one work out the logistics and indicate the criteria of this dealienation?

So far I have mentioned about overcoming alienation between man and man and between nature and man. Now I will discuss briefly how alienation within oneself can be overcome in the context of *dharma.* We have already mentioned about *svadharma* in terms of heredity and qualities. In modern times this is being de-emphasised and it is conceived as an innate tendency in people which is essentially moral in character. Here *dharma* is indicative of the built-in energy, moving people and nations to morality.

Tagore also professes a similar faith in *svadharma* but puts it differently. For him it is the law of truth and in the ultimate sense, one cannot go against it. *Svadharma* is the moral faculty on the basis of which he builds the principle of overcoming of alienation. From this perspective, he has gone to the root problem of alienation, namely, from oneself. *Svadharma,* from Tagore's perspective, enables one to realise one's unity with other people and in the process helps attainment of the feeling of fulfilment. Tagore explicates this idea of *svadharma* specifically in relation to *dharma,* when he asserts, in his book, *Sādhana,*

> The Sanskrit word *dharma* which is usually translated into English as religion has a deeper meaning in our language. *Dharma* is the innermost nature, the essence, the implicit truth, of all things. *Dharma* is the ultimate purpose that is working in our self. When any wrong is done we say that *dharma* has been violated, meaning that lie has been given to our true nature.[32]

Here he is referring to the fundamental alienation that could occur within oneself in terms of *svadharma*. It is indicative of the fact that *dharma* is not only objective and external but internal and subjective. The principle which is embedded in the universe is embodied by the people, but in an imperfect way. But one must be true to one's ontological moorings, both internally and externally to avoid alienation.

In this paper I have attempted to show the dual character of *dharma*. On the one hand, I have sought to indicate that *dharma* has engendered alienation in terms of *varṇadharma* and *svadharma* because it is considered to be unduly dependent on birth, heredity and inherent qualities. Within the context of this syndrome, there cannot be much freedom and responsibility, and hence alienation is inevitable. On the other, I have also demonstrated that *dharma* provides us with an ontological grounding, both intrinsically and extrinsically. This saves us from subjectivism, relativism and individualism and provides us with a universal or cosmic frame of reference. In such a context, our expectations will be moderate with regard to what we can do and cannot do. This is not an excuse for inaction or indifference but a sober recognition of our finiteness, "to display a modicum of ontological humility, to recognise...that perhaps it may be...unable to achieve total redemption in time."[33] In this sense, *dharma* enables us to overcome alienation.

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# 10

# ALIENATION AND TIME

G. S. HERBERT

This paper is an attempt to understand the alienation which the individual man suffers with reference to time. Alienation, in general is of three types : (i) between man God, (ii) between man and his ideal and (iii) between man and society. This paper deals with the first two types of alienation (with reference to time). Time, in this paper, is understood as temporal process or duration, and the diversity of past, present and future.

Alienation between man and God is based on a fundamental presupposition that God exists. Evidently such an alienation has no meaning to those who deny God. Man may be alienated from God in several ways, and one type of alienation from God is in terms of time. Such an alienation is due to the fact that God is necessarily eternal and man is temporal. To be temporal is to be finite or limited. Man exists for a duration of time from birth to death. God being eternal is infinite and timeless, i. e., beyond time.

In passing it might be remarked that eternity is not endless time though that is a way of understanding eternity. For eternity viewed as endless time would be understanding it from a temporal standpoint, but not understanding it by itself. Eternity rightly understood is beyond time or timelessness where distinctions of past, present and future do not exist.

The alienation which man suffers from God in terms of time is inherent in the very nature of man's existence which is temporal. This is an inherent and necessary part of the human situation. The distinction between the eternal and the temporal does not admit degree also. It is an absolute distinction.

Such an alienation in terms of time has nothing to do with the other characteristics of God such as His being love, omnipotent, etc. and the man not being so. It is possible that man may be estranged from God in several ways. For example, man is said to be alienated from God due to sin. Some hold that it is due to the original sin of Adam; and some of the modern thinkers would attribute sin to the rebellious nature of man which would mean that sin depends upon man's voluntary nature. Whatever might be the cause of man's sin, it is sufficient for us to know that sin alienates man from God. God saves sinners from their sin. When a sinner is saved, there is a close association between him and God, the saviour. Thus the alienation of man from God due to sin can be got over and hence it is not necessary for man to be permanently alienated from God. Sin takes man away from God, and when man is saved, he goes back to God. The alienation due to sin can thus be annulled.

At this stage a question might be raised: When there is contact between God and man in terms of salvation, how can there be absolute alienation in respect of time which can never be annulled? To answer this question, we have to see what makes man temporal and how it is different from what makes man sinful. The individual man by virtue of his birth and death is temporal. He exists for a duration of time. Temporal existence is a necessary existence as man cannot escape from being temporal by virtue of his birth and death. Since man's sin depends upon his free will, it is left to him either to rebel against God as in the case of the prodigal son against his father, or to be righteous and be with God. But inherent alienation due to time is not voluntary as it does not depend upon the will of man to be temporal or otherwise.

It might be pointed out that there is a contradiction here. After all the individual man is the same in both cases, temporal or sinful. If so, how can there be absolute alienation in one respect and no such alienation in another? This contradiction is resolved when we look at the problem from the standpoint of religion.

All religions try to establish a contact between man and God and in order to realise that end, religions postulate or believe that there is an eternal element in man also and that is the divine element or

a spark of God. Religion in general holds that man is a combination of the temporal and the eternal, and that God is eternal only. If so, there is naturally no inalienable alienation between man and God. Man would be alienated from God temporarily so long as the divine element is hidden or not allowed to be in contact with God. Such an alienation is neither permanent nor necessary. Thus the inalienable alienation is given up. Perhaps the best way of resolving this is found in the Advaitic position where the finiteness and limitations are all illusory and the real is the eternal self. If the Advaitic position is accepted, the inherent alienation between man and God arising in terms of time vanishes with the realisation of the truth. Anyway, it does not seem to be correct to hold that there is an absolute, permanent alienation between man and God.

*Self—Alienation*

Self-alienation is an estrangement from one's ideal self or an ideal which an individual experiences within himself. The ideal may be evolved by the self from within or obtained from an external source. It appears that the feeling of self-alienation is normal to any person to a certain extent as the man is usually not satisfied entirely with what he is. The ideal which an individual aspires for is always ahead of himself and so he has a feeling of self-alienation.

The distinction between an authentic and inauthentic life of a person which the existentialists make, is helpful to understand the concept of self-alienation. Inauthentic existence of a person consists in being lost in the mass and leading an insignificant existence or a life of nobody. In that type of existence, an individual no more lives like a human being, but reduces himself to a thing of the non-human world. Authentic existence consists in living a life of responsibility. The authentic man to begin with, realises the radical distinction between the human and the non-human. At the next step he realises that he is free, exercises his freedom and leads a significant life struggling always not to be lost in the world.

Existentialists would explain self-alienation in the context of the struggle to lead an authentic life. The individual is said to be 'thrown' and 'abandoned' in the world to discover for himself how

best he is to live in the world. The freedom which he enjoys is said to make an individual suffer in anguish in the attempt of creating values and ideals which he is forced to do by virtue of enjoying freedom unaided. In exercising freedom the individual is not sure of what he is doing. Lack of justification leads to a feeling of guilt contributing to self-alienation. Man feels guilty, for he always could have chosen otherwise. Thus self-alienation arises in the context of not being able to live upto one's ideals as the individual is not sure of his ideals.

In self-alienation the temporal factors, past, present and future, have an important role to play. The self is a continuing whole of the past, present and future. The individual man has a past, goes through the present into the future. These temporal factors have a determining effect in the life of an individual, and our concern here is to see their involvement in self-alienation.

It has been already mentioned that self-alienation is the consequence of the incapacity of the individual to reach an ideal because of the inherent nature of the ideal to be always unattainable. Such an inherent unattainability becomes clear when we try to understand the life of man in terms of the past, the present and the future.

*Past*

Usually past is understood as that which is no more present. Past is that which is gone out of existence and irrevocably lost. Such a view of the past does not seem to be correct, at least when we consider the life of an individual. The whole past life of an individual remains with him. The past is not an entity which can be put away in a drawer or destroyed. The past is a continuity into the present and the future. To understand such a view of the past, it is helpful to use the phrase of Heidegger 'having been', instead of 'past'. 'Having been' indicates that which 'was' and 'still is' and 'continues'. Life of an individual is one complete whole from birth to death. No part of the life of an individual is lost at any time.

Such a view of the past with reference to the life of an individual indicates that the whole past life of an individual has an effect on the present life and is inalienably mixed up with it. The individual

is in the process of 'making' throughout his life, and it cannot be said of any part of him that it is made.

The effect of the past on the present in the life of an individual has been very well brought out by Freud. The role of the unconscious in shaping the behaviour of an individual is enunciated by Freud who takes into account the cumulative effect of all the experiences of an individual from his birth. Psycho-analysis has scientifically demonstrated the role of the past in determining the life of an individual. Even if we do not agree with Freud entirely, what is important for us here is to note that the past is not lost, but has an effective bearing on the present and the future.

An individual feels self-alienation with reference to the past, as he realises that he could have been other than what he was. When one takes a retrospective view of life, he feels that it could have been otherwise. The freedom which one enjoys is as much a part of his past as the rest of his life. It is on account of such freedom that an individual also experiences a sense of guilt. The sense of guilt arises from the fact that a person could have led a better life as he had been free to live. It is an undeniable experience that every individual at some stage in his life feels a sense of guilt. This sense of guilt experienced in terms of 'could have been otherwise' arises out of the past. This is a common feeling as none can be entirely satisfied with the past life and be sure of optimum achievement. Evaluation is the result of a retrospective view of what has been. The sense of guilt arises out of such an evaluation because of the fact that one could have been otherwise. Thus the alienation between 'could have been' and 'what actually is' arises from the past. Further, the activity directed towards the future life has a basis in the past and is a continuation of it. The individual man can neither destroy the past, nor ignore it. He is fully aware of the past and that is how he experiences self-alienation.

*Present*

The present of an individual is a continuation of his past life leading him into the future. The present is neither specious as William James said, nor momentary beyond comprehension. The present has a span of its own depending upon our standpoint. It

is possible to look at a minute or even an hour as the present. Present is the apprehension of a span of duration taken as a whole. The span of the present is an unbroken continuity of the past with the present and the boundaries of this span are naturally hazy.

There is another way of looking at the present and the past. That part of the past which is effective in the present is considered as being present and that which is not effective is just the past. Such a view distinguishes between the effective past and the non-effective past, which distinction perhaps is not correct, as there is no part of the past which is not effective.

The present, whatever its durational dimension might be, is important for alienation for it is in the present one feels estrangement from his ideal personality. The inauthentic life characterised by the life of nobody, struggling to express the uniqueness of the individual is an expression in the present only. If self-alienation is a fact, it is in the present. An individual lives and acts in an environment which is present at hand. While acting, one may be oblivious of the past and the future, but their bearing on his activity is undeniable. The present is not a mere point of demarcation between the past and the future. The past and the future are inherently held in it. The present life of an individual is a process of past going into the future.

There can be divergent views on this point and we may consider two of them. According to Bergson who believes in creative evolution, the future has no role at all to play in shaping the present which is linked with the past. Heidegger, on the other hand, holds that it is the future which determines the present. Bergson denies future's effect on the present perhaps as he is looking at the evolution of the whole of reality from the standpoint of creative evolution and consequently holding that the future is unpredictable. Hence he says that the future has no bearing on the present. On the other hand, Heidegger is mainly concerned with man and the freedom enjoyed by the individual which puts a heavy responsibility on him as to how he acts in the present as it has a bearing on his future. Thus Heidegger finds the impact of the future on the present life. Perhaps, it is correct to say that the present is as

much determined by the future as by the past. Whatever might be the fact, it is important to note that the life of an individual has a present in which he lives and acts indicating self-alienation.

*Future*

The usual understanding of future is as the not-yet. A future event is that which has not yet occurred. There is another way of understanding the future that it is not-yet but that which is potentially (Heidegger). The individual man is born and is bound to die. He necessarily goes towards death as death is potentially present in him. Death is necessarily involved in life. "Death is not the axe that cuts down the tree, it is the fruit that grows on it." As death is already present in the individual man, future is also present though potentially.

The importance of the future is also clear from the fact that man always looks ahead of himself. Looking ahead may be with a sense of prospective achievement or a fear of failure. Whatever might be the attitude, looking ahead of the present is a fact. The present has roots in the past and flowers in the future. All our activities are executed with an eye on the future. Only in being futural is life worth living.

The life of an individual is directed towards the future, and consequently the future has a role to play in self-alienation. The ideal and perfection aimed at by the individual are futural. They stand ahead beckoning the person to reach them. Future in a sense is present and is also always ahead and consequently affects the experience of self-alienation. The individual has an ideal and the apprehension that he may not reach it, leads to self-alienation.

*Conclusion*

We may summarise as follows:

Man has a finite existence and feels alienated from the eternal though it is not permanent. This is inherent in the very existence of man.

Every person is a blending of the past, the present and the future in him. He is a continuity from birth to death. He has the

freedom to live as he wills and appears to suffer because of such freedom. He has aspirations and ideals. And he has also limitations. One of the limitations is in his being temporal.

Further, man is a whole of the past, the present and the future in him. This is a continuing whole in which all the three aspects play their roles in determining the type of life one leads. There is a gap between 'what he could have been' and 'what he actually was' and 'what he is' and 'what he wants to be' which leads to (a sense of) self-alienation. Man endeavours to bridge the gap involved in self-alienation and is perhaps pronounced to be a contented and happy man if the gap can be nullified. But as the past is irrevocably gone and as the future always lies ahead, the infinite possibilities being open, perhaps man is bound to be self-alienated.

# PART TWO

# SPECIAL ARTICLES

1

# T. S. ELIOT AND MĀYĀ*

P. S. PADMANABHAN

The explication of the works of T. S. Eliot in recent years has become a minor industry. But the Indian philosophical themes and symbols which are fused with the Christian doctrine in his poetry and drama have not been scrutinized with the care and attention they deserve.

It is true that a few pioneering efforts have been made by some critics to evaluate the role played by Indian philosophical thought in Eliot's poetic development. But, at their best, these efforts seem the outcome of partial understanding. Moreover, they are too limited in their scope and fail to come to grips with Eliot's basic vision of the human condition.

It is not difficult to illustrate the *explicit* use Eliot makes of Indian philosophy in his poetry; to cite but one example, he brings the Buddha and St. Augustine together at the very core of *The Waste Land*. But, such *explicit* references form merely the tip of the iceberg; there are numerous other allusions to Indian thought which are not so readily seen. Unless all the direct references to Indian thought in Eliot's poetry and drama are regarded as mere window-dressing, they must be understood as indispensable parts of organic wholes, indicating a particularly valuable mode of penetration which might uncover the *implicit* use Eliot makes of Indian philosophy in his poetry and drama.

Poetry, religion and philosophy are no doubt quite distinct from each other in the abstract, and may be regarded as having different functions. But, in the concrete, they overlap considerably, so that a

* Lecture delivered at the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy on September 14, 1978.

poem, without ever ceasing to be an aesthetic-emotional structure, may carry both religious and philosophical overtones. For, at their loftiest and sublimest, poetry, religion and philosophy spring out of certain fundamental intuitions, which are keenly experienced and felt to be of cosmic significance. These intuitions themselves are quite immediate, though their consequences may be far-reaching; for out of them may evolve emotional visions with an imaginative logic of their own. These emotional visions may become religions or complex theologies; systematised logically, they may even be called philosophies or elaborate world-views; but as emotional visions, they are poetry.

One valuable mode of penetrating the work of a philosophical poet like Eliot, then, is by way of the key intuitions underlying his poetry. By comparing these key intuitions with those of Hindu-Buddhist thought, we may not only gauge the deep influence of Vedānta and Buddhism on Eliot's *Weltanschauung*, but also gain some insights into his basic vision of the human condition.

The fundamental intuition of Vedānta as well as Buddhism is that of impermanence (or ephemerality) of all phenomena and of the universality of suffering. Impermanence, when fully grasped, is found applicable to the knowing subject as well as to the objects perceived; the seer and the seen are both ephemeral, so that individuality or ego is at best a product of the mind, an illusion. Suffering, when fully understood, is found inseparable from existence in the world of phenomena.

No sensitive and thinking person can, in fact, avoid perceiving that this intuition is rooted in our everyday experience of the world, in which birth and death, growth and decay, hope and despair are repeated *ad infinitum* and combine to produce a spectacle of suffering in which nothing remains stable and everything is in a state of flux. The very best of our experiences are ephemeral, our most exquisite moments are flawed and fragmentary. Nothing abides for ever; everything changes and perishes. This is a universal phenomenon. If we crave what changes and perishes, therefore, our desires are never satisfied and our lives are full of suffering. It is the impermanence of the object of our craving that causes disappointment and sorrow. Hence, in Vedānta and Buddhism, the transitoriness of the

phenomenal world is even identified with suffering, so that impermanence and suffering form but complementary aspects of a single fundamental intuition.

These notions of impermanence and suffering are, of course, quite universal. They are to be found in *Ecclesiastes* and *The Book of Job;* and in the New Testament, we find Christ and his disciples repeatedly urging us to give up the things of this world since they do not have a lasting value for the human soul.[1] However, in Vedānta and Buddhism, the notions of impermanence and suffering are a fundamental intuition, not an idea among other ideas; they are the bedrock on which entire philosophical systems rest.

It may readily be seen that the notions of impermanence and suffering haunt Eliot's poetry and drama. In the poems published before *The Waste Land,* suffering is often identified with loneliness, frustration and impotence, and there is the heart-searing lament over the meaninglessness of life spent amidst the fog and smoke of winter afternoons. With the publication of *The Waste Land* (1922), the perception becomes deeper and wider so that suffering is seen to be universal, prevalent in the lives of ancients as well as moderns, among the heroes and saints of yore as well as among the typists and clerks of the modern world. By the time of the *Four Quartets* (1941), the apprehension of existence as it is in the phenomenal world has become a tragic vision of life, grasped in all its immediacy of horror and despair. And it is quite clear that essentially Eliot's poetry and drama grapples with the perennial problem of human suffering in a transient world and gropes for a positive way out of suffering to freedom. In other words, Eliot is responding to the same fundamental intuition that moved Krishna or the Buddha (or, for that matter, Christ) and embodying his responses in poetry and drama.

The human predicament in the midst of omnipresent and universal change and suffering is often graphically expressed in Vedānta and Buddhism by the image of the wheel. Krishna speaks of the terrible wheel of birth and death which binds the individual down to the phenomenal world in the *Gītā.*[2] And the Buddha alludes to the wheel of existence, which he calls *saṁsāra.*[3] The image of the wheel is even found in the New Testament.[4] The wheel may even

be regarded as an archetypal symbol expressing a fundamental fact of human existence.[5] Not surprisingly, therefore, Eliot evokes it poignantly in his poetry and drama, directly or indirectly, by a sensitive use of language. Perhaps, the opening passage from his modern 'Mystery' play, *The Rock*, may serve as an illustration:

> O perpetual revolution of configured stars,
> O per etual recurrence of determined seasons,
> O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!
> The endless cycle of idea and action,
> Endless invention, endless experiment,
> Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
> Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
> Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
>
> (*CR.* p. 147)*

The concepts of impermanence and suffering, the ceaseless flux of existence, the endless cycle of birth and death, the turning world and the still centre (God or noumenon) — they are all clearly and succinctly expressed.

So then, flux and suffering are inseparable from existence. People change with time, act and remember, weep and smile, but the agony abides and even the laughter in the rose-garden points before and after to the agony of birth and death. The cause of such suffering is disclosed as craving by Krishna in the *Gītā*; and the Buddha speaks of the selfsame craving as thirst (*tanha*) for the transient things of the phenomenal world.

The characters in Eliot's poems and plays are all possessed by an incessant craving for sensual gratification. This desire or thirst breeds attachment in them to things which are ephemeral. Since their craving or thirst can never be satisfied, their lives are full of suffering. Craving and its concomitant suffering, then have as much significance in the universal scheme of things for Eliot, as for Krishna, Buddha or Christ. To be a slave of shifting desires, without realizing that they give birth to endless suffering, is to be blindly caught up in the revolutions of the

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* All quotations from Eliot's works are from, *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1969).

wheel of *saṁsāra*; it is *avidyā* or ignorance. Not to seek a way out of this bondage to the wheel is to be involved in the darkness of *māyā* or the world of appearances.

The term *māyā* has a long history in Indian thought. In the *Ṛgveda*, it is used to denote a mysterious deceptive power of the gods. In the Upaniṣads, the Lord wields the power of *māyā* to order Nature (*prakṛti*) and conjure up the world of appearances. Nature, then, is the manifestation of the Lord's creative power, of his *māyā*, and Nature is capable of deluding man, when he takes it to be an independent ultimate reality. Thus, we read in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*:

> For all the sacred books, all holy sacrifice and ritual and prayers, all the words of the Vedas, and the whole past and present and future, come from the Spirit. With Māyā, his power of wonder, he made all things, and by Māyā the human soul is bound.
>
> Know therefore that nature is Māyā, but that God is the ruler of Māyā; and that all beings in our universe are parts of his infinite splendour.[6]

The *Gītā* deals even more emphatically with the same concept:

> Helpless all, for Māyā is their master,
> And I, their Lord, the master of this Māyā . . .
> Māyā makes all things: what moves, what is unmoving.
> O son of Kuntī, that is why the world spins,
> Turning its wheel through birth
> And through destruction.[7]

The concept of *māyā* attains its fullest flowering in the non-dualistic (*advaita*) Vedānta of the eighth century philosopher, Śaṅkara, who was responsible for reviving the Hindu way of life by reinforcing the nondual reality (*Brahman*) of the Upaniṣad and the *Gītā*. According to the non-dualistic interpretation, the one indivisible unchanging reality (*Brahman*) or that which is, *appears* to be many and constitutes the world of our everyday experience. Our perception of an independent material world of objects, person and processes is grounded in a pervasive error. We take the unreal for

real and the real for unreal. This is borne out by the famous analogy of the snake and the rope. We often *mis*-take a coil of rope for a snake in the dark; but, on closer examination, we discover it to be only a coil of rope. Our everyday world of appearances may be likened to snake, and it seems very real to us; we are in the darkness of ignorance, caught in the web of illusion. When we are illumined, we experience the truth; the snake-appearance vanishes into the underlying reality of the rope. This does not mean that the world of appearances is non-existent; the world, according ro Śaṅkara, "is and is not."[8] When we are in a state of ignorance, it is experienced by our everyday consciousness and it exists as it appears; as long as we are in the dark, the snake appears quite real to us. But when we are enlightened and pass into a transcendental consciousness the world is no longer experienced and it ceases to exist; once we are illumined, the snake disappears and the rope alone is real. Here, then, we are confronted by a paradox — the world is and the world is not. It is neither real nor non-existent. And yet this apparent paradox is simply a statement of fact — a fact which Śaṅkara calls *māyā*. This *māyā*, this world-appearance, has its basis in *Brahman*, the one indivisible unchanging reality; and *māyā* not only conceals reality, but also distorts it. *Brahman* remains eternally infinite and unchanged. It is not tranformed into the world. It simply *appears* as this world to us, in our ignorance. Not only do we fail to perceive reality, but we also superimpose a snake upon a coil of rope in the dark. In short, we substitute a phenomenal world for the noumenon and take the unreal for real and the real for unreal; we are subject to *māyā*, to the world-appearance. *Māyā* is characterized as beginningless (*anādi*), since time arises only within it; as unthinkable (*acintya*), for all thought is subject to it; as indescribable (*anirvacanīya*) for all conceptual language results from it. To seek to know what causes *māya* is to go beyond *māyā* — and when we do that, *māyā* vanishes like a mirage in the desert, for the effect ceases to exist, and there is only *Brahman*, the one unchanging reality. And so Śaṅkara concludes:

> The universe does not exist apart from *Brahman*. Our perception of it as having an independent existence is false, like our perception of blueness in the sky. How can a superimposed attribute have any existence. apart from its

> substratum? It is only our delusion which causes this mis-conception of the underlying reality.[9]

No matter what we think we are perceiving in our delusion, we are really seeing *Brahman* and nothing else but *Brahman*; only we are not aware of this in our ignorance. We see the coil of rope and imagine it to be a snake; we see mother-of-pearl and imagine it to be silver. We see *Brahman* and imagine it to be the world.

It is noteworthy that Śaṅkara's concept of *māyā* and *Brahman* is analogous to Bradley's theory of appearance and reality, on which Eliot wrote his doctoral dissertation. Staffan Bergsten's comments in this regard are highly interesting:

> Long after he had finished his academic study of Bradley, Eliot wrote an essay on him which suggests his appreciation of the semi-religious metaphysician rather than the logician. The religious element underlying Bradley's concept of the Absolute had been noticed before, and it is significant that his philosophy had been compared with Vedic philosophy—as the bewildering illusions of Māyā are brought to harmony in Brahman, so are appearances in reality.[10]

At the very outset of his *magnum opus*, *Appearance and Reality*, Bradley declares the aim of his work : it will demonstrate the fact that the world "contradicts itself; and is, therefore, appearance, and not reality."[11] He subjects to critical scrutiny the ideas and intellectual formulae through which man attempts to solve the riddle of the universe, such as motion and change, space, time and causation, self *et cetera* and shows that they are all riddled with contradictions and do not comprise the whole truth. He is driven to conclude that the finite human experience of the world is not the experience of reality *as* reality, though it is the experience *of* reality. What is given to finite human experience, therefore, is not reality *qua* reality, but only appearances; and yet, "there is reality in every appearance however slight."[12] In short, reality is distorted into self-contradictory appearances in a wholly inexplicable manner:

> The fact of appearance, and of the diversity of its particular spheres, we found was inexplicable. Why there

are appearances, and why appearances of such various kinds, are questions not to be answered.[13]

This admission of the fact of world-appearance and its ultimate inexplicability is precisely what is called *māyā* by Śaṅkara in his non-dualistic (*a-dvaita*) interpretation of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*.

Bradley differs, however, on the crucial point from Śaṅkara. According to Bradley, reality *as* reality (that which is or the noumenon) cannot be experienced. He writes:

> Fully to realize the existence of the Absolute is for finite beings impossible. In order thus to know we should have to be, and then *we* should not exist...But to gain an idea of its main features ... is a different endeavour. And it is a task in which we may succeed.[14]

Unlike Bradley, Śaṅkara maintains that *Brahman* (or reality *qua* reality) can be concretely experienced and that, in experiencing that reality, we cease to exist as separate individuals. In other words, our individuality or ego is due to our ignorance (*avidyā*) and is part of the world-appearance (*māyā*). When enlightenment comes, it is destroyed in the light of pure being that is *Brahman*, and we are said to have attained *nirvāṇa* or freedom from the bondage of the wheel of *saṁsāra*. Śaṅkara's assertion that the ultimate reality of *Brahman* can be concretely experienced is in consonance with the teachings of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*.

It cannot be denied that Eliot upholds the possibility of attaining the reality of the still point, the silent centre around which all the world turns. He even goes so far as to say that most of us are vouchsafed "hints and guesses" (DS. p. 190) about the nature of the ultimate reality, though we are often incapable of the total apprehension possible to a saint. He seems, therefore, to have inclined more towards the vision (*darśana*) of ultimate reality enshrined in the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā* and the non-dualistic (*a-dvaita*) Vedānta of Śaṅkara than towards the agnosticism of Bradley. Moreover, the Christian writers Eliot drew upon, whether it be St. Augustine, St. John of the Cross, Dante or Lancelot Andrewes, are all unequivocal in declaring that it is possible to be

united with the divine essence. Presumably, therefore, Bradley had only a limited influence on Eliot's ethos. However, in his poetic evocation of the multiple facets of the turning world and its unreality in the light of the still point, Eliot seems to have amalgamated what Bradley calls the inexplicable fact of world-appearance with what Śaṅkara, following the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, calls *māyā*.

Thus, the characters in Eliot's early poems may all be seen to be subject to *māyā*, deluded by the world of appearances. Prufrock's existence is literally and metaphorically enveloped in a foggy atmosphere of unreality. He is conscious of having wasted his time in futile pursuits of self-gratification, of having measured out his life "with coffee spoons." (LP. p. 14) He cannot bring himself to ask his lady "the overwhelming question," (LP. p. 15), for that would destroy the comfortable illusion of his ordered world. He yearns to escape from his meaningless crippled existence, but his impulse to freedom lacks focus, so that he takes refuge in his dream-world of singing mermaids. He finds that he cannot even pin-point the source of his anguish:

> It is impossible to say just what I mean!
> But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns
> on a screen ....
> (LP. p. 16)

It is an unconscious yet precise echo of Śaṅkara's concept of *māyā*; it cannot be described, for all words and thoughts are its direct outcome. Prufrock's world, in short, has only an apparent reality, like the "patterns on a screen" and when he gropes for words to describe his existential situation or to indicate the nameless something he yearns for, he finds himself helpless and frustrated, reduced to shadaw-boxing with reality.

The "Preludes" are unified by their imagery, which lends an air of unreality to the scenes and actors encountered in them. The first poem begins with winter nightfall in an urban backstreet, and moves from indoor gloom and the confined odour of cooking to the smoky twilight outside, in which a gusty wind whips up the withered leaves and soiled newspapers, and raindrops spatter the housetops.

The second poem reviews the street, as morning "comes to consciousness" of "faint stale smells of beer" and coffee fumes, like a person who has been all night out drinking and wakes up with a hang-over; and the poem ends by contemplating the house windows, where innumerable hands reveal "the other masquerades/That time resumes," by "raising the dingy shades." (P. p. 22). The third poem peeps into one of the "thousand furnished rooms" in which a rather dirty woman shakes off her sleep and sluggishly tries to get out of her bed; she has watched,

> the night revealing
> The thousand sordid images
>
> (P. p. 23)

of which her soul is constituted flickering "against the ceiling," and now struggles to regain her day-to-day consciousness in order to resume her role in life's masquerade. The "thousand sordid images" of which her soul is constituted are comparable to the transitory show of fingers, pipes, newspapers and eyes that constitute the soul of the personified street in the fourth poem. In other words, woman and street are both mere congeries of fugitive appearances; they are both earthbound, she supine in her bed and 'he' trampled by insistent feet. Nevertheless, both are vaguely aware of a hidden reality behind the apparent purposelessness of their existence; for, instinctively their aspirations tend heavenward as they strive to free themselves: her soul's "images" flicker overhead, while her soul is "stretched tight across the skies." (P. p. 23) The "thousand sordid images" of the woman's soul and the 'passing show' of the street impinge on reality, so to speak, as upon a *tabula rasa*, and mask that reality from their consciousness. In short, they are bedevilled by *māyā* or the world-appearance. Consequently, their struggle upward is blind and their struggle seems endless; so, the poem turns to the notion "of some infinitely gentle Infinitely suffering thing," (P. p. 23) of a compassionate Buddha or Christ figure, who can help suffering humanity penetrate the veil of *māyā* and attain the reality beyond.

The protagonist of "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" has a consciousness resembling that of the woman in the "Preludes," which marshals the flickering kaleidoscopic images into a pattern of

subjective *dureé*, so that he too has "a vision of the street." Each street lamp he passes on his midnight ramble seems to beat like a "fatalistic drum," murmuring "lunar incantations," (RWN. p. 24) directing his gaze towards new spatial images, which pass into his memory and combine with memories already there to make up his vision. The rhapsody of his consciousness moves like a symphony, introducing, abandoning and returning to certain *leitmotifs* — the apparent irrationality or meaninglessness of events in time and the inexorable dissolution and death that await all animate being. The images that invade the speaker's consciousness and take possession are all depressing and point up the apparent meaninglessness of the universe. In fact, these images constitute his soul; he can no more escape the bleak landscape conjured up by his imagination than the woman of the "Preludes" can avoid the sordid pattern traced on her ceiling by her dreams. Even as he retreats into the solitude of his bed-room, the last street lamp lights his way up the stairs and reminds him that his *memory* has the key to free him from life's prison - not the memory of what his intelligence can learn, like the number on his door but the memory of a hidden reality, of that which is behind life's masquerade. Nevertheless, memory alone of the hidden reality is not enough; human effort is required to rend the veil of appearances or *māyā*. Lacking this effort, the protagonist is overcome by the terror of his own trapped condition and the knowledge of his powerlessness to emancipate himself pierces him with a "last twist of the knife." (RWN. p. 26)

Gerontion is a logical extension of the nameless protagonist of "Rhapsody." As he squats outside his "decayed house," an old man driven to "a sleepy corner" (G. p. 39) and awaiting his death, his mind is busy, occupied with the remembrance of things past. He is acutely conscious of the futility of a world in which man blindly stumbles down the "contrived corridors" of history (G. p. 38), lured by vanity and deceived by success, reluctant to choose "Christ the tiger" above mere sensual gratification - it is the futility of a maze whose centre man can no longer perceive. Despite this knowledge, Gerontion himself is incapable of reaching the centre of the turning world; like his corrupt foreign acquaintances, he too must share the eccentric propulsion of the damned around the still

centre of the wheel. No doubt, he has lost the passion for earthly pleasures in his old age; but passion is the strongest in memory and his sensual thoughts still have the power to

> Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
> With pungent sauces, multiply variety
> In a wilderness of mirrors.
>
> (G. p. 38)

The unity behind the diversity of these mirror images is hidden from him; *māyā* holds him yet in its relentless grip, distorting and concealing reality by its multitudinous appearances.

The modern figure of Gerontion is replaced by the mythological Tiresias to unify the diversities of *The Waste Land*.[15] Tiresias is more shadowy than Gerontion, so that most of the incidents in the poem seem immediate, not recalled, even though they are his memories of things past. The apparently disorganized flow of past events in his consciousness is so vivid and arresting that these events become present themselves. In short, Tiresias *relives* his memories, as Kurtz does in Conrad's story, witnessing all of his past lives "in every detail of desire, temptation and surrender" unroll before his vision.[16] "What Tiresias *sees*," therefore, "is the substance of the poem" (WL. p. 78) - a college of images, mystifying statements and dramatic encounters superimposed by his own mind on the basic substratum of reality.

It is perhaps instructive at this point to quote the words of Sri Ramana Maharshi, one of the greatest modern exponents of the philosophy of non-duality (*Advaita Vedānta*) on the phenomenon of *māyā*. Sri Ramana is no mere academic theoretician, but a seer, in the living tradition of the Upaniṣadic sages. He speaks, therefore, simply and clearly, with the authority of 'one who knows' from personal experience:

> You see various scenes passing on a cinema screen; fire seems to burn buildings to ashes; water seems to wreck ships; but the screen on which the pictures are projected remains unburnt and dry. Why? Because the pictures are unreal and the screen real.

> Similarly, reflections pass through a mirror but it is not affected at all by their number and quality.
>
> In the same way, the world is a phenomenon upon the substratum of the single Reality which is not affected by it in any way. Reality is only One.
>
> ...Being now immersed in the world, you see it as a real world; get beyond it and it will disappear and Reality alone will remain.[17]

This might almost be a summing up of "what Tiresias *sees*" in *The Waste Land*. He is an uncommon spectator though, unlike most of mankind who are so immersed in the 'passing show' that they fail to recognize it as mere appearance. He is conscious that the other characters and their expressions are fused together in his consciousness and constitute his reveries:

> I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs,
> Perceived the scene, foretold all the rest...
> And I Tiresias have foresuffered all ..
>
> (WL. pp. 68-69)

His consciousness may well be described in the words of Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*, which Eliot quoted in his notes to *The Waste Land*: his consciousness forms "a circle closed on the outside," a private world peopled by appearances. (WL. p. 80) And, curiously enough, he is not merely a spectator of the gyrations of life within the maze of his consciousness, but also a participant in the past actions he now recalls. He participates as "I Tiresias" in such flash-back scenes as the fortune-telling of Madame Sosostris, the fornication of the typist with the young man carbuncular and the journey across the desert to where the thunder is heard. And simultaneously, in his capacity as spectator, he is watching himself take part in the 'passing show.' He is, so to speak, the dreaming Alice of the *Waste Land*, who vividly recalls the episodes in which he figured prominently. At the beginning, middle and end of the poem, therefore, he functions as a chorus, synthesizing and commenting on the actions of all those who inhabit his dream, including himself. On each occasion, he perceives that neither the actors nor their deeds partake

of the ultimate reality; they are all mere shadows, insubstantial a a dream. He does not use the word *māyā* when he sums up these appearances; he prefers the word 'unreal' in each instance. Thus, the solidity of London and its crowds is only apparent:

> Unreal city
> Under the brown fog of a winter noon...
>
> (WL. p. 62)

And because of the turns of the wheel, history is circular; what is true of London is true of other cities too:

> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
> Vienna London
> Unreal
>
> (WL. p. 73)

The Jewish, Greek and Egyptian civilizations have all declined; the civilizations of modern Europe will follow in their wake. And those who inhabit these cities, the centres of modern civilization, are all (as the allusion to Baudelaire makes clear) ghosts of former lives, enacting the same roles again and again: "You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!" (WL. p. 62)

As a commenting spectator of the 'passing show,' Tiresias is capable of empathizing with the sufferings of his fellow-beings bound on the wheel, like the lama in *Kim*. Or, as Christmas Humphreys puts it in his informative book on *Buddhism*, he is one of the few,

> whose lives are sufficiently unhappy, or who have sufficiently withdrawn themselves from the appearance of happiness in their own or in their neighbours' lives to be able to hear, in the stillness of the night or above the turmoil of the day, the ceaseless cry of anguish which rises from a blindly groping, sorrow-laden world.[18]

Consequently, he can sense the sufferings of those who inhabit the unreal cities of the world:

> What is that sound high in the air
> Murmur of maternal lamentation
> Who are those hooded hordes swarming

Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only...

(WL. p. 73)

This "ceaseless cry of anguish" mingles with the falling towers of the unreal cities to evoke in his consciousness a nightmarish vision of civilization in chaos.

Tiresias bears witness, then, to the fact of world-appearance or *māyā*, of which he too forms a part. He has refined his consciousness to such an extent that he is aware of his bondage to the wheel. He has only a hint of liberation—a tantalizing glimpse into "the heart of light" he once had in the hyacinth garden. (WL. p. 62) And he has only his "fragments" at the end - touchstones, to use Matthew Arnold's phrase, with which to test the stages of his inward progress toward the freedom of *nirvāṇa*. And to encourage him on his way, he has the promise of grace—"a damp gust bringing rain." (*WL.* p. 74)

Unlike Tiresias, the speaker in *The Hollow Men* does not have the courage to accept his spiritual distress and to strive for the still centre of the turning world. Instead, he is sunk in apathy and declines to think of himself as anything but a scarecrow among other scarecrows, shuffling despondently round and round the prickly pear, or loitering beside "the tumid river" (HM. p. 85) like a throng awaiting the barge of Charon to ferry them across, to everlasting torment. He knows, however, that they are all in "death's *dream* kingdom" (emphasis mine) (HM. p. 84) and that they must remain "sightless" as long as they are content with their futile and apathetic existence in this land of shadows. He realizes, moreover, that it is still possible for them to wake to reality and seek love through repentance in their nightmarish world. In other words, it is possible even for the hollow men to purge themselves of their desires, die to their self-centred existence and thus storm "death's twilight kingdom," (HM. p. 85) where they might behold the "Multifoliate rose" (HM. p. 85) betokening the ecstasy of the still point. But it is not easy, especially for those sunk in inertia like the hollow men, to cross "With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom." (HM. p. 83) A "Shadow" frustrates every effort to transform the potential into the actual:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the shadow.....

(HM. p. 85)

The "Shadow" symbolizes the deceptive power of *māyā* or the world-appearance. It is no child's play to 'wake' up from the 'dream' and penetrate the facade of appearances to the reality beyond. And so, at the end of the poem, the hollow men continue to suffer and turn on the wheel, incapable of striking out for the centre. They must still await grace, hope and pray for water in their cactus land. ''

The monologuist of *Ash Wednesday* is vouchsafed a light in the midst of darkness, a sign of grace amidst the delusions of *māyā* : he is blessed with a vision of

One who moves in the time between sleep and waking,
wearing
White light folded, sheathed about her, folded.

(AW. p. 94)

She goes dressed "in white and blue, in Mary's colour," (AW. p. 94) heralding that which is beyond all shifting appearances and desires, and conveying to the protagonist's soul the possibility of the fusion of human and the divine. Despite her silent affirmation of the Word, however, the monologuist is plunged in despair, for he is still in "the time of tension between dying and birth," (AW. p. 98) subject to the conflict between the values of the flesh and the spirit.[19] No doubt, he has renounced his desires for "this man's gift and that man's scope;" (AW. p. 89), no longer does he "mourn/The vanished power of the usual reign;" (AW. p. 89), nor does he "hope to know again/ The infirm glory of the positive hour." (AW. p. 89)

Moreover, he fully realizes the limitations of the phenomenal world —

that time is always time
And place is always and only place
And what is actual is actual only for one time
And only for one place ..

(AW. p. 89)

Above all, he yearns to go beyond the "unstilled world" and unite himself with the "silent Word." (AW. p. 96). Nevertheless, the *memory* of his desires still plague him and cause him to waver

between the profit and the loss
In this brief transit where the dreams cross
The dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying...
(AW. p. 98)

Even his human longing for love and beauty have the power to deflect him from his purpose, for, in the ultimate analysis, love and beauty too belong to the "unstilled world" of appearances, they too are *māyā*, reinforcing the dualism of the flesh and the spirit and barring the aspirant's way to the non-dual reality beyond. Consequently the delightful pictures that flash before his mind's eye — "white sails ...seaward flying/Unbroken wings" (AW. p. 98) - only breed attachment and the joy he feels is that of a "lost heart" for a phantasm:

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel
For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell...
(AW. p. 98)

But it is all a delusion of "the blind eye" creating "empty forms"— the phantasmagoria of the turning world. Not surprisingly, the protagonist is baffled by the unreality of the "empty forms" — the insubstantiality, so to speak, of art as well as memory. His is the tragic portion of being caught in "the time of tension between dying and birth," wandering, one might say with Arnold,

between two worlds, one dead
The other powerless to be born.[20]

He is in a "place of solitude" where the sexual, artistic and spiritual ideals are all present as "dreams" and where the symbolic gates to eternity formed by the blue rocks and the yew trees await the resolution of his inner conflict between the world and the Word. Like the soul in "Animula," he seems powerless to "fare forward or retreat." (A. p. 107). But, from the depths of his dejection, he miraculously finds strength to pray to the Lady of his vision for deliverance from the bondage of the turning world:

Blessed sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden,
Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still...

(AW. p. 98)

Only a serene and compassionate detachment akin to that of the Buddha, a humble acceptance of the divine will similar to that of the Christ, can enable him to penetrate the "falsehood" of "empty forms" which "the empty forms" which "the blind eye creates" and go beyond the unreality of the "unstilled world" to "the centre of the silent Word." (AW. p. 96). Until that detachment and self-surrender are attained, he is under the sway of *māyā*.

Except for the *Four Quartets*, all the major poems of Eliot - from *Prufrock* to *Ash Wednesday* - focus on the finite human consciousness and its gropings in "a wilderness of mirrors." (G. p. 38). These gropings and the accompanying thoughts and feelings all fall, in each poem, within the protagonist's own circle - a circle, we might say with Bradley, "closed on the outside," (WL. p. 80) constituting a private world of appearances. None of the protagonists in these poems succeeds completely in breaking out of his/her closed self and apprehending the reality that is. At best, some of the protagonists are vouchsafed a tantalizing glimpse of the peace that this reality entails; they can only be patient, endure and await grace, in their "unstilled world." (AW. p. 96). In the *Four Quartets*, however, we sense for the first time that at least a partial breakthrough has been achieved by the poetic self. What has so far been obliquely alluded to as "the heart of the light" (WL. p. 62) or the "Multifoliate rose" (HM. p. 85) or "the centre of the silent Word" (AW, p. 96) is now precisely defined as "the still point of the turning world." (BN. p. 173). Moreover, the peace and freedom that ensue when the human soul reaches "the still point" is dwelt on in the paradoxical language of the mystics. Of course, "the turning world" is still very much with us; it has not disappeared from the *Quartets*. But the apprehension of the still point, partial though it may be, seems subtly to have altered the poetic perspective, so that what goes on in the turning world is viewed not only within the boundaries of time (*sub specie temporis*),

but also in the light of eternity (*sub specie aeternitatis*). The creative word of the poet seems to partake of the nature of the all-fathering Word of the universe by bringing order out of chaos. Consequently, the efforts of the poetic self to find the word and the Word often appear identical, mirror images of each other. Nevertheless, in the ultimate analysis, the creative efforts of the poetic self take place in the temporal world of appearances; hence, they are subject to change and the poet must take note:

> Words strain,
> Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
> Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
> Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
> Will not stay still.
>
> (BN. p. 175)

The poet comments next on the "Shrieking voices" of unreason and chaos that always assail his words, enforcing them to undergo continuous change. Then, in a daring leap of thought upward from the emporal to the eternal, he shifts from "word" to "Word":

> The Word in the desert
> Is most attacked by voices of temptation,
> The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
> The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.
>
> (BN. p. 175)

The Word is the Logos, the complete meaning, the one reality that is permanent and unchanging. When the Word becomes flesh, however, as in the person of a Christ (or Buddha), it too is subject to the power of *māyā* or world-appearance and is assailed by "voices of temptation," death and phantasma. The Word, embodied in Christ or the poet, has to struggle against "the disconsolate chimera," enacting the very same conflict that beset the soul of the protagonist in *Ash Wednesday*. Yet, in the eternal perspective, there is only the Word, Logos, the complete meaning, the one permanent and unchanging reality, underlying Christ as well as the poet in the desert.

Clearly, all human attempts to describe either the still point or the turning world completely involve one in "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings," (EC. p. 179) since all these attempts take

place in the realm of *māyā*, where everything is constantly in a state of flux. And knowledge derived from past experience has little value, for

> The knowledge imposes a pattern and falsifies.
>
> (EC. p. 179)

We are all groping, so to speak, in Dante's "dark wood" or on the edge of the "grimpen" mire in Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*,

> where is no secure foothold
> And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,
> Risking enchantment.
>
> (EC. p. 179)

In other words, we are all ensnared by the web of *māyā*. This is only too obvious to one, who has even momentarily apprehended the still point and is thus able to view his fellow-beings and their actions in the light of eternity:

> O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
> The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
> The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,
> The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
> Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,
> Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark.
> ....
> And we all go with them, into the silent funeral.
> Nobody's funeral, for there is no one to bury.
>
> (EC. p. 180)

Since most of mankind cannot bear very much reality, it continues to dwell in the darkness of ignorance, deluded by appearances and bound to the wheel, subject to change and suffering. Although there is but one Centre, most men live in centres of their own. This darkness, however, is not real; it may be vanquished by the other darkness, the immobility of St. John's Dark Night, 'the darkness of God':

> As, in a theatre,
> The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed

With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness
on darkness,
And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant
panorama
And the bold imposing facade are all being rolled away -
(EC. p. 180)

The "bold imposing facade" of *māyā* vanishes[21] and there is no more diversity; there is only the unity of *Brahman*, the one eternal unchanging reality. The still point has absorbed the turning world.[22]

In an essay he wrote on John Martson, Eliot tried to isolate a quality that sets poetic drama apart from prosaic drama, a quality, discernible in his own plays:

> It is possible that what distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in action, as if it took place on two planes at once. In this it is different from allegory, in which the abstraction is something conceived, not something differently felt, and from symbolism (as in the plays of Maeterlinck) in which the tangible world is deliberately diminished—both symbolism and allegory being operations of the conscious planning mind. In poetic drama a certain apparent irrelevance may be the symptom of this doubleness; or the drama has an under-pattern .the characters...are living at once on the plane that we know and on some other plane of reality.[23]

The characters in Eliot's plays may not always live on two planes at once; but usually, they contribute to a certain doubleness in action, when the play is considered in its entirety. On the surface, the characters appear to take part in simple, realistic events; actually, they are involved in a mythic or ritualistic mode of action. Either by deliberate symbolic *motifs* or by archetypal situations, Eliot manages to convey through his plays what he defines in his essay as

> a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention and detachment, drowning in sunlight.[24]

Only gradually do we become aware of this subtly wrought "pattern behind the pattern," as if in its apprehension, we are re-enacting the poet's own painfully won apprehension of that greater pattern in which all contraries are reconciled. We become conscious of our dual citizenship in time and eternity and of a synthesizing power acting through us and making sense of seemingly opposite worlds.

The perception of the characters in *Murder in the Cathedral* are on different levels of refinement: Becket, the Priests, the Chorus of the Women of Canterbury, and the murderous Knights have, on a descending order, distinct conceptions of reality, ranging from the awesome spirituality of Becket to the depraved worldliness of the Knights. The cumulative effect is somewhat like the impression conveyed by a cubist painting, in which successive temporal states are depicted on the same spatial canvas (see Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase"). The characters perform their different functions simultaneously, the Knights are sinning, the Chorus and the Priests are suffering, Becket is martyring himself. This is 'tragedy' under the aspect of eternity, as it may appear to God; the internal conflicts of Becket and the Chorus, the uncertainty of the Priests, the arrogant self-assurance of the Knights are all microcosmic. Becket intuitively senses that the still wheel, as God beholds it, incorporates all the patterns of interlocking action and suffering which most of mankind can only view as flux. He knows that he has to combat deceptive appearances and temptations on his way to the reality of the still point:

> End will be simple, sudden, God-given.
> Meanwhile the substance of our first act
> Will be shadows, and the strife with shadows.
>
> (MC. p. 246)

He is not deflected from his purpose by temptations involving worldly gain. It is only when he is tempted by his own deeply hidden desire for martyrdom that he pauses, unsure of the course he should pursue. The Fourth Tempter flings his own seemingly wise words in Becket's teeth and all the four tempters chant in unison of the unreality (or *māyā*) of temporal existence:

Man's life is a cheat and a disappointment;
All things are unreal,
Unreal or disappointing;
The Catherine wheel, the pantomime cat,
The prizes given at the children's party,
The prizes awarded for the English Essay,
The scholar's degree, the statemen's decoration.
All things become less real, man passes
From unreality to unreality.

(MC. p. 256)

He realizes with a shock that he is courting disaster by imposing his own will over God's and initiating action and suffering in himself and others, as if he, not God, were the centre of the wheel. The only way in which he can reach the still point of the turning world is to surrender to the divine will. Those who act and suffer on their own initiative are inescapably on the wheel; but those who consent to the will of God are one with God, at the still point. Becket resolves, therefore, to submit himself and find his peace, like Dante, in God's will. His way is now clear through the miasma of *māyā* to the still point.

*The Family Reunion* too contains different orders of reality, corresponding to the potentialities of the characters ranged within the play. Amy, her sister and their husbands are shallow, their vision circumscribed by the 'normal' world of appearances. They see only events and they are incapable of understanding any action that does not proceed from a selfish desire for sensory gratification. Harry is conscious of their hollowness and reprimands them for it soon after his arrival:

You are all people
To whom nothing has happened, at most a continual
impact
of external events. You have gone through life in sleep,
Never woken to the nightmare.

(FR. p. 293)

Harry is quite right in claiming that their life would be "unendurable," if they were "wide awake." (FR. p. 293). For, they are people who

have taken the reality of this world for granted, people who are afraid to look beyond their ken. They are disquieted by Harry's passionate denunciation of their enslavement to the wheel, but cling desperately to their world of make-believe:

> We all of us make the pretension
> To be the uncommon exception
> To the universal bondage.
> ...
> Why do we all behave as if the door might suddenly open,
> the curtains be drawn
> The cellar make some dreadful disclosure, the roof
> disappear,
> And we should cease to be sure of what is real or unreal?
> Hold tight, hold tight, we must insist that the world is what
> we have always taken it to be.
> (FR. p. 301-302)

They are classic illustrations of the power of *māyā*: they take the real for unreal and the unreal for real. On the other hand, Agatha and Mary are able to see beyond what appears to be real and they help Harry in his pursuit of liberation from the "universal bondage." When he comes back to Wishwood, Harry is in a condition of acute spiritual distress; he has not yet gained access to the transcendental realm to which Agatha holds the key but he is dissatisfied with his life in the phenomenal world. Like the anguished protagonist of *Ash Wednesday*, he exists between sleep and waking, in the "time of tension between dying and birth," and like him he is conscious of being alone with his predicament. He speaks of

> The sudden solitude in a crowded desert
> In a thick smoke, many creatures moving
> Without direction, for no direction
> Leads anywhere but round and round in that vapour—
> Without purpose, and without principle of conduct
> In flickering intervals of light and darkness....
> (FR. p. 294)

and expresses his yearning to escape being alone "In an over-crowded desert, jostled by ghosts." Later, in his conversation with Mary, he confesses his despair over his inability to escape:

It seems I shall get rid of nothing.
Of none of the shadows that I wanted to escape.
(FR. p. 306)

Harry's strife with shadows seems very real to him; nevertheless, as Mary points out, "it may be a deception." (FR. p. 307). Harry admits that what he sees may be a "dream." He is tormented, however, by the thought that there is no other reality but this nightmare, "If there is nothing else/The most real is what I fear." (RF. p. 308). Mary shows him though that he brings his own "landscape" with him, a landscape which is no more real than the other landscape in which his mother, aunts and uncles are toiling. She tries to make him see that his conttending with shadows is all imaginary and that he is a victim of self-deception:

Even if, as you say, Wishwood is a cheat,
Your family a delusion - then it's all a delusion....
You deceive yourself
Like the man convinced he is paralysed
Or like the man who believes that he is blind
While he still sees the sunlight.
(FR. p. 309)

Harry is, in fact, in the same position as a person who sees a coil of rope and deludes himself into believing that it is a serpent. He is still subject to the power of *māyā*. Gradually, Harry comes to realize the insubstantiality of the world of appearances. He begins to question the reality of those around him:

Nothing can have happened
To either of my brothers. Nothing can happen -
If Sergeant Winchell is real. But Denman saw him.
But what if Denman saw him, and yet he was not real?
(FR. p. 321)

Very soon, the change in his perception becomes apparent to him; he knows that this sets him apart from his mother, aunts and uncles:

They don't understand what it is to be awake,
To be living on several planes at once,
Though one cannot speak with several voices at once.
(FR. p. 324)

He can no longer talk the "language" of the others, for he has woken up from his sleep of ignorance and sees much farther than they do. He begins to discriminate between the real and the unreal and to become detached from the transient phenomena in the 'normal' world of appearances:

> What you call the normal
> Is merely the unreal and the unimportant.
>
> (FR. p. 326)

As his perception deepens, he comes to realize that *māyā* had entangled him in a web of unreality:

> Now I see
> I have been wounded in a war of phantoms,
> Not by human beings—they have no more power than I.
> The things I thought real were shadows, and the real
> Are what I thought were private shadows.
>
> (FR. p. 334)

No longer do the Furies, who have been hounding him, have the power to frighten him. Those apparitions were a symptom of his inner darkness, which caused him to see shadows where none really existed. As he emerges into the light of reality, the Furies are transformed into "the bright angels," whom he elects to follw in pursuit of liberation from the "burning wheel." (FR. p. 339)

Edward and Lavinia, Peter and Celia, in *The Cocktail Party*, are under the power of their private delusions at the start. Without being in love with Celia, Edward has indulged *à la* Prufrock in a kind of mermaid dream about her and has willed their relationship, in order to satisfy his selfish desires. Lavinia's fancy of being loved by Peter is the converse of her husband Edward's fancy of loving Celia. Celia, in her turn, discovers that she has only been in love with an ideal, projected out of her own imagination and superimposed on Edward. After Celia's death, Lavinia reveals to Peter that what he has been living on is an "image" of Celia, which he made himself in order to meet his own needs. One and all, they are deluded and dwell amidst unrealities; they all come to realize this fact in their own different ways. But, Edward and Celia best express the feeling of helpless bewilderment and the longing escape which result when one is confined to a world of one's own making:

EDWARD: There was a door
And I could not open it. I could not touch the handle.
Why could I not walk out of my prison?
What is hell? Hell is oneself,
Hell is alone, the other figures in it
Merely projections.

(CP. p. 397)

CELIA: I don't hear any voices, I have no delusion —
Except that the world I live in seems all a delusion!
. . .
Then one is alone, and if one is alone
Then lover and beloved are equally unreal
And the dreamer is no more real than his dreams.

(CP. p. 416)

Both Edward and Celia sense that "one is always alone," (CP p. 397) and that one's thoughts and feelings all fall within "a circle closed on the outside," constituting a private world of appearances. (WL. p. 80). Edward, Lavinia and Celia approach Sir Henry for relief from their suffering (presumably, Peter will follow in their footsteps). Sir Henry is quick to recognize their common *malaise*, but prescribes a different 'cure' to each one of them to suit their individual needs. For, obviously they are in different stages of spiritual evolution. He advises Edward and Lavinia to accept the past and to perceive what they have in common - a sense of "isolation" - which furnishes a bond to hold them together, while they are still in "a state of unenlightenment." (CP. p. 410). They must make "the best of a bad job." Sir Henry's remedy for Celia's sickness is much more radical, for she is ready to sacrifice herself and accept martyrdom in patience and humility like Becket. So, Sir Henry sends her to the "sanatorium," where only saints go, and Celia consents to "journey blind" towards the still point. (CP. p.418). Her life of self-abnegation "by which the human is / Transhumanized" contrasts with the non-mystical life of average people like Edward and Lavinia. Celia's way is that of the contemplative mystic (or the *sannyāsin*), who has renounced all desires for the love of God; the other way, which Edward and Lavinia follow, is that of the dutiful householder (or the *gṛhastha*),

who consecrates all his actions to God. Both are ways of redemption; both are ways out of darkness through darkness, for "Only through time is time conquered." (BN. p. 173). Hence, Sir Henry comments:

> Each way means loneliness - and communion.
> Both ways avoid the final desolation
> Of solitude in the phantasmal world
> Of imagination, shuffling memories and desires.
>
> (CP. p. 419)

Hence, Sir Henry's parting words to Edward, Lavinia and Celia are the same — "Work out your salvation with diligence." (CP. p. 411, p. 420)

None of the characters in *The Confidential Clerk* is a martyr or a saint. None is an artistic genius; even Colby who seems distinct from the others has only a second-rate talent. None cures the ills of the mortal condition by recipe. The characters are all ordinary men and women, who insist on their own diagnoses and make up their own prescriptions; yet, by the end, they all gain a measure of self-knowledge, though the deepest insight belongs to Colby. His self-education begins in the first serious conversation he has with his father. Initiated by Sir Claude's observation that his wife "has always lived in a world of make-believe," the talk soon strikes a profounder note, when Colby expresses his doubt of such a pretence:

> It doesn't seem quite honest
> If we all have to live in a world of make-believe,
> Is that good for one?
>
> (CC. p.462)

Then, Sir Claude reveals to Colby that he had relinquished his youthful dreams of becoming a potter, prompted by pressure. from his father and by his own doubts, and become a financier. He had gradually become reconciled to his substitute life as a businessman, which

> begins as a kind of make-believe
> And the make-believing makes it real.
>
> (CC. p. 464)

Nevertheless, he continued to cherish his potter's creations, and periodically retreated to his private room, holding his china and porcelain. It was his escape into "the real world." But it is obvious that the "pure" world of art into which Sir Claude escapes from time to time is as much a make-believe as the "sordid" world of business. He lives in "two worlds — each a kind of make-believe." (CC. p. 466). Like his wife, therefore, Sir Claude is prey to "delusion," (CC. p. 462), caught in the web of *māyā*. Colby can empathize with his father, since he too has relinquished his ideal of becoming a musician, a great organist, by taking up the post of a confidential clerk under his father. But he rebels against his father's fatalistic acceptance of life's terms in the fond hope that "make-believing makes it real." (CC, p. 464) He refuses to be content with less than the wholly real. He too has a "secret garden," an inner world into which he occasionally retires, but he cannot accept what his half-sister, Lucasta, tells him:

> .... it's only the outer world that you've lost;
> You've still got your inner world - a world that's more real.
> (CC. p. 472)

To Colby, it is only a part-time consolation. He wants a "garden" as real as the literal one in Joshua Park. from which Eggerson, his predecessor in Sir Claude's service, not only gains a creative joy but also "marrows, or beetroots, or peas" for his wife. To a man of Colby's sensibility, no reality is acceptable that does not integrate the ideal or spiritual with the actual or practical. He knows that both his outer world and his secret garden are insubstantial:

> . . . my garden's no less unreal to me
> Than the world outside it. If you have two lives
> Which have nothing whatever to do with each other —
> Well, they're both unreal.
> (CC. pp. 473-474)

Moreover, he is alone in his garden; he longs that God would walk in his garden, as "that would make the world outside it real." (CC. p.474). Mere ecstasy, aesthetic or spiritual, is not enough for Colby; it must be expressed through practical action and, more important, it must be shared, with man or God. Clearly, Colby yearns to break out of the closed circle of his self, the private

world of make-believe, and be free of *māyā*, separating him from reality. At the end, he manages to take his first step in this direction by opting to be a church organist instead of a confidential clerk.

In *The Cocktail Party*, after Sir Harcourt-Reilly has appropriately guided his 'patients' onto their respective paths, his confidante Julia comments:

> All we could do was to give them the chance.
> And now, when they are stripped naked to their souls
> And can choose, whether to put on their proper costumes
> Or huddle quickly into new disguises ...
>
> (CP. p.421)

Lord Claverton, in *The Elder Statesman*, is also given a chance by the sheer force of circumstances to re-form his life. He is quick to seize the opportunity and, though it entails considerable pain, strips himself naked to his soul before his daughter and her *fiancé* and chooses rightly to put on the proper costume. He is a lonely man, ill and prematurely aging at the start. On his retirement from public affairs, he finds himself "Contemplating nothingness." (ES. pp. 529). All that he has done so far in life does not seem to amount to much and he is left with the "fear of emptiness" before him. (ES. pp.529-530) Then, he is suddenly confronted by two persons, whom he had known in his past life, and they accuse him of having adversely affected their lives by acts of commission and omission. Forced to come to terms with his unsavoury past, he finally recognizes that "they are not real" and that they are "merely ghosts," who have always been with him, tormenting his conscience (ES. p. 569). With this recognition, he sees himself emerging from his "spectral existence" into something like "reality." (ES. p. 569). When he has exorcised the uneasy ghosts of his own past, which have usurped his reality, his visitors are reduced to mere human beings who can no longer harm him. He confesses to his daughter and her *fianacé* and receives a kind of absolution at his daughter's hands. He gives up dominating and exploiting others for his own needs and dares to be "the man he really is." This marks the death of his unreal self, that which "pretends to be someone." (ES. p.582). In other words, he has done battle with the accusing phantoms of his shadow self and

thus loosened the grip of *māyā* over his existence. At the end, therefore, he is "brushed by the wing of happiness," (ES. p. 581) a sign that he is well on his way to freedom.

No doubt, the characters and episodes in Eliot's plays differ from each other. Yet, their chief stress is on the deceptiveness of man's temporal existence and the necessity of living under the aspect of eternity. Man, as a rule, dwells amidst appearances, deludes himself into taking the unreal for real and the real for unreal. Consequently, he finds himself enslaved by shifting desires and becomes bound to the turning wheel, which involves him in endless suffering; he is reduced to shadow-boxing with reality. The treachery, so to speak, of secular hopes and desires, which enmesh man ever more firmly in the web of *māyā* or world-appearance, is thus Eliot's great dramatic theme.

The majority of mankind continue to be subject to *māyā*, except for those odd and infrequent moments when they have a brief and tantalizing glimpse of the reality beyond all appearances. A few intrepid souls, however, do achieve a break-through and find repose in the still point.

Eliot does not elaborate on the nature of the still point. Instead, he leaves us the task of piecing together the hints scattered throughout his poetry and drama, particularly the *Four Quartets*, and of forming a coherent picture: the still point is thus "a liberation/ From the future as well as the past" (LG. p. 195); liberation, however, is not negation, for when we are liberated, we consider "the future/And the past with an equal mind" (DS. p. 188); in other words, past and future are reconciled. The still point spells "inner freedom from the practical desire" (BN. p. 173), but freedom from desire is not desirelessness, for there is still the "unattached devotion which might pass for devotionless" (DS. p. 186), and "the expanding of love beyond desire." (LG. p. 195). The still point is "release from the inner and outer compulsion" (BN. p. 173) but it is not inaction, for "right action is freedom/From past and future also," (DS. p. 190) and one acts freely when one has the source of movement within.

The still point, then, is not freedom from time as such but freedom from the temporality of time; not freedom from desire as such, but freedom from slavery to shifting desires; not freedom from

agony as such, but freedom from the agony of agony, through understanding and compassion; not freedom from death as such - for "the time of death is every moment" (DS. p, 188) - but freedom from the fear of death. It is a condition of "complete simplicity," (LG. p. 198) when one lives unattached and clings to nothing in the world, rising above, without negating, the basic facts of impermanence and suffering. Or, as Iqbal Singh puts it in his book, *Gautama Buddha*,

> Here we are in a universe which is devoid of tension — not because contraries and conflicts have ceased to operate, but because they have somehow become intelligible. Here, in the very contemplation of transiency, we receive a measure of eternity.....Here the wheel turns and does not turn. Here the paradox is no longer a paradox, but rather a luminous certitude. Here we are in the very heart of peace.[25]

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See also T. S. Eliot, "Dante," Selected Essays (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 275, for an exposition of Dante's Catholic philosophy of disillusion .
2. See *The Bhagavad Gītā*, tr. by Juan Mascaro (Middlesex: Penguin, 1962), p. 101
3. See H. C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), pp. 175-179
4. *The Holy Bible*, ed. Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 1469
5. T. E. Hulme, *Speculations: Essays in Humanism and the Philosophy of Art* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936), p. 34
6. *The Upanishads*, tr. by Juan Mascaro (Middlesex: Penguin, 1965), pp. 91-92
7. *The Bhagavad Gītā*, tr. by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (New York: New American Library, 1954), p. 80
8. *Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, tr. by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (Hollywood, California: Vedanta Press, 1953), pp. 14-15
9. *Ibid.*, p. 68

10. Staffan Bergsten, *Time and Eternity: A Study in the Structure and Symbolism of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets* (Stockholm)

11. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (London Sonnenschein, 1893), p. 9

12. *Ibid.*, p. 432

13. *Ibid.*, p. 453

14. *Ibid.*, p. 140

15. A quite convincing case may be made out for seeing even Prufrock as foreshadowing the appearance of Tiresias in Eliot's poetry. Prufrock compares himself to "Lazarus....come back from the dead" (LP. p. 16) and, at one point in his agitated reverie, declares that he should have been a crab; later, he claims to have seen his own "head...brought in upon a platter." (LP. p. 15). It would seem, therefore, that Prufrock like Tiresias experiences several lives simultaneously.

16. T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, a facsimile and transcript of the original drafts including the annotations of Ezra Pound, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 3

17. *The Teachings of Bhagavān Śrī Ramaṇa Maharishi*, ed. by Arthur Osborne (London: Rider, 1962), p. 10

18. Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism* (Middlesex, Penguin, 1948). Eliot refers us in his notes (WL. p. 79) to a quotation from Hermann Hesse's *Blick ins Chaos*, describing a similar phenomenon "... Ueber diese Lieder lacht der Bürger beleidigt, der Heilige und Seher hört sie mit Tränen." Hesse was deeply influenced by Indian philosophy; he was especially captivated by Buddhism. He embodied certain basic Indian philosophical themes in his book *Siddhārtha*. Siddhārtha was the original name of the Buddha, before he became enlightened. In Hesse's book, the name belongs to the protagonist who encounters the Buddha.

19. *Cf. Aphorisms of Yoga by Bhagavān Śrī Patañjali*, done into English from the original in Sanskrit with a commentary by Shree Purohit Swami and an introduction by W.B. Yeats (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1936), p. 62,

> The forces of attachment and detachment simultaneously work on the mind, a constant fight goes on between worldly pleasures and spiritual pleasures; with the help of spiritual pleasures the yogi controls the worldly pleasures, with the help of renunciation he controls the spiritual pleasures, till he attains the seedless Samādhi.

20. Matthew Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," *The Portable Matthew Anold*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 151

21. *Cf.* "Little Gidding," *Four Quartets*, p. 195:

> See, now they vanish,
> The faces and the places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
> To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.

22. *Cf. The Dry Salvages*, p. 180:
> So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

23. T.S. Eliot, *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), pp. 189-190

24. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

25. Quoted by Christmas Humphreys in *Buddhism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), p. 215

# 2

# E. M. FORSTER'S 'A PASSAGE TO INDIA' : AN ANALYSIS*

P. S. PADMANABHAN

> "...Several things dovetailed into my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature,... I mean *Negative Capability*, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason."
>
> — John Keats

"God," runs a popular Renaissance adage, "is a Circle whose Circumference is nowhere and whose Centre everywhere."[1] It is an image peculiarly appropriate to *A Passage to India*, for from its central Caves circle after circle expands and echoes to the uttermost limits of the Universe, like the endless ripples set up on the surface of a pond by the casting of a stone. Within its periphery, then, the book includes all existence, animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic, though individual men, tragically wrapped up in their own private cocoons, often do not perceive the essential unity of all creation in that Great Circle called God.

Forster dwelt at length on the significance of the Marabar Caves in his *Paris Review* interview:

> When I began *A Passage to India* I knew that something important happened in the Malabar Caves, and that it would have a central place in the novel - but I didn't know

*Lecture delivered at the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy on September 13, 1978

> what it would be... The Malabar Caves represented an area in which concentration can take place. A cavity. They were something to focus everything up: they were to engender an event like an egg.[2]

The Caves, in short, imparted to Forster "the sense of a solid mass ahead, a mountain round or over through which .. the story must somehow go."[3]

## I

The caves are contained within those abrupt and monstrous swellings in the ground, the Marabar Hills, as it were, bubbles inside the earth's sphere. The Caves and the Mountains, then, together constitute an archetypal symbol of life and evolution-the circle within the circle. The origins of the Caves are shrouded in mystery, lost

> In the dark backward and abysm of time.[4]

Because of their extraordinary antiquity, they manage to suggest the womb of Mother Earth and thereby point back to the fount of all creation.

Having inhabited India for a far longer time than either the Moslem or the Christian, the Hindu is closer to an apprehension and assimilation of the primordial meaning embodied in the caves and mountains of the Indian landscape. He is moved even to cherish and worship that meaning in a transmuted and subliminal form in the architecture of his temple. The ends of Hindu art and religion therefore, are one and the same. Their purpose

> is not to extract beauty from nature, but to reveal the Life within life, the Noumenon with the phenomenon, the Reality within unreality, the Soul within matter.[5]

That is to say, both Hindu art and religion are designed to lead man back to the spring-head from which his life-current runs or else dries up.

The most striking feature of the Hindu temple is its *Gopura* (or World Mountain)

> on whose exterior is displayed life in all its forms, life human and superhuman and subhuman and animal, life tragic and

> cheerful, cruel and kind, seemly and obscene, all crowned at the Mountain's summit by the sun.

Deep within this *Gopura*, which forms the shell, as it were, around an egg, is contained

> a tiny cavity, a central cell, where, in the heart of the world complexity, the individual could be alone with his god.[6]

This *garbha-gṛha* (womb-house) is connected to the *Gopura* by a simple, doorless corridor inviting everyone to pass freely too and fro between them.

When one walks into a Hindu temple, therefore, he passes symbolically from the external world of egotism and desire, tragedy and comedy, nobility and absurdity, order and chaos to an internal realm of anonymity and detachment, in which only a passionless neutrality holds sway. And when one reaches out beyond symbol to its essential meaning, realization dawns that one's own body is, so to speak, a temple housing a dark, secret, inner core of being. Gradually this feeling is intensified until at last the humorless region of the subconscious takes complete control over one's personality and reaches out to the ends of the universe. Then, one is said to have attained the *Mukti* (freedom *tout court*) of *Nirvāṇa;* instead of flitting to and fro between the order-cum-disorder of the *Gopura* and the utter non-order of the *garbha gṛha*, he is one with the primal force of creation coiled within his own self and engendering the universe.

Because of his proximity to "the Ancient Night" (PI. p. 74) of the Caves in his temple, the Hindu, as Forster intuitively realized and found attractive,

> is concerned not with conduct, but with vision. To realize what God is, seems more important than to do what God wants. He has a constant sense of the unseen - of the powers around if he is a peasant, of the powers behind if he is a philosopher, and he feels that this tangible world, with its chatter of right and wrong, subserves the intangible.[7]

Thus, though the Marabar Caves are not considered "holy" (PI. p. 74) and are not venerated, their symbolic and archetypal significance is immediately grasped by the Hindu, Godbole, while it only

intimidates, bewilders, or wearies other. Consequently, a vision akin to that of the Hindu runs through the varied incidents in the book, threading them together like a string its handful of scattered pearls; it provides, moreover, a cosmic backdrop against which are enacted the minute details of everyday life, tragic, comic and absurd, all equally insignificant or indistinct like tiny jabs of oil in a masterpiece of painting.

Implying as they do a cosmic negation of all that is comprehensible to the finite and reasoning human mind, the Caves are appropriately housed in the "unspeakable" Marabar Hills (PI. p. 123), which are "like nothing else in the world" bearing "no relation to anything dreamt or seen" (PI. p. 123) and are themselves unvaried in pattern:

> . . . no carving, not even a bee's nest or a bat distinguishes one from another. Nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation — for they have one — does not depend upon human speech. (PI. p. 124)

Even if they are excavated, "nothing, nothing would be added to the sum of good and evil." This "nothing" of the Caves is a negation of everything finite and human but does not mean a vacuum; it indicates rather an infinite absence that points in turn to an infinite presence. It is similar to the *Śūnya* of the Buddha or the *nirguṇa Brahman* of the Upaniṣads Absolute Reality without attributes.

The non-human nature of the Caves is implicit in its response to any human sound. There is only a "lterrifying echo" (PI. p. 140), terrifying to anyone unable or unwilling to transcend human limitations and be overwhelmed by a primal awareness of life in the Universe. It is an echo, moreover, "entirely devoid of distinetions":

> Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof. 'Boum' is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or 'bou-oum' or 'lou-boum'—utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeaking of a boot, all produce 'boum'. Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a

> circle, but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an over-lapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake, composed of small snakes, which writhe independently. (PI. p. 140)

The coiling worm is reminiscent of the serpent biting its own tail, an archetypal symbol of "the cyclic unity of all life, the inseparability of beginning and end, the eternal round of the seasons."[8] The worm is genetically linked to the small snakes, "which writhe independently" within the larger snake, reproducing in miniature the archetypal circles-within-the-circle concept embodied in caves and mountains. Psychologically speaking, therefore, the coiling worm stands for the human consciousness reaching back in the collective unconscious to the prehistoric memory of the ur-womb of all creation, that indescribable nothingness from which we all come and 'to which we must all return. On a metaphysical level, the coiling worm represents the solitary human soul (*Jīvātman*) striving through eternity (that is, through endless reincarnations) to complete itself in the essential unity of the Great Circle (*Paramātman*). The extreme difficulty of this union from the human point of view is mirrored in the worm's present inability to complete the circle, while its "eternal watchfulness" holds out the promise of a possible future consummation. The near-impossibility of union between the human and the non-human, the rational and the non-rational, is strikingly illustrated everytime a casual visitor to the Caves lights a match:

> Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit... The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. (PI. p. 124)

The air-fed flame of the match is brought in from the rational and chaotic world outside and signifies human consciousness. It is also *Jīvātman*, the individual soul which, according to the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad, "is like a flame without smoke."[9] *Jīvātman* is ever at one with *Paramātman* or *Brahman* so that fundamentally there is no duality, only unity of being. And when this unity is concretely experienced the *Jīvātman* is said to enter "the cave of the heart, the

abode of the Most High" and to dwell "for ever in the heart of all beings", so that "in one's own heart, Brahman is realized clearly, if seen in a mirror. [10] The finite human mind, however, is unable or unwilling to reach deep enough into the unconsious and grasp this essential unity of all being. This human incapacity to transcend limitations and connect with the non-human is beautifully imaged in the refusal of the air and stone fed flames to meet and merge:

> A mirror inlaid with lovely colours divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, all the evanescent life of the granite, only here visible. (PI. p. 124)

This division between the human and the non-human, however, is only an apparent truth. For, from the standpoint of the unity of being, there can be no duality. To the *Ātman* in indissoluble union with *Brahman*, there can be no other reality but itself; by mere being, it precludes the phenomenal universe and admits of neither the duality of the twin flames nor even their striving for union. Indeed, with what can the one indivisible and ever-present Reality unite? The phenomenal universe functions but as a mirror-reflection of this Reality; it is a seeming truth (*mithyā*), that which the human mind must somehow overleap in order to find its true identity in *Brahman*. That the essential unity of the *Ātman* in B*rahman* can be realized only by an annihilation of the human consciousness and the flooding-in of the non-human awareness is brought by the extinction of the twin flames in the caves:

> The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all caves. (PI. p. 125)

It is the moment of *Nirvāṇa*, when the *Ātman* frees itself from all seeming truths and finds its true self in *Brahman*, the unlimited absolute without attributes, symbolized in the infinitely mirrored darkness of the Caves.

The polished stone of the Caves that prevents the union of the two flames implies the seeming truth (*mithyā*) of the phenomenal universe, for stone - the granite of the Caves as well as the rock on

which the wasp rests - represents the point beyond which human consciousness may not venture in its passage towards ultimate Reality.

The symbology of the Caves and Mountains, then, with its intricate and multiple meanings, determines the structure of *A Passage to India*, making it resemble, to a very large extent, the architecture of the Hindu temple. Thus, at the centre of the book is located a small, secret and dark inner core of being or 'nothingness', around which are clustered, like whirling electrons about an unmoving neucleus, all the apparent contradictions and the seemingly irreconcilable opposites of the day-to-day phenomenal universe.

The central Caves function, moreover, as a great echo-chamber so that its lights and shadows, shapes and sounds, snakes and stones, mesh and coalesce into one another, with the nonchalant ease and symbolic depth of the multitudinous gods of the Hindu pantheon. And they are propagated in rhythmic waves across the "hundred Indias" (PI. p. 204) to the uttermost limits of the phenomenal universe and to resound in the ears of Hindu, Moslem and Christian alike, conveying bliss, ennui or nemesis according to the individual's capacity to apprehend and assimilate the fundamental 'nothingness' of all creation.

The circular form of the Caves, for instance, is echoed in the "overarching" (PI. p. 10) Indian sky that presides over a spherical earth containing hills with "bubbles" inside them, so that "outside the arch there always seemed an arch, beyond the remotest echo a silence." (PI. p. 52). The Caves, then invest the phenomenal universe, which is but a mirror-reflection of the boundless Noumenon, with an apparent infinitude, making the entire universe seem but a gigantic Marabar Cave.

## II

The endless circularities generated by the Caves, suggestive of the non-human infinitude of God, are criss-crossed by the profusion of phenomenal life - the same disorderliness so picturesquely depicted on the *Gopura* of the Hindu temple. Consequently, subtle and

stubborn divisions are created, never to be fully resolved by a finite human consciousness. Yet such is human nature that it must at least attempt to bring order into chaos.

The book falls into three sections, comparable to the three big blocks of sound in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. 'Mosque' represents the season of cool spring, when instinct or emotion, symbolized in the full moon, holds sway, as in the Moslems. 'Caves' stands for the hot summer, when reason or intellect, symbolized by the parching sun, rules the earth, as do the Ango-Indians. 'Temple' signifies the rainy autumn, when intuition or inspired love, symbolized by the fertilizing waters of Mau, achieves a partial triumph, as in the Hindus.

The sky, the water and the earth of the Indian landscape form yet another triad. The sky houses the sun and the moon, which are eternally at war with each other in Indian myth. The moon is daily deprived of one half of her sovereignity over time by her enemy, the sun, who swallows her up bit by bit every month.

Appropriately enough, it is when the full moon of instinct rides the Indian sky in 'Mosque' that Ronny and Adela, the two Anglo-Indian lovers, are momentarily able to suspend their reason and achieve "a spurious unity." (PI. p. 86). The unity is spurious because their inhibiting Western education with its false pride and emphasis on dry intellect stands in their way and prevents them from a total surrender to the dark gods of passion within them. Hence, the perpetual hostilities of the phenomenal universe, symbolized in the enmity between the sun's day and the moon's night threaten to rend them apart:

> And the night that encircled them, absolute as it seemed, was itself a spurious unity, being modified by the gleams of the day that leaked up around the edges of the earth, and by the stars. (PI. p. 86)

Towards the end of 'Mosque' the sun gains control over the moon and banishes human love by its burning power to destroy:

> The sun was returning to his kingdom with power and without beauty — that was the sinister feature. If only there had been beauty! (PI. pp. 111-2)

The sun is also creator and preserver of life and functions as a beacon at the crest of the *Gopura*, inviting men to annihilate human consciousness by the light of discrimination and attain a primal awareness of the universe. But then, just as false sentiment can defeat the full-fledged passion of the moon and yield only a spurious unity, so also dry-as-dust reason can lead to sterility:

> Through excess of light, he [the sun] also failed to triumph, he also; in his yellowy-white overflow not only matter, but brightness itself lay drowned. (PI. p. 112)

Water, which the sun sucks up along with everything else is not destroyed, only transformed into cloud and later returned to the earth as rejuvenating rain to interpenetrate all being, organic and inorganic. Even the granite of the Marabar Caves is not exempt from its primal moistness; the cave walls are "smoother than windless water" and all visitors to the cave first circumnavigate "a puddle of water" to be "sucked in like water down a drain" into the Caves. Water stands, then, for all-embracing compassion and as such defines the nature of Mrs. Moore's spiritual exaltation under the spacious Indian sky:

> In England the moon had seemed dead and alien; here she was caught in the shawl of night together with earth and all other stars. A sudden sense of unity, of kinship with the heavenly bodies, passed into the old woman and out like water through a tank, leaving a strange freshness behind. (PI. p. 30)

Unlike Ronny, Mrs. Moore can sense the common humanity of all men under dark and fair skins. Unlike Adela, she is prompted by no vulgar curiosity to see the "real India." (PI. p. 25). Her heart and head are both in their places. Consequently, the very same night sky that came between Adela and Ronny, with their lack of proportion, endows Mrs. Moore with a unique Wordsworthian experience of unity in nature.

Water and all that it stands for dominates 'Temple'. Thus, "in the air thick with religion and rain" (PI. p. 294), Godbole reaches upward through Krishna (the Hindu God of Love akin to

Mrs. Moore's Christ) and succeeds in uniting Mrs. Moore and the wasp in himself. He discards his consciousness to such an extent that he cannot tell himseif apart from other human beings and even insects. He sees all organic life in the phenomenal universe as part of himself. He does not, however, delve deep enough into his unconscious, to render the stone — the granite of the Caves as well as the rock on which the wasp rests — a part of his existence. "Logic and conscious effort" (PI. p. 282) force him back to state of mind when he must perforce distinguish himself as an entity separate from the rest of the universe. He does not despair:

> That was all he could do. How inadequate! But each according to his own capacities, and he knew that his own were small. (PI. p. 286)

It is precisely because Godbole knows his limitations that he refuses to discuss the Caves at Fielding's garden party and even avoids making a trip to the Caves by doing such elaborate *pūjā* (worship and prayer) to his beloved Krishna that he misses the train. Worshipping Krishna as he does - a God with attributes (resembling the *Allah* of the Moslems with his ninety-nine names), the *saguṇa Brahman* of the Upaniṣads - he can not yet comprehend, let alone assimilate, the Ancient Night of the Caves - a Being without attributes, the *nirguṇa Brahman* of the Upaniṣads. He confesses as much to Fielding:

> Good and evil are different, as their names imply. But in my humble opinion, they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the difference between presence and absence is great, as great as my feeble mind can grasp. (PI. p.175)

Consequently, total comprehension and realization of the unity of being for Godbole is as yet an unfulfilled desire, not a reality. Even as he reaches out towards it, his consciousness shrinks back from its neutrality. He accepts this insufficient expansion of his self, in all humility and perhaps with dignity:

> 'One old Englishwoman and one little, little wasp,' he thought, as he stepped out of his temple into the grey of a pouring wet morning. 'It does not seem much, still it is more than I am myself.' (PI. p.286)

Recognition of his incapacities goes hand in hand in Godbole with an intuitive grasp of the metaphysical truth that the unmoving imperishable One can never *come* to him, for it *includes* him and the rest of the universe. How can that which *includes* everything and *is* everything go or come? Thus, Godbole knows that however long, humble and involved his song, his beloved Krishna will never come:

> 'Oh no, he refuses to come,' repeated Godbole...'I say to Him, Come, come, come, come, come, come. He neglects to come.' (PI. p. 78)

For Krishna, the God with attributes (*saguṇa Brahman*) is included in that Being without attributes (*nirguṇa Brahman*) represented by the 'nothingness' of the Caves. Is then the infinite 'absence' of Absolute Reality "a universe...not...comprehensible to our minds"?* Yes. Must then the finite human mind give up its efforts to connect with Reality in despair? No. Though the finite human mind cannot grasp an infinitude of 'nothingness', it must persist in its attempt to connect, since

> .. absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence, and we are therefore entitled to repeat, Come, come, come, come. (PI. p. 175)

The passage to the infinitude of absence lies through the plenitude of presence. The best way to attain the inner core of the unconscious is to intensify consciousness to the point where it refines itself out of existence. And so, Godbole is justified in reaching out to the Being without attributes (*nirguṇa Brahman*) through the worship of Krishna, the God with attributes (*saguṇa Brahman*). Like the coiling worm of the Caves, he may be unable to complete the circle at present; but then all eternity lies before him and he will be "eternally watchful" of another moment when he may seek to identity himself with Reality.

In expanding oneself out to the Absolute through Krishna, consciousness is so refined as to pass through all barriers, especially the barrier of logic: 'God is love' reads one of the inscriptions at Mau, "composed in English to indicate his universality" (PI. p. 284), a distorted echo of Mrs. Moore's logical "God...is....love." (PI. p. 51).

*From a programme note by Forster for the dramatization of *A Passage to India* by Santha Rama Rau, the playwright.

Even though Mrs. Moore senses a unity in nature, she conceives of the universe as divine order and not as unspeakable 'nothingness'. Indeed, she is not even conscious that a barrier of logic exists. She lacks the metaphysically adventurous spirit of Godbole, who can not only conceive and accept the indescribable 'nothingness' at the core of existence but also consciously strive towards self-abnegation, the surrender of his individuality in that 'nothingness'. Knowing that Krishna too is finally a mere seeming truth, just a token of the Absolute, he is not perturbed when the clay images of his beloved Krishna are cast into the waters of Mau; they are but

> emblems of passage; a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be apprehended except when it is unattainable.
> (PI. p. 309)

God is love. Yes, that is the final message of India. The Indian mind' wary of even a God of love, a God with human attributes, can find total repose only in a non-human and infinite 'nothingness', without qualm and in silent serenity.

On the human level, the waters of Mau promise a world-embracing compassion, a promise to be revoked with the return of summer, for the present is only a part of the ever-changing flux of existence. Thus, the Hindu festival of *Gokulāṣṭami* is an attempt to apprehend the joy of the moment and celebrates the birth of Krishna, the God of love, in a "wild and sincere" spirit and all men love each other. (PI. p. 299). Under a temporary benediction, as it were, of the sky in the form of rain and surrounded by the waters of fertility, the boats of Aziz and Fielding collide, just as the earthen images of Krishna mingle with the stream. The collision symbolizes a momentary union of East and West, emotion and intellect, heart and head.

Earth, alternately baked by the sun and cooled by the rain, is the third element in the triad of earth, water and sky. It is both womb and grave. Out of its primordial slime have evolved all the myriad forms of life and into its muddy nakedness must they all return.

The triad of sky, water and earth is intermingled with the triad of animal, vegetable and mineral life. The animals of India lack

"any sense of an interior" and will lodge as soon "inside a house as out"; houses to them are only "a normal growth of the eternal jungle, which alternately produces trees, houses trees." (PI. p. 35). A wood of trees often "seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving" (PI. p. 9) so that earth as well as water seem commingled in vegetable life. Vegetation also connects earth, water and air:

> The toddy palms and neem trees and mangoes and pepuls... rise from the gardens where ancient tanks nourish them.... Seeking light and air ...they soar above the lower deposit to greet one another with branches and beckoning leaves, and to build a city for the birds. (PI. p. 10)

And above all is "the overarching sky", the sky that is blue like Krishna, the God of love, and so "settles everything - not only climates and seasons but when the earth shall be beautiful." (PI. p. 10). The sky has also its eddies and swirls of air, which transmits sounds as echoes and sustains life, human and animal and vegetable. Air fills the book, then, from beginning to end, so that the entire novel seems an exercise in *prāṇāyāma* (the yogic art of breathing).

Earth, water, sky and air combine to form a grand stage, as it were, on which are enacted, in the brief interim between birth and death, the lives of human beings as well as plants and animals. And ceaselessly, the background is shifting: days and nights pass on their diurnal rounds, seasons flit by on swift-winged feet and the stars whirl on in their cyclic paths *ad infinitum*. Time, moreover, operates geologically, not historically, in this cosmos:

> The Ganges.. is not an ancient stream. Geology, looking further than religion, knows of a time when neither the stream nor the Himalayas that nourished it existed, and an ocean flowed over the holy places of Hindustan. (PI. p. 123)

Placed against such a stupendous setting, people are reduced to the stature of dwarfs, their deeds and misdeeds, virtues, faults and absurdities pale into insignificance, their politics and the differences arising from it become dust-heaps of illusion. For, behind all this multitudinousness, mess and confusion of the phenomenal universe is the Noumenon, that which describes all while itself remaining

indescribable. Manifesting itself from within the ur-womb of all creation, hidden in the inmost cavity of all being, it is at once the spectacle, the spectator and the manipulator of the cosmic dance; centred in its 'nothingness' it apprehends no other reality but itself. It is the puppeteer *par excellence*, who pulls the strings that motivate the dolls and yet remains indifferent to the show, aware that the strings, the dolls and the show are all included in its own being.

This complex idea that has its origin in the Caves is most beautifully echoed in the untouchable, who pulls the punkah in the courtroom where Aziz is tried:

> Pulling the rope towards him, relaxing it rhythmically, sending swirls of air over others, receiving none himself, he seemed apart from human destinies, a male fate...The Punkah-wallah...scarcely knew that he existed and did not understand why the Court was fuller than usual, indeed he did not know it was fuller than usual, didn't even know he worked a fan, though he thought he pulled a rope. (PI. p.212)

The swirls of air from the rhythmically relaxed Punkah are carried all over the courtroom to become the common respiration of all the races, Hindu, Moslem and Christian, but they do not remind them that, in the final analysis, they are all one indescribable 'nothingness'. They function, therefore, like the clay images of Krishna flung into the waters of Mau, as emblems of a passage not yet realized.

## III

Lacking an awareness of the infinitude of absence, the three prominent races in the book, the Moslems, the Anglo-Indians and the Hindus are never able to unite. They are divided not only from other races but also from people of their own races. And ultimately, they are divided within themselues: "The fissures in the Indian soil are infinite." (PI. p. 288)

Aziz, whose name runs the gamut from A to Z as if to encompass all the divisions, religious and racial, inherent in the Moslems, is at once superstitious and scientific, passionate and rational, political and non-political, practical and visionary, perpetually at war with

himself, Hindus bore and disgust him and Hinduism, with its dark, confusion of cow-dung and double-talk, compares unfavourably with the hard gem-like brilliance of his beloved Islam. Anglo-Indians amuse and infuriate him by turns so that he finds it impossible to make true friends among them; they are all, including his 'dear Cyril', subtly infected with *sahib*-dom, never letting him forget that they are the ruling whites and that he is the subject native. Mrs. Moore is the sole exception with whom he can communicate in the *lingua franca* of the heart. Other than this brief interlude, his only escape is in poetry that extols the heroic past of Islam, with which he delights his compatriots:

> He recited a poem by Ghalib. It had no connection with anything that had gone before but it came from his heart and spoke to theirs. (PI. p. 102)

The "sad beauty" of the song of Ghalib greets "ridiculous Chandrapore, where every street and house was divided against itself" and tells her that she is "a continent and a unity." (PI. p.103) Essentially, it is the same message that resounded in Godbole's miming of the milkmaid's song, inviting Krishna to 'Come'. Aziz and the other Moslems, however, have not intensified their consciousness beyond "pathos" to grasp the fundamental unity behind everything:

> They were overwhelmed by its pathos; pathos, they agreed, is the highest quality of art; a poem should touch the hearer with a sense of his weakness (PI. p. 102)

Lacking the strength of Godbole who can serenely contemplate self-abnegation in a central 'nothingness', Aziz and his fellow-Moslems can only be soothed, not inspired, by Ghalib. His song sounds "not as a call to battle", a battle in which all opposites may be reconciled in a unity of being, but as "a calm assurance" that "India is one; Moslem; always had been; an assurance that lasted until they looked out of the door" (PI. p. 102) into the mess and confusion of the phenomenal universe. Consequently, their hearts and heads are always at loggerheads. None of them, including Aziz, ever subsume both heart and head to a condition of the soul when the unconscious may unfold to reveal that which is

latent in the inmost cavity of being. And so, whenever the Marabar Caves are mentioned, their reaction is either a shrug or a yawn.

The typical Anglo-Indian reaction to the mysteries of India, its art and religion, is a mixture patronising contempt and reluctant tolerance and comes out very well in Ronny's oracular pronouncements:

> We're here to do justice and keep the peace . . . India isn't a drawing room . . . We're not pleasant in India and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do. (PI. p. 50)

It is the attitude bred by the British Public School, which equips Englishmen for the world with "well-developed bodies, fairly well-developed minds, and undeveloped hearts" so that they seldom break their Sawstonian postures of defence against contamination by the heathen. "It is not that the Englishman can't feel — it is that he is afraid to feel."[11]—a fear that stands condemned in Mrs. Moore's reproach of hers son's priggishness:

> One touch of heart — not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart — would have made him a different man, and the British Empire a different situation. (PI. p.50)

As it is, the kindness that bespeaks the heart is conspicuous by its absence in the rulers of Moslem and Hindu India. The Collector Turton, though no racist, believes only in law and order. Major Callender confines himself to his surgical duties. McBryde, the police Inspector is outspoken in his belief of the superiority of the whites over the blacks at Aziz's trial. Anglo-Indian women are worse than their male counterparts. Aziz and his friends believe that it takes only six months for an Englishwoman to lose her humanity in India. Unburdened with duties or children, with empty hearts and minds, they while away their time in gossip and abuse of the natives. They are the chief reason for the dismal failure of "The Bridge Party" which, instead of bridging the gap between the rulers and the ruled, only drives in the wedge of separation deeper than ever between them:

> The Englishmen had intended to play up better, but had been prevented from doing so by their women-folk, whom they had to attend, provide with tea, advise about dogs, etc. (PI. p. 46)

Such attitudes make even Christianity, the professed religion of the Anglo-Indians, a hollow mockery. Ronny, for instance, approves of religion only so long as it endorses his patriotic zeal; he objects when it tries to influence his life. Indeed, the true Anglo-Indian hymn is the British National Athem, inviting God to participate in nationalist politics, and demanding a stiff and solemn posture, as if the listeners expected their King to pay an unscheduled visit any moment. In a land saturated with religion, such shallowness virtually guarantees the defeat of any attempt to bridge the gap between heart and heart.

The Hindus, though less affected than Moslems and Anglo-Indians by racial and political cleavages, have yet their social divisions, their castes and sects and sub-sects, with their wheels within wheels of ancient discriminations. Beyond caste, they have other circles, which include their *sādhus* and *sannyāsins*,

> people who wore nothing but a loincloth, people who wore not even that, and spent their lives in knocking two stick together before a scarlet doll. (PI. pp. 37-8)

During the festival at Mau, the cleavage is between "Brahmin and non-Brahmin; Moslems and English were quite out of the running, and sometimes not mentioned for days." (PI. p. 287) Even religion is not exempt from these pervasive divisions:

> Hinduism, so solid from a distance, is riven into sects and clans, which radiate and join, and change their names according to aspect from which they are approached. (PI. p. 288)

When representatives of the three cloven races get together, as during the expedition to the Marabar Caves, the problems posed by food alone are staggering. Godbole cannot eat meat, Aziz no ham, the English need whisky, soda and port. Aziz, in organizing this

miniature 'bridge' party, challenges "the spirit of the Indian earth which tries to keep men in compartments." (PI. p. 127)

> How can the mind take hold of such a country? Generations of invaders have tried but they remain in exile. The important towns they build are only retreats, their quarrels the malaise of men who cannot find their way home. India knows of their trouble . . . She calls 'Come' through her hundred mouths . . . But come to what? She has never defined. She is not a promise, only an appeal. (PI. p. 135)

Come. It is Godbole's appeal to the unresponsive God, echoed and multiplied a hundred-fold from the cavities scattered all over the Indian sub-continent. An appeal, therefore, to travel back in memory to that imperishable One from which we all come and to which we must all return.

Fielding, Adela and Mrs. Moore try to respond to that appeal.

Fielding is free of racial prejudice and travels light like "a holy man minus his holiness." (PI. p. 118). He extends his hand in friendship to everyone in all sincerity. He too gives a 'bridge' party at his home and it fares better than the other two parties, chiefly because of his warmth and friendliness. As a liberal humanist, he confronts the darkness of India with Grecian clarity of thought:

> The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of good will plus culture and intelligence — a creed ill-suited to Chandrapore, but he had come out too late to lose it. (PI. p. 62).

Yet, only by losing his Hellenist-cum-humanist notions and abandoning himself to the primeval memories churning within his unconscious, can he hope to fully respond to the appeal of India and to connect in radical sense with her teeming humanity. He does not suffer from an undeveloped mind or heart, but from an undeveloped soul. He is curious about Hinduism as an astronomer

may be curious about the uncharted seas of the moon. But curiosity is not enough; it cannot penetrate the dark mysteries of the World Mountain. Only a consciousness mature enough to transcend all barriers, logic among them, can come to rest in the innermost cavity of being, and Fielding does not possess it. His is the tragic portion of a man who has found such a good servant in reason that he has become its enamoured slave:

> Great is information, and she shall prevail. It was the last moment of light, and as he gazed at the Marabar Hills, they seemed to move graciously towards him like a queen, and their charm became the sky's ... Lovely, exquisite moment, but passing the Englishman with averted face and on swift wings. He experienced *nothing* himself; it was as if someone had told him there was such a moment and he was obliged to believe. And he felt dubious and discontented suddenly, and wondered whether he was really and truly a successful human being. (PI. p. 187)

This vague discontent and the mystifying message of 'nothing' from the caves he does not penetrate, are all that Fielding can know of the fantasia of the unconscious.

Adela Quested is the queer and cautious girl who comes out to India to see if she is really in love with Ronny. She "hates mysteries." (PI. p. 68). When she undertakes to see the "real India" (PI. p. 25), therefore, all unknowingly she ventures into very deep waters and discovers to her consternation that a tourist's vision of India can involve her in an encounter with the Ancient Night of the Caves. She too has been taught like other Britishers that feeling is bad form and that one must bottle up one's emotions. She recognizes this to be a mistake and determines not to emulate the other Anglo-Indians in this respect: "I won't be bottled up." (PI. p. 133). More as an act of bravado than one of real courage she shuns the 'chastity belt' of her inhibitions and takes a 'trip' into the dark 'bottles' of the Marabar Caves, only to be sent screaming back to the safety of the civil station.

What happens to her in the cave? Nothing. Literally speaking, no incident takes place, for Aziz is not even near the cave she enters. Psychically, she obtains a glimpse into the everlasting no, the cosmic

negation that lies coiled at the bottom of the unconscious. Clinically, she suffers from sexual hysteria. She has been extremely nervous all day; just before she enters the cave, she suddenly realizes that she is not in love with Ronny and simultaneously notices that Aziz is handsome in a dark Oriental fashion. She is, therefore, in a highly excited state when she starts the usual echo by scratching the cave walls with her finger nail. Her tension snaps under the cave's "ou-boum" and she is precipitated into the gloom in gloom of the unconscious, in which she sees a "shadow" at the entrance of the cave bottling her up; she reacts in "panic and emptiness." (PI. p.189). Her repressed mind interprets her experience in sexual terms; she feels as if she has been raped, entered into and ravished of her personality by the "shadow", that which overshadows everything else by its uniqueness. The "emptiness" that results from momentary draining away of her personality and the "panic" of being infinitely expanded and compressed at once, inspire in Adela a vague humiliation:

> She felt that it was her crime, until her intellect, reawakening, pointed out to her that she was inaccurate here and set her again upon her sterile round. (PI. p. 190).

Even Mrs. Moore does not explain to her jaded personality the significance of the incident in the caves, for it is incommunicable. Hence, the echo flourishes "raging up and down like a nerve in the faculty of her hearing, and the noise in the cave, so unimportant intellectually, was prolonged over the surface of her life." (PI. p. 190). Even her great act of courage in the courtroom, when she testifies to Aziz's innocence, is somehow robbed of all emotion, as if she looked on it from an ironic height. And so, while relieving the Oriental mind, she chills it by a subtle insincerity:

> Truth is not truth in that exacting land, unless there go with it kindness and more kindness and again kindness, unless the Word that was with God also is God. And the girl's sacrifice - so creditable according to Western notions - was rightly rejected, because though it came from her heart, it did not include her heart. (PI. p. 238).

Adela, like Fielding, is hampered by an intellectuality that cannot progress beyond words to a bewildering yet haunting wordlessness.

Hence, when she seeks with his help to give a rational explanation of what happened to her in the cave with words like "hallucination" and "telepathy", "a friendliness as of dwarfs" is in the air and their words are followed

> by a curious backwash as though the universe had displaced itself to fill up a tiny void, or as though they had seen their own gestures from an immense height - dwarfs talking, shaking hands and assuring each other that they stood on the same footing of insight. (PI. p. 257).

Mrs. Moore, unlike Adela, does not turn away from the "shadow", but meets it face to face. Her character undergoes a transformation into something rich and strange, in which all her loyalties to family, race and religion are swept away. By conviction and upbringing a staunch Christian, she begins to feel the change in her from the instant she meets Aziz in the mosque and is dubbed by him an honorary Oriental. She jokes with Aziz: "We shall be Moslems together." (PI. p. 131). But she moves steadily towards a vision akin to that of the Hindu Godbole. His song disturbs her equanimity as it does Adela's naiveté. She too feels like Adela that she has been enclosed in a cocoon of conventionality all her life. Unlike the younger woman, however, she does not resent her condition and complain of being bottled up. She accepts her condition apathetically. The more she is in India, the less benignly Christian her God becomes. When she enters the cave, she is discontented with "poor little talkative Christianity." And she encounters a primordial 'nothing' that includes life as well as death in the cave's echo, an echo that reduces her Christian doctrine of "Let there be light" to "It is finished" and then to "ou-boum" (PI. p. 149)

> Coming at a moment when she chanced to be fatigued, it had managed to murmur, 'Pathos, piety, courage - they exist, but are identical with filth. Everything exists, nothing has value.' If one had spoken vileness in that place, or quoted lofty poetry, the comment would have been the same-'ou-boum'. If one had spoken with the tongues of angels and pleaded for all the unhappiness and misunderstanding in the world, past, present and to come...it would amount to the

> same, the serpent would descend and return to the ceiling. (PI. p. 148).

The serpent, an archetypal spmbol, serves as a mute comment on the seeming truth of all except that Reality which yields but a characterless echo.[12] Totally unprepared by culture or religion for such a vision - a vision so to speak, "with its back turned"[13]- Mrs. Moore retreats into a cave of her own "where the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time, the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people are involved." (PI.p. 202). She stands, in short, in the dim-lit corridor connecting the daylight and confusion of the *Gopura* with the darkness and simplicity of the *garbha-gṛha.* Under different circumstances and background, she might have plunged into that annihilating darkness and achieved the limitlessness of which Godbole knows. She alone among the Anglo-Indians meets the "shadow" face to face, though she sees without understanding. And so, she is finally linked up in Godbole's consciousness with the wasp as he attempts, through a desperate contortion of his body in dance, a spiritual ravishment of the unknown in the temple at Mau.

As she journeys across India homeward bound for England, she sees the fortress town of Asirgarh at sunset through her train-window:

> The train in its descent through the Vindyas, described a semi-circle round Asirgarh. What could she connect it with except its own name? Nothing. But it had looked at her twice and seemed to say: 'I do not vanish.' (PI. p. 204)

Like the train and like the coiling worm of the caves, Mrs.Moore has not completed her circle and her incapacity is reflected in her inability to realize the unity that includes everything. She cannot connect Asirgarh with anything in her consciousness, unlike Godbole who links her with the wasp.That is her tragedy, to have emerged from her plunge into the sea of her unconscious without any redeeming pearl of infinite compassion. She dies at sea and though her grave is unmarked, her spirit becomes a part of the Indian earth. She becomes a legend among Indians, who associate her name with Aziz's triumphant acquittal and transform it by some queer spiritual alchemy of their own into "Esmiss Esmoor", a *mantra,* a hypnotic

chant of thanksgiving-cum-invocation to the goddess who has mysteriously influenced Adela's testimony and saved their countryman Aziz. (PI. p.219). As *mantra*, Mrs. Moore's name crosses the barrier of of logic, which even Godbole is not able to transcend, and so serves as a reminder that the flight of the human soul into the unknown must be on the wings of the non-rational. Subsequent to the trial, a temporary truce is declared between the Hindus and the Moslems and "Esmiss Esmoor" - an expression of Mrs. Moore's spirit in an incantatory form - penetrates the partitions of India to suggest that ultimately there are no disparities, everything and everyone being equally valueless in the presence of the naked being within the echoing cave. Finally, "Esmiss Esmoor" has its own tremendous echo and parallel in the chant

> Radhakrishna Radhakrishna
> Krishnaradha Radhakrishna
> Radhakrishna Radhakrishna
> Radhakrishna Radhakrishna (PI. p.306)

of the worshippers in the temple at Mau, compelling even Aziz, who despises Hinduism, to hear in the insistence "almost certainly, the syllables of salvation that had sounded during his trial at Chandrapore." (PI. p.308)

Towards the end, the failure of friendship between Aziz and Fielding strikes a seemingly discordant note:

> But the horses didn't want it - they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it sending up rocks through which the horses must pass in single file; the temples, the tanks, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath; they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there.' (PI. p.317)

It is not a last despairing wail over *la condition humaine*, not a final *adieu* to hope. It is merely a quiet acknowledgement of the enduring *Weltschmerz* and a calm determination to persist in attempting to connect against all odds. The failure of love between the Englishman and the Indian is but a minor episode in the mess and

confusion of the phenomenal universe depicted on the slopes of the *Gopura*, and does not belie the naked being of unity within the inner cell or *garbha-gṛha*. Both Aziz and Fielding have not responded to the centripetal pull of the primal force of creation. Hence, the phenomenal universe itself *seems* to rise up in revolt against their union. Only by coming to terms with the non-rational within themselves can they hope to be really united in the Noumenon. The horses are libido symbols; emblems of psychic energy derived from primitive biological urges. By defying their riders' desire to come together, the horses drive home their riders' incapacity to penetrate Mother India, a penetration neither possible nor desirable until men can hearken to her call and understand her echoes and know themselves to be but points of contact within that Great Circle called God.

The myriad echoes that emanate in rhythmic waves from the central Caves join, separate, distort, accelerate and amplify each other endlessly, to offer a type of beauty which music attains in its final expression:

> Expansion . ... Not completion. Not rounding off but opening out. When the symphony is over we feel that the notes and tunes composing it have been liberated, they have found in the rhythm of the whole their individual freedom.[14]

For the echoes are all-pervasive and irresistible. They spell nightmare and hysteria, incertitude and pain, to those who stop their ears. They evoke dreams of harmony and peace, assurance and ecstasy, in those who hearken to their call. And their common refrain is that for all our apparent differences we are in reality One. Not only are we fused together each to each as human beings, but we are also a blend of earth, water, sky and air; of mud, temples, stones and mosques; of trees, birds, monkeys and flies; even "of shoes and ships and sealing-wax, of cabbages and kings." Psychically as well as physically, we are one indivisible whole and it is reason's denial of our common root deep in the womb of the Mother Earth that prevents our growth skywards to the sun of enlightenment (*Jñāna*) and causes us to rule ourselves and our hundred Indias with such futility and

blindness as to produce in every era, dictators and tyrants who set brothers against brothers and bloody human history for generations. It is our prime responsibility, therefore, to attempt to integrate ourselves and to base our civilization on *that* which we have in common with the rest of the universe. In other words, we must try to effect a 'passage' like Godbole to the ageless enigma that resides in the inmost cavity of our being. When this passage is an accomplished fact, then and only then, shall the poet's prophecy become a reality:

> All these hearts as of fretted children shall be soothed
>
> All affection shall be fully responded to, the secret shall be told,
>
> All these separations and gaps shall be taken up and hooked and linked together.[15]

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Marjorie Nicolson, *The Breaking of the Circle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 47
2. Forster in his *Paris Review* interview. See *Writers, at Work: The 'Paris Review' Interviews*, (ed.) Malcolm Cowley, New York, 1958, p. 27
3. Forster, The *Paris Review* interview, p. 27
4. *The Tempest*, Act I, scene ii, 1.50
5. E.B. Havell, *The Ideals of Indian Art* (London John Murray, 1920), p. 24. See also: Mulk Raj Anand, *The Hindu View of Art* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 1-6
6. E.M. Forster, "The World Mountain" *The Listener*, XXXLII (1954), p. 978
7. E.M. Forster, "The Gods of India", *The New Weekly*, May 30, 1914, p. 338. *Cf.*, W.B. Yeats in his essay called "An Indian Monk", *Essays and Introduction* (New York : MacMillan, 1961) p. 431

   > The Indian, approaches God through vision, speaks continually of the beauty and terror of the great mountains, interrupts his prayer to listen to the song of birds, remembers with delight the nightingale that disturbed his meditation by alighting on his head and singing there, recalls after many years the witness of a sheet, the softness of a pillow, the gold embroidery upon a shoe. These things are indeed a part of the 'splendour of that Divine Being.'

8. Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1966), pp. 298-9)

9. *The Upanishads* (New York: A Mentor Publication, New American Library, 1957), translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester, p. 21

10. *The Upanishads*, p. 19, 23

11. E.M. Forster, *Abinger Harvest* (London : Edward Arnold & Co., 1965), p. 13

12. The serpent also echoes Adela's experience on her way to the Caves. Adela sees a snake which on closer examination turns out to be a twisted tree stump. This seems to be Forster's version of one of the classic examples of *māyā* or seeming truth. For, a piece of rope lying by the wayside perceived as a snake is Śaṅkara's famous example of *māyā* in his exposition of the Vedānta philosophy. See Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (Cleveland : World publishing Co., 1955), p. 19n

13. Forster, The *Paris Review* Interview, p. 27

14. E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1962), p. 170

15. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Modern Library), p. 324

**HINDUISM : A RELIGION TO LIVE BY,** BY NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI; PUBLISHED BY B. I. PUBLICATIONS, NEW DELHI, 1979

A. *Historical*

The historical section opens with an explanation of his methodology. The first chapter closes with the enumeration of select source materials. Chapter two of this section sets forth "Historical Data About Hinduism" (page 42) taken from the above select source materials. The remaining two chapters of this section give historical explanation of how Hinduism came to be shaped down the centuries. In short, the author in this section presents a new method and a new approach to Hinduism. It is precisely this method and approach that form the focus of this present review.

The numerous books written on Hinduism so far have attempted to trace the development of religious philosophy from the Vedic times to the present day. On the whole their approach has been 'objective' 'intellectual' and one-sided. Such accounts were more text-book like, having little relation to the lived experience of the vast majority of Hindus. In other words, traditional approaches treated Hinduism from an idealistic standpoint. The author of the book (under review) makes a break with this tradition in attempting to give a description and interpretation of the religion of the Hindus as practised and experienced by them. In doing this he claims to set forth Hinduism as the product of a particular kind of mind in a 'particular environment'. This approach is creditable in so far as it seeks to relate religion to the daily life of the masses.

Another commendable aspect of the work is its choice of source material for fixing chronology. Traditional writers on Hinduism

depended almost exclusively on scriptural texts such as the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the dates of which are conjectural. Regardless of the authenticity of their dates the traditional writers have "arranged them in a chronological sequence both relative and absolute" (page 30). The materials obtained from these texts have been used to write a conventional history of Hinduism, dividing it into three broad but distinctive periods, namely the Vedic, the classical and the modern.

As contrasted with this, the present writer adopts scientifically accepted source materials in determining chronology. His source materials consist of inscriptions, art objects, religious buildings, writings of foreigners and works of secular Sanskrit literature. The first three of this group belong to archaeology. Historians consider them more authentic than the literary sources because they are of stones and metals and therefore free from the process of 'tampering' to which books and other perishable materials are liable. As the author himself says, the most dependable material is that "provided by the inscriptions, whose dates are given in many cases, and even when not, they can be approximately determined by the style of the script. What the inscriptions prove with absolute certainty is that every Hindu belief or practice must have appeared, before the date of the inscription, in which it is mentioned." (page 42)

While the method itself is commendable, it should be remembered that the date obtained from them must be supplemented with those derived from literary sources. Moreover, no historian will ever set aside a well developed body of literature such as the Vedic literature, and the ideas embodied in them as pre-historic just because no external evidence is available to fix their date.

A lengthy explanation is given by the author to prove that the conventional account of Hinduism was not true to reality due to influence from the West. One result of this influence specifically pointed out by him is the tendency on the part of the writers to present Hinduism historically. He says that "the historical approach to Hinduism made its appearance only in the nineteenth century among

the Hindus under the impact of western learning. Before that the Hindus never thought of justifying their religion, nor considered it historically. They had accepted it as something which had always been what it was and will be for evermore." (page 28). In the light of this reflection one would expect the author to present it as the Hindus themselves saw it, free of chronological obsession. Contrary to this he himself falls into the European trap and labours hard to build up a "dependable chronological framework" for Hinduism into which the undated material can be fitted (page 60).

Another proof of himself being conditioned by the West is that on the one hand he is excessively pre-occupied with presenting the lived experience of the Hindus, with special reference to the popular cults and beliefs of the masses, unduly highlighting them and on the other he either neglects the philosophies which are part of religion in India or explains away these philosophical doctrines as psychological or historical phenomena. For example, *jñāna-mārga* originated out of the non-anthropomorphic idea of God prevalant among the Indo-Europeans who were the ancestors of the Indo-Aryans (page 86).

Though the method he uses is praiseworthy, its application is not fully free from fallacy. His plea for not accepting 1500 B. C. to 1200 B. C. as the date of the Vedas is that this date has not been fixed according to external dependable evidence. In this connection the attempts made by historians like Herzfeld and Hirt to fix the date of Aryan migration and the date of the Ṛg Veda may be recalled. The records of treaties discovered at Bōghaz-Koi dated about 1400 B. C., the clay tablets with Babylonian cuneiform script discovered at El-Amarna in Egypt dating to the same period and the evidence that the Kassites in about 1760 B. C. designated 'sun' with the word 'sūrias' "the oldest attested word of definitely Indo-Iranian stamp" have been used by the above historians to fix the date of Aryan migration and consequently the date of the Ṛg Veda before 1000 B. C. It is true that their conclusions have been criticised with "fierce intolerance", as usual, by the scholars, yet the fact remains that external evidences are not altogether lacking in fixing the date of the Vedas. (R. C. Majumdar, edt., *History and Culture of Indian People*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1971, Vol. I, pp. 208–209). The record of treaties at Bogazkoi has been used by the author himself in the

present work to show the antiquity of the Hindu gods found in the Vedas. If the antiquity of the Hindu gods can be traced to around 1370 B. C. using the above records, why rule out the possibility of fixing the date of the Vedas on the basis of the same records?

Chronological considerations have brought him to the conclusion that the classical Sanskrit language and consequently the religious texts of Hinduism, except the Vedas and their ancilliary texts, in their present form, cannot be dated earlier than the fourth century A. D. (page 40). This conclusion is arrived at by the following arguments. The fact that the Asokan Edicts of the first three centuries preceding the Christian era uses Prakrit and excludes Sanskrit as its language, is taken to mean that Sanskrit was not in general use at that time. Further, the use of Sanskrit in inscriptions from the second century A. D., is taken to mean that Sanskrit by them was fully developed and had replaced the dialects. Based on these two facts it is concluded that excepting the Vedas and their ancillary texts, the other religious texts of Hinduism which are in classical Sanskrit cannot be dated earlier than the fourth century A. D.

Of the two suppositions the first one is acceptable because as th author himself observes, Sanskrit was not at any time the current language of the entire population. It was, to say the least the language of the elite. Therefore, Asoka, anxious as he was that the content of his teachings should be understood by all his subjects, used Prakrit which was understood by all at that time. Now the explanation for Sanskrit becoming the language of the inscriptions from the second century onwards, can be had from the fact that the sovereigns of this period were not preoccupied like Asoka that the content must be known to all. Moreover the subject-matter of these inscriptions are the achievements of the kings and the aristocrats. They were quite satisfied to record them in classical Sanskrit, the language of the elite.

The argument that there was no interaction between the incoming Aryans and the indegeneous group whom the author calls "aboriginal" is untenable. It is a widely accepted fact that these aboriginals were Dravidians who had developed a highly evolved culture of their own. Gustav Oppert who has made an extensive

study on the original inhabitants of India says "so far as historical traces can be found in the labyrinth of Indian Antiquity, it was the Gauḍa—Dravidians who lived and tilled the soil and worked the mines in India." (Gustav Oppart, *The Original Inhabitants af India*, Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1972, p. 9). The earliest known civilisation in India, namely the Indus Valley civilization has indisputably been established as Pre-Aryan. Although the authorship of the Indus Valley civilization has been attributed to a cosmopolitan group, (R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 196), nevertheless, certain elements of this culture, for example worship of the Mother Goddess and of Śiva are pre-Aryan and probably Dravidian (*ibid.*, p. 160). Therefore to argue that the indigeneous people at the time of Aryan migration were aboriginals with no civilization of their own and that there was no interaction between them and the Aryans cannot be accepted. Given the absorbing and assimilating character of Hinduism down the centuries and the fact that the Aryans in a peaceful and unobtrusive way penetrated into the subcontinent in the course of several centuries, it is impossible to believe that they retained the socio-cultural set up in its original purity.

The role of the South in the development of Hinduism has been minimised in the work. The author seems to think that the South was a "colonial extension" of the north (page 99) and it was only in the ninth century A.D. that the South took up leadership in the religious field. Elsewhere he says that "there is not a single element in the culture of any civilized human group in south India which is not Aryan-Brahmanic." (page 65) These statements contain two fallacies; one, it overlooks the religious tradition of the south prior to the ninth century A.D. Two, it is equivalent to saying that the Vedic and the Aryan tradition which migrated into the South is the real and only religious tradition of India.

It must be admitted that the historical period for the north begins earlier than the south. Apart from that the South had long religious tradition as depicted in the Sangam works inspite of their secular character. Further, in the seventh and eighth centuries the Āḻvārs and Nāyanmārs had made rich contributions to religion.

—Mary John

B. *Descriptive*

In this part which is divided into five chapters and running to over a hundred pages, the author examines (i) sources of description, (ii) regional and social diversity, (iii) intrinsic diversity, (iv) priesthood and sects and (v) religious control of Hindu life.

For various reasons, the author chooses his sources from the many descriptions of the European observers from the seventeenth century onwards [Missionaries, such as, Henry Lord (1530), Abraham Roger (1651) Philip Baldoeus (1622), Charles Wilkins (1785), Abbe Dubois (1897), Warren Hastings and others, for instance]. One reason for this, according to him, was the time when it might have been that Hinduism presented itself "not only in its full developed state, but also at its most typical" (p. 103). To present it as it is today would not do, as it "has been subjected, during the last fifty years or so, to so many disruptive influences, partly from the cultural impact of the West and partly from the economic changes, that many of its observances have disappeared and the devotion it inspired and evoked has become very much weakened." (*Ibid*). The scanty source makes it unworthy to write another alternative description of Hinduism, as it was before the Muslim conquest at the end of the twelfth century, "when the Hindus were politically independent and their culture had reached its full development." (p. 103). He admits of two parallel tenets in the 19th century Missionary writings on Hinduism: one polemical and the other objective. Even though some of the polemical books (or pamphlets) were ferociously denunciatory, their historical value could not be doubted! (But certainly their objectivity could be questioned?) The reason is "if the Missionaries had to fight Hinduism, they could not afford to be inaccurate as to facts, whatever might be their interpretation." (p. 109). Moreover, "the Missionaries who wrote scholarly works felt that to describe Hinduism accurately was the best means of controverting it by implication, and even of discrediting it." (p. 110) Here, one is inclined to ask why the author, who elsewhere admits of the living vitality of Hinduism, almost summarily neglects the modern secular and religious literature as they are a part and parcel of a living tradition. He at least appreciates the living quality and vitality of Hinduism against several odds, as

demonstrated by the loyalty it has commanded from its followers, even though this meant occasional "collective inquisition" (p. 120) of the errants by the whole society. As the whole section deals with the descriptive aspect of Hinduism, a mere popular Hinduism, dissected from its higher, rarefied forms of expression, does fall far short of the avowed aim of the author, as "the book is addressed to those who, either in India or in the outside world, take an intellectual interest in Hinduism in all its greatness and strangeness as the product of a particular kind of mind in a particular environment." (preface p. 11).

The various regional and social diversities are considered under geographical distribution and under variations in attitudes and practices according to the class affiliations caused by social stratification. In many aspects there are contrasts between Hinduism in Northern plain and that of the rest of the country, especially the South, which has created a notion that South India had a cultural individuality of its own. This was mainly by political history: "The Muslim conquest pulverized Hinduism in Northern India, but left it as an old and yet inhabited building in the South." (p. 129) But even before that, did the two regions have a similarity, as the author claims? One does not deny the fact that "the great commentator of the *Vedas*, Sāyaṇa, and the greatest exponent of philosophic Brahmanism Śaṅkara, came from South." (*ibid.*) Was it not due more to a religious allegiance than to a cultural affinity? Again the sacred places of pilgrimages, be they in the North or in the South, were non-exclusive more due to religious feelings than to the cultural similarity. It is true there is, amidst the multiform of religious beliefs and practices, a unitary element in the Hindu religious outlook. Yet is it "more marvellous because it has not been created by propaganda or inter-communication (p. 136) but *vice versa*? In fact this unity was maintained, as Chaudhuri himself claims, by the priestly class, the brahmins, whose mode of life all over India remains the least affected by social changes. The Sanskrit language too has played an important role in maintaining the unity of ideology by the standard religious texts or Śāstras. It goes to the credit of the brahmin pundits, who not only served as a referential point on matters of orthodoxy but also maintained the

continuity of philosophical tradition by studying the different schools of Hindu Philosophy.

Coming to the intrinsic diversity, one is baffled by the multitudinous features that reveal "a mental world which will have a shattering effect on the intellectual faculties for nothing in it will seem to conform to any logic". (p. 144) The author makes such a note after alluding certain references from some of the *Upaniṣads* like *Kaṭha*, *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, which are indeed not so easy to grasp unless properly initiated. Another remark of his, is "the *Gītā* which has a distinct and powerful religious message of its own, leaves an impression of inconsistency in thought and feeling because it has so many other things which do not harmonize with the central theme!" *(ibid.)* An apt comment on such vague generalizations and sweeping statements would be to apply to the author himself, the "*andha-hasti-nyāya*" of which he speaks (p. 146). He does not like the idea, as many self-proclaimed Indologists in the West, of religion having any truck with philosophy or *vice versa*. But this is so with Hinduism, although, "from the primitive religious feature, it, in its superstructure rises to heights at which it is not simply mystical, but succeeds in converting religion into philosophy". (p. 147) Does he intend to equate primitive animism or fetishism with religion where no serious intellectual content is called for ? It will be too naive indeed, even as one is misguided, if this philosophy is regarded as the true Hindu religion as it is lived.

Diversity in belief where a Hindu is under no compulsion to subscribe to any dogma or profess faith in a particular thing is, according to the author, "the basis of the much advertised Hindu religious tolerance." (p. 48). It is all-inclusive. The exclusiveness is social, starting from birth and consequent social stratification. And the unity of Hinduism lies in the Hindu's unlimited capacity for faith, and not on the oneness of the object of faith. Yet in general, Chaudhuri contends, the foremost object of faith for all Hindus is a genuine, monotheistic personal God, all-compassionate and just. He is not certainly derived from the impersonal and abstract one God, *Brahman*. Rather, "He is a Hindu form of the Christian and Islamic God!" (p. 149). Is this conclusion due to the "lack of discussion of

the nature of this God in the whole of the religious literature of Hindus," (*ibid.*) one is tempted to ask? Probably the author is not aware that the impersonal God can assume a myriad personalities and any one of them at any given moment for the Hindu. The idea about after-life causes another dilemma. It points to the fact that "Hinduism has never offered a coherent view of human destiny." (p. 152). Otherwise how are we to explain the *Śrāddha* at regular intervals to the deceased ancestors? This rite has, the author laments, continued down to this day without reference to the doctrine of rebirth or salvation. Thus "the notion of salvation becomes wholly unreal, a matter merely of theorizing." (p. 153). Moreover, "the view of after-life to which the Hindus cling with the greatest fervour was of rebirth in another household." (*ibid.*) Chuadhuri wonders why, out of over one thousand hymns and ten thousand five hundred verses of *Ṛg-Veda*, *Gāyatrī* has been selected as the supreme credo and prayer for a Brahmin, to be uttered three times a day. He claims that it cannot be put by the side of the Christian Credo of the Lord's prayer or the Islam 'Fatiha'. (pp.155-56) Contrary to his understanding, the Sun is not a minor God of the Hindu Pantheon. "He presides over the crucial archetypal world (the *vijñānamaya*) which is the junction between the lower and upper hemispheres of creation (of the seven worlds). To be a denizen of the Sun-world is to step decisively into the spiritual life. Again, *dhīyo* is not just 'mind'. According to Monier-Williams, '*dhī*' means particularly, religious thought, meditation, devotion, prayer, wisdom. *Pracodayāt* is 'to set in motion', 'impel', 'inspire'....Thus the seeker will be inspired to move on from the lower hemisphere of matter, life and mind to the upper heimisphere of Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss." (V. K. Gokak, "Niradbabu's Hinduism, Challenged" in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. Vol. C 13, 1979, p. 24)

Quoting the Abbe Dubois, the author brings 'priesthood and sects' under severe criticism. The 'guru-dakṣiṇā', the 'brahmabhojana', the 'devadāsi' system, the law forbidding remarriage of widows with its consequent moral degradation etc., are all taken up for consideration. Narrating a few stray incidents in Bengal and elsewhere of the immoral relations of the low-ranking priests, he unscrupulously applies it to the whole class throughout the country. The

sects and numerous subsects too are pictured in darker colours than they deserve. (pp. 175-185)

Religious control of Hindu life with regard to the day-to-day affairs such as food and drink, clothing, guilt and atonement, marriage, etc., is so strong that often excommunication results if the regulations inclusive of taboos and superstitions are not adhered to. This has to be viewed from a historical background intermingled with political reasons and prompted by psychological needs of identity and self-preservation.

The general impression one manages to get, is this: in staking his claim to be objective at the living modes of Hinduism at its best, what the author has achieved is a piecemeal treatment; thus projecting a prejudiced mind assisted by a pair of 'jaundiced' eyes, that stands on the way of clearly viewing facts in a living religion. By this I do not mean to suggest that the sundry malpractices, both social and religious, analysed in the book, be they past or present, and often not supported by doctrinal content are to be condoned; they are, by all means, to be condemned and corrected. But who is the competent person (*adhikāri*) to accomplish such a task? Certainly not the one like Chaudhuri, who stands disqualified by claiming to "have lost faith in the tenets of Hinduism and indeed in all established religions long ago." (preface p.11). No wonder, he has succeeded in caricaturing rather than featuring this great religion, with the history of over three thousand years of waxings and wanings. A genuine criticism, interpretation and re-orientation, though with an objective mind, should spring from within, in an organic development, as Hinduism is still 'a religion to live by'.

— J. THATHRATHIL

C. *Analytical*

In the third and final section of the book the author discusses the three prominent cults of India viz., Śiva, Durgā-Kāli and Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa. He deals mainly with the popular aspect of Hinduism. As he feels this religion has been a victim of moral and intellectual dishonesty, he attempts to present a true picture of Hinduism.

He begins with a critical assessment of the value of religious literature for this purpose and goes on to explain the relation between

Hindu mythology, cult and devotion. Later he takes up the cults and concludes his work with an epilogue dealing with what he calls the myth of Hindu spirituality.

The spirit with which he takes up the task is commendable. In his zeal for intellectual honesty, he seems to have out-classed even the most sceptic of critics. He summarily dismisses Hindu religious literature as unfit for describing Hinduism scientifically. The Śruti or revealed text is nabbed as "extremely crude...being based on false physics and false biology;" (p. 219) similarly other commentaries on religious texts are branded as "either pedestrian or meaningless" (p.220). That Hinduism is a complex product of gradual synthesis of philosophic and social evolution beginning from the Vedic age cannot be denied. As such religious literature cannot be dispensed with so easily.

While discussing the origin of mother goddess the author says "It has to be added that the idea held by some historians of Hinduism and popularised by them that the cult of mother goddess was taken over from the aboriginals of India may be discussed not only as impossible but also absurd" (p.242). It must be pointed out that a view is gaining ground that the so called aborginals were either an earlier wave of Aryans or Dravidians with a highly evolved culture more advanced in some respects than the Aryans themselves. That Aryo-Dravidian synthesis was one of its results is more widely accepted than the author's view.

While discussing the Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa cult he says, it inaugurated a new form of religious sentiment among the Hindus viz., *bhakti* and this was communicated to other cults. Tracing the origin of *bhakti*, he rejects the first usage of the word found in the *Ṛg Veda* as not denoting the same meaning as devotion. Pointing to the resemblance between *bhakti* and the Christian notion of love of God as sentimental love, he argues that this sentiment might have been arrived at under the influence of early Christianity. The date of the *Gītā* being uncertain this argument cannot be considered very sound. Moreover the idea of devotion to the leading gods is implicit in the *Ṛg Veda*. Dr S. Radhakrishnan says, "If *bhakti* means faith in personal god, love for him, dedication of everything in his service and the attainment

of *mokṣa* or freedom by personal devotion, surely we have all these elements in Varuṇa worship." (p. 108) Garbe says, "For one who is intimate with the intellectual life of ancient India, the doctrine of bhakti is entirely conceivable as a genuine product of India." (p. 84). The origin of *bhakti* can be traced to the *upāsana* theory of Upaniṣads and the devotional way of the Bhāgavatas. That the Bhāgavata cult had developed two hundred years before Christ has been proved on the basis of the Garuḍadhvaja pillar inscription of second century B. C. Thus the concept of *bhakti* may not have been borrowed from outside.

Dealing with the development of *bhakti* movement, the author narrates how this concept undergoes a transformation from 'love' during the *Gītā's* time to eros in Bhāgavatapurāṇa and adulterous love in Brahmavaivartapurāṇa and later works. The author feels "This is indeed a revolutionary doctrine of surrender to the sexual impulse in the name of religion." (p. 282) He attributes the transformation of the sentiment of bhakti from love to eros to social factors like early and arranged marriages, perpetual widowhood etc., which were the order of the day. This explanation may be satisfactory in the case of the female devotees. But it does not explain the attraction this sentiment had to the male section of our society who were not affected by any of the aforesaid social factors. Moreover one cannot help wondering whether by sex alone the great theme of bhakti could have survived through hundreds of years of cultural history. Also, this feature is not peculiar to Hinduism alone. Mystical writers are often known to use sex as an image to express their mystical experiences. This is because sex is the obvious analogue of creative energy. The idea of spiritual marriages in the West was first developed by St. Bernard and later on by John Ruys Brook, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa and others. Even the Islamic myths use sexual imagery both in relation to the prophet and even to Allah himself.

Nirad C. Chaudhury concludes his book by examining the spiritual aspect of Hinduism. He feels "it has been credited with exalted, rarefied and esoteric spiritualty in the West" (p. 311) and calls it a myth. He feels Hindu spirituality is a pursuit of power and not of beatitude. This is mere misrepresentation. In

fact, our spiritual guides like Śaṅkara warn the aspirants of salvation not to be carried away by infatuating yogic power and point out the goal as salvation or supreme bliss.

Analysing *jñānamārga*, which the author feels has gained Hinduism its current reputation of spirituality, N. C. Chaudhury says the knowledge of unity was arrived at through intuition. Though he admits that some of the scientific theories have originated from flashes of intuition, he calls the Hindu discovery elemental, something akin to instinct in animals." (p. 318)

His interpretation of *karma mārga* is equally ludicrous. He feels "the spiritual way of action is oriented towards action in the form of unobstructed self-assertion." (p. 323). Its object is to acquire the capacity to do things beyond what is within the natural physical and mental power of man e.g., the capacity to see into future, read the minds of other men, control physiological process.

Thus we find Nirad C. Chaudhury trying his best to explode the myth of Hindu spirituality. Refuting some of Chaudhury's views on Hinduism does not mean that we should remain conservative and be convinced of the glory of ancient heritage. But wild criticism and misrepresentation and misinterpretation will not lead to a true picture of Hinduism.

— P. Vedavalli

# PART THREE

# A NOTE ON 'TIRUMŪLAR'S UPADEŚAM'

The basic Tamil texts in Śaiva Siddhānta are usually classified into two groups, as *stotra* and *śāstra*. The *stotra* works are spoken of as *Panniru Tirumuṟai* (twelve sacred works). These are *mainly* devotional out-pourings. The *śāstras* are fourteen in number and so spoken of as *Meykaṇḍa śāstram padināngu* and *Siddhānta śāstram padināngu*. These are doctrinal works setting forth the philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta.

Tirumūlar's *Tirumandiram* is reckoned as the tenth in the group of devotional works. But though included in this group, it seems to be the earliest Tamil work to state the philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta. It is generally assigned to the fifth century A. D. The doctrinal works referred to above, come several centuries later.

Tradition speaks of the *Tirumandiram* as consisting of three thousand verses. But even in the printed text, there are some extra verses besides 3000. Annamalai University has published a work called *'Tirumandiramālai Munnūṟu'* as different from the *Tirumandiram*. St. Ramalingar who flourished in the last century, speaks of the eight thousand verses of the *Tirumandiram* (திருமந்திரம் எண்ணாயிரம்). One wonders whether apart from what is available in the print, the other verses of Tirumūlar are lost to us. A research scholar, Ms. Vimala of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced study in Philosophy, working on the *Tirumandiram* came across five copies of thirty verses of Tirumūlar given under different headings but having the common import *'upadeśa'*. These thirty verses, however, differ from the thirty, available in the printed editions of the *Tirumandiram* under the title *'Upadeśam'*. The verses found in palmera leaves are given here-under, by the research scholar with transliteration and paraphrase of the general drift of the verses. The research scholar and the Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced study in Philosophy are thankful to the authorities and the staff of the Dr. U. V. Svāminātha Ayyar Library, for their kind permission and help in enabling us to present these verses to the world of scholars.

Editor

# திருமூலர் உபதேசம்
# TIRUMULAR UPADESAM

Edited with Transliteration and Translation by
K. VIMALA

குருவென வந்து குணமாய் வணக்கித்
திருநீறு சாத்திச் செவியருள் செப்பி
யெறுவுட னறுகு மென்கையி னீரா
லுருவுடன் கொண்டா னுடல் பொருளாவியே. 1.

*Guruvena vandu guṇamāy vaṇakkit*
*tirunīṟu sāttic ceviyaruḷ seppi*
*yeruvuḍa naṟugu menkaiyi nīrā*
*luruvuḍan koṇḍā nuḍal poruḷāviyē.*

The Lord (Śiva) came as *guru*, in the form of grace and made me kneel in submission, blessed me with sacred ashes, imparted the sacred teachings in the ear, and accepted me as His own by a formal rite of pouring water and took on Himself all effects of my past *karmas* with the fruits of the present and the potentiality of future actions as well and with that my entire self - my body, life and possessions.

The following meanings are suggested tentatively, for further considerations. *'Eru'* (எரு) - *sañcita*; *arugu* (அருகு) is a kind of grass (Harialli grass, cynodon dactylon) which spreads and sprouts. Hence it may be likened to *āgāmi* and *uru* (உரு) to *prārabdha* because it has already taken shape in the form of the present body. *'Kaiṉīrāl koṇḍān'* a ritual to give away one's belongings by pouring water into the hands of the person who receives these.

Variant reading: *vaṇaṅgit, tiruvaruḷ*.

உடல் பொருளாவி யுதகத்தால் வாங்கி
படர்வினை பற்றறப் பார்த்துக்கை வைத்து
நொடியி லடிவைத்து நுண்ணுணர் வாக்கிக்
கடிய பிறப்பறக் காட்டின னந்தியே. 2.

*Uḍal poruḷāvi yudagattāl vāṅgi*
*paḍarvinai parṟaṟap pārttukkai vaittu*
*noḍiyiladi vaittu nuṇṇuṇar vākkik*
*kaḍiya piṟappaṟak kāṭṭina nandiyē.*

Nandi having thus obtained my surrender of body, life and possessions, enabled me to do my *karmas* without attachment, and by way of protecting me, blessed me by grace of touch of hand and feet on my head, infused subtle knowledge in me such that the strong link of birth was cut, and revealed to me the bliss of birthlessness.

'*Kai vaittu*' and '*aḍi vaittu*' indicate *dīkṣā* by placing the hand and feet on the head of the devotee.

Variant reading: *koṇḍup* for *vāṅgi*

நந்தி விளைவித்த நல்ல வெண்ணீற்றினைச்
சந்தேகந் தீரத் தலத்தே பரப்பி
யிந்தா பாரென்று வெழுதின னேரே
யுந்தா மலுந்தி யுடற் சக்கரத்தையே. 3.

*Nandi viḷaivitta nalla veṇṇīṟṟinaic*
*candēham tīrat talattē parappi*
*yindā pāreṉṟu veḻudina nērē*
*yundā malundi yudaṟ cakkarattaiyē.*

Nandi who came as *guru* spread on the ground the ash, that He Himself created and on that drew and pointed out the main *ādhāras* in the body and said, 'See for yourself in order to get over all your doubts.'

Variant reading: *santāpan tīrat* for *sandēham tīrat*.

சக்கர மூலஞ் சதுர் மண்ணீர் பிறை
யக்கினி முக்கோண மறுகோணம் வாயுப்
புக்குவான் வட்டம் பூதவடி வென
நிற்குந் திருவடி நிறமது பொன்னே. 4.

*Cakkara mūlañ catur maṇṇīr piṟai*
*yakkini mukkōṇa maṟukōṇam vāyup*
*pukkuvān vaṭṭam bhūtavaḍi vena*
*niṟkum tiruvaḍi niṟamadu ponnē.*

Main elements of the body are, earth which is like a square; water which is like a crescent moon; fire which is triangular; air which is like a hexagon spreads and moves in *ākāśa* which is circular. They all unite and function in the gross forms (of the world) by the grace of the holy feet which are of golden hue.

Variant reading: *vāyvu aṟukōṇam* for *aṟukōṇam vāyup*; *bhūta vaḍivumēl* for *bhūtavaḍivena.*

பொன்னிறம் பூமி புனல் பளிங்கு நிறம்
வன்னி செம்புநிறம் வாயுக்கரு நிற
மின்னிய வான்புகை மேகநிற மென
வுன்னியே நந்தி யுரைத்தான் கடிதே. 5.

*Ponniṟam bhūmi punal paḷiṅgu niṟam*
*vanni sembuniṟam vāyukkaruniṟa*
*minniya vānpugai mēghaniṟamena*
*vunniyē nandi yuraittān kaḍidē.*

'Earth is of golden hue; water is white like crystal; fire is of red colour; air is black in colour and *ākāśa* is of the colour of the cloud.' - so said Nandi after giving thought to the matter and declaring it quickly.

Variant reading : *paḷiṅgin niṟam*; *nandi yuṇarndār kaḍidē.*

கடின மண்ணீர் குளிர்ந்தே பதங்காட்டுஞ்
சுடுமழருனே சுட்டொன்றி விக்குந்
திடமுச்சரித்துத் திரட்டுங்கால் வான
மிடமாய் நிரந்தர மென்றுரைத்தானே. 6.

*Kaḍina maṇṇīr kuḷirndē padaṅkāṭṭuñ*
*cuḍu maḷaṟānē cuṭṭonṟi vikkun*
*diḍa muccarittut tiraṭṭuṅkāl vāna*
*miḍamāy nirantara menṟu raittānē.*

'Earth is hard; water with its cooling effect makes it soft; fire with its heat burns and unites all; the air quickly and firmly spreads

things and collects them together and *ākāśa* stands as permanent substratum for all, giving them their strength and stability.' - said Nandi.

Variant reading: *diḍamāy salittut* for *diḍamuccarittut*; *uraittārē*.

உரைத்த பார் நவ்வுமுதகத்தின் மவ்வும்
வரைத்த தீச் சீயும் வாயு வகாரமு
மிரைத்த வான் யவ்வு மிதன் கீழோங்காரமு
நிரைத்த வெழுத்துட னின்றன நாடியே. 7.

*Uraitta pār navvu mudakattin mavvum*
*varaitta tic cīyum vāyu vakāramu*
*miraitta vān yavvumidan kīḻōṅkāramu*
*niraitta veḻuttuḍa ninṟana nāḍiyē.*

For the elements so explained, letter *'na'* stands for earth; *'ma'* for water; *'śi'* for fire; *'va'* for air; and *'ya'* for *ākāśa* and sustaining all these five is the *praṇava*, namely, *aum*.

Variant reading : *mudakattil*; *vāyvu vakāramāy*.

நாடியிடை பிங்கலை நடுமாறியே
கூடியே யவ்விற் கொழுந்தாகி நின்றது
ஓடு மயன் மாலு ருத்திர னீச
னீடுஞ் சதாசிவ நின்றெழுத்தஞ்சுமே. 8.

*Nāḍiyiḍai piṅgalai naḍumāṟiyē*
*kūḍiyē yavviṟ koḻundāgi niṉṟadu*
*vūdumayan mālu ruddira nīśa*
*nīduñ sadāśiva niṉṟeḻuttañjumē.*

*Nāḍi* classified as *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā*, alternate within themselves, join and remain as the live-wire or animating principle for this body. In between these *nāḍis* are the five deities - Brahmā, Māl, Rudra, Maheśvara and Sadāśiva represented by the letters *'na ma śi va ya'* respectively.

Variant reading : *naḍuvē suḻimunai* for *naḍumāriyē*; *Maheśa* for *īśa*.

அஞ்சில் நகார மதிலிரு காலுமாய்
வஞ்சகமான வயிறு மகாரமாய்
நெஞ்சு சிகாரமாய் நேர் கழுத்துமுக
மிஞ்சொல் வகாரம் வாயவ்வதில் நெற்றியே 9.

*Añjil nakāra madiliru kālumāy*
*vañcakamāna vayiṟu makāramāy*
*neñju śikāramāy nērkaḷuttu muka*
*miñ col vakāram vāyavvadil neṟṟiyē.*

In the said five letters *'na'* is for the two legs; *'ma'* for the deceitful stomach; *'si'* for the heart; *'va'* for the neck called the base for the face and *'ya'* for the forehead.

Variant reading : *nērkaḷandannilē.*

நெற்றி வெளி செவி நின்றன் சத்தமும்
பற்றிய வாயு வுடலிற் பரிசந்தீப்
பெற்றிடுங் கண்ணுரு நீர் நாவிரதமு
முற்றமண் ணுசியிற் கெந்த முயிர்க்குமே. 10.

*Neṟṟi veḷi sevi niṉṟana sattamum*
*paṟṟiya vāyu vuḍaliṟ parisantīp*
*peṟṟiduṅ kaṇṇuru nīr nāviradamu*
*muṟṟa maṇṇā siyiṟ kendamuyirkkumē.*

*Ākāśā* that stands first gives the sense of sound through the ear; air that spreads in the body gives the sense of touch; fire enables perception of forms through the eyes; water remaining in the tongue gives the sense of taste and the earth through the nose gives the sense of smell.

Variant reading : *kaṉrūpa* for *kaṇṇuru*; *appil* for *nīr.*

உயிர்த்திடும் வானிலுரை செயுங் காற்று
நயப்படு காலினடையாந் தீக்கை
செயிற்பில பான நீர் சேர்ந்து மலம் விடும்
வியப்பாரி லிங்கம் விடுஞ் சல வித்தே. 11.

*Uyirttiḍum vānilurai seyuṅ kaṟṟu*
*nayappaḍu kālinaḍaiyān dīkkai*
*seyiṟpila pānanīr sērndu malamviḍum*
*viyappāri liṅgam viḍuñ calavittē.*

[Having dealt with *tanmātrās*, the author next passes on to (*karmendriyas*) organs of action]. *Vāk* abiding in *ākāśa* gains the power of speech; feet abiding in air get the power of walking or movement; hands abiding in fire perform their functions (of taking

and giving); anus abiding in water defecates; and the genital organ' with none to sing its praise, generates the sperm. (Or the wonderful genital organ generates the sperm. 'Wonderful' – if the words are split as: வியப்பு + ஆர் + இலிங்கம்).

Variant reading: *ninṟurai seyuṅ* for *vāniluraiseyuṅ*

வித்து மனம் புவி மேவிடு நீரினிற்
புத்தி நிலையழற் பொன்றிடு மாங்காரமுஞ்
சித்த நிலை வாயுத் தெளிவுள்ளம் வானி
னித்திசை யைந்து மிருந்திடுங் காலமே. 12.

*Vittu manam puvi mēviḍu nīrinir*
*buddhi nilaiyalaṟ ponṟiḍu māṅkāramuñ*
*citta nilai vāyut teḷivuḷḷam vāni*
*nitdisai yaindu mirundiḍuṅ kālamē.*

[Passing on next to the internal organs (*antaḥkaraṇas*)] : *Manas* which is the basis of all has the *guṇas* of earth; *buddhi* abides in water; *ahaṅkāra* has the predominant quality of fire; *cittam* abides in air and clarity abides in *ākāśa*.

Variant reading: *vittumaṇ* fo *vittumanam*; *nilaiyanal porundu* for *nilaiyalaṟponṟiḍu*; *littiṟam* for *nitdisai*.

கால மண்ணீர் நியதி கலையனல்
மேலுங்கால வித்தை யிராகமது வெளி
மேலும் புருடனு மாயையுமே விடுஞ்
சாலவே வித்தியா தத்துவ மாமே. 13.

*Kāla maṇṇīr niyati kalaiyanal*
*mēluṅkāla vittai yirāgamadu veḷi*
*mēlum puruḍanu māyaiyumē viḍuñ*
*sālavē viddiyā tattuva māmē.*

(Next he deals with *Vidyā tattvas*) : *kāla* abides in earth; *niyati* in water; *kalā* in fire; *vidyā* in air; *rāga* in *ākāśa*; with these five *puruṣa* and *māyā* go to make the *vidyā tattvas*, namely seven.

Variant reading : *Kālamē maṇ* for *kālamaṇ*; *tattuva mēḻumē* for *tattuvamāmē*.

தத்துவமே சிவ தத்துவ மஞ்சது
சுத்தவித்தை யீசுரஞ் சாதாக்கியஞ்
சத்தி சிவமது தானஞ் செழுத்துளே
யொத்தே யுரைத்தாஞெரு முப்பத்தாறுமே. 14.

*Tattuvamē śiva tattuva mañcadu*
*suddha viddai īśurañ sādākkiyañ*
*satti śivamadu tānañ jeḻuttē*
*yottē yuraittānoru muppattāṟumē.*

(Now the five *Śiva tattvas*) : *Śuddha vidyā, īśvara, sādākhya, śakti* and *śiva*. And all these five have their respective place in the five letters. Thus he has explained the total of thirty-six *tattvas*.

Variant reading ; *muppattārē* for *muppattāṟumē*.

ஆறு சமைய மதுவே சடாட்சர
மேறு மிருக்கு எசுர் சாம மதிர்வணங்
கூறும் வித்தியாசங் குறிப்பைந் தெழுத்துளே
மாறிலா ஞான விளக்க மருவுமே. 15.

*Āṟu samaiya maduvē saḍāṭara*
*mēṟu mirukku yajur śāma mathirvaṇaṅ*
*kūṟum vittiyāsaṅ kuṟippaindeḻuttuḷē*
*māṟilā ñāna viḷakka maruvumē.*

The six religions, the six lettered *mantras* and the teachings of the four *vedas - ṛg, yajur, sāma, atharvaṇa*, though reckoned differently are contained in the *pañcākṣara* and therein lies the supreme knowledge without any differences.

Variant reading : *Ñāna maruvu tagalyē* for *Ñāna viḷakka maruvumē*.

மருவு தகழி நெய் வன்னிதிரி யொளி
யுருவமாய் நின்றிடு மோரைந் தெழுத்துளே
திருவடி வைத்துச் சிவாய வென்றேத்திடி
லிருவினை நீங்கிடு மென்றன னந்தியே. 16.

*Maruvu tagaḻi ney vannitiri yoḻi*
*yuruvamāy ninṟiḍu mōraindeḻuttuḷē*
*tiruvaḍi vaittuc civāya venṟēttiḍi*
*liruvinai nīṅgiḍu menṟana nandiyē.*

The lamp. ghee, flame, thread and light, though five, stand as one to emit the beam. So does stand *pañcākṣara*. (By the grace of *guru*) when one worships at the holy feet, chants in praise of *Śiva*, the effect of two-fold *karmas* get lost - said Nandi.

Variant reading : *Śivāyanama* for *Śivāya*; *aindeḻuttumē*.

என்றதொர் மூலத்தெரியங்கி மண்டல
மன்றி லுறுதைய மாதித்தன் மண்டலந்
துன்று கபாலத்திற் சோமனர் மண்டல
நின்றது மேல் தளம் நினைவாலு ணருமே. 17.

*Enṟa dor mūlatteriyaṅgi maṇḍala*
*manṟi luṟudaiya māditta maṇḍalan*
*tunṟu kapālattiṟ sōmanār maṇḍala*
*niṉṟadu mēl taḷam ninaivāluṇarumē.*

In the so called *cakras, agnimaṇḍala* is at *mūlādhāra; sūrya maṇḍala* at the heart and *candra maṇḍala* at the head. How they function in unison can be realised with the experience of the supreme knowledge.

உணர்குத மூல முபத்தஞ் சுவாதிட்ட
மணிபூரக முந்தி மார்பி லனாகத
மணிகளம் விசுத்தி யாக்கினை நெற்றி
குணமுடனு சான்கூறு மாருதாரமே. 18.

*Uṇarkuda mūla mupattañ suvādiṭṭa*
*maṇi pūraka mundi mārbila nāhata*
*maṇi kaḷam visuddhi yākkinai neṟṟi*
*guṇamuḍanāsān kūṟu māṟā dhāramē.*

The *guru* with grace, in order to make us realise, exlpained the placement of six *ādhāras* thus: *mūlādhāra* at the base of the spine; *svādiṣṭhāna* at (spleen; *maṇipūraka* at the navel; *anāhata* at the heart; *viśuddhi* at the throat and *ājñā* at the forehead.

Variant reading: *guṇamuḍan nands* for *guṇamuḍamānāsān.*

ஆதார மூலத்தடியிற் கணபதி
வேதா நற்பூமி விண்டுவு நீரினிற்
றீதானு ருத்திரன் சிறந்த கான மகேசன்விண்
மீதே சதாசிவ மேற்குரு பாதமே. 19.

*Ādhāramūlattaḍiyiṟ Gaṇapati*
*vēdā naṟbhūmi viṇḍuvu niriniṟ*
*ṟītānu ruddiran siṟanda kānamaheśan viṇ*
*mīdē sadāśiva mēṟguru pādamē.*

(Now for the ruling deities of *mūlādhāra* and the five elements): Gaṇapati for *mūlādhāra*; Brahmā for earth; Viṣṇu for water; Rudra for fire; Maheśvara for air and Sadāśiva for *ākāśa*. And above them all rule the holy feet of *guru*.

Variant reading: *Viṣṇu* for *viṇḍuvu*.

பாதம் பராபரை படர்விண் மனோன்மணி
வாத மகேசுவரி வன்னி யுருத்திரை
யோத மிலக்குமி யொண்பார் சரசுவதி
வாதி கண மூலத்தின் வல்லபை சத்தியே. 20.

*Pādam parāparai paḍarviṇ manōnmaṇi*
*vāda maheśvari vanni yuruddirai*
*yōda milakkumi yoṇpār sarasuvati*
*vādi gaṇa mūlattin vallabai śattiyē.*

Likewise, the *śakti* deities of the said *ādhāra* and elements are also given. They are: *Parāparai* where the feet of *guru* abide; *Manonmaṇi* for *ākāśa*; *Maheśvari* for air; *Rudrai* for fire; *Lakṣmī* for water; *Sarasvatī* for earth and *Vallabhai* for *mūlādhāra*.

Varient reading: *Parāśakti* for *Parāparai*; last line reads thus *mādēvi mūlattu vallaba sattiyē*.

சத்தியாலே யயன் ருனே படைக்கமா
லுத்தே யளிப்பன் றுடைப்பனு ருத்திரன்
சித்தத் திரோபாவஞ் செய்வான் மகேசுர
னந்தச் சதாசிவ னனுகிரகஞ் செய்வனே. 21.

*Sattiyālē yayan ṟānē paḍaikkamā*
*luttē yaḷippan ṟuḍaippanu ruddiran*
*cittat tirōbhāvañ seyvān mahēśura*
*nandac cadāśiva nanugrahañ seyvanē.*

(Functions of the deities are also explained as under). Creation by *Brahmā* by his own powers, protection by *Viṣṇu*; destruction by *Rudra*; *tirobhāva* (obscuration) by *Maheśvara* and *anugraha* by *Sadāśiva*.

Variant reading : *padaippan*, for *paḍaikka*; *viḷaippan*; *paṇṇuvan* for *seyvān*

செய்யுஞ் சரிதை கிரியை சிவயோக
முய்யுமா ஞான மோரைந் தெழுத்துளே
துய்யமாய்த் தூலமுஞ் சூக்கமுஞ் சொல்லியே
யையய மறுத்தானரு ளொன்றினுலே. 22.

*Seyyuñ caritai kiriyai śivayōga*
*muyyumā jñāna mōrain deḻuttuḻē*
*tuyyamāyt tūlamuñ sūkkamuñ solliyē*
*yaiyya maṟuttānaru ḷonṟināḷē.*

(Next he speaks of *sādhanas*). The *guru* clearly explained *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna* which liberates; and *sthūla* and *sūkṣma pañcākṣaras*, thus setting at naught all doubts by His grace.

Variant reading: *meyñjñāna* for *mājñānā; kaṭṭiyē* for *solliyē.*

நாலு மிரு மூன்று மீரைந்து நான்மூன்றுங்
கோலியே நின்ற குறிகள் பதினறு
மூலங் கண்டாங்கே முடிந்த முதலிரண்டுங்
காலங் கண்டானடி காணலு மாமே. 23.

*Nālu miru mūnṟu miraindu nānmūnṟuṅ*
*kōliyē ninṟa kuṟigaḷ padināṟu*
*mūlaṅ kaṇḍāṅgē muḍinda mudaliraṇḍuṅ*
*kālaṅ kaṇḍānaḍi kāṇalu māmē.*

(In this verse, *ādhāras* are indicated by the number of petals of each). Four (*mūlādhāra*), six (*svādhiṣṭhāna*), ten (*maṇipūraka*), twelve (*anāhata*), and sixteen (*viśuddhi*). One who goes to the source of it all, crosses each, transcends the last (*ājña*) which has the appearance of being divided into halves, perceives the holy feet of the Lord who transcends all time and who reigns over these.

Variant reading: *mīrāṟuṅ* for *nānmūnṟuṅ; koṇḍān* for *kaṇḍān.*

காணுவனுன்கு கருதிய பலவாறு
பூணுடேப் பத்தும் பொருந்துக வீராறு
வேணுளா தீரெட்டிரண்டுடன் ஒன்றதாம்
தாணுவிற் கக்கரந்தானம்பத் தொன்றுமே. 24.

*Kāṇuvanāngu karudiya palavāṟu*
*pūṇudēppattum porunduga vīrāṟu*
*vēṇuḷā tīreṭṭiraṇḍuḍan onṟadām*
*taṇuviṯ kakkarantānaimpat tonṟumē.*

[This verse is not easily intelligible. It may be that the verse as found in the manuscripts used is not exact. Hence only a very general indication is suggested there. The deities *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and

*Rudra* are associated with the fiftyone letters of the alphabet. (Or the fifty one letters are distributed between the six *ādhāras.*)]

Variant reading: *kāṇuṟacanam* for *kāṇuvanāngu.*

ஒன்று பொறி புலனுற்ற கரணமு
நின்றிடு மீரெழு நெற்றியிற் சாக்கிரங்
கண்டு நாற் கரணங் கண்டத்திற் சொற்பனந்
துன்று கரணஞ் சுழுத்தியு மார்பே. 25.

*Onṟu poṟi pulanuṟṟa karaṇamu*
*ninṟiṟu mīreḻu neṟṟiyiṟ jaggiraṅ*
*kaṇḍu nāṟ karaṇaṅ kaṇḍattiṟ soṟpanan*
*tunṟu karaṇañ suḻuttiyu mārbē.*

(In this and the following verse, he deals with *avasthās.*) During waking state, when thirtyfive *tattvas* function, consciousness is centred on the forehead. The thirtyfive *tattvas* are: *puruṣa*, five *bhūtas*, five *tanmātrās*, five *jñānendriyas*, five *karmendriyas*, four *antaḥkaraṇas* and ten *vāyus*; during dream state consciousness rests in throat (when twentyfive *tattvas* function, excluding *karmendriyas* and *Jñānendriyas*), in deep sleep state, consciousness rests in the heart (when only three *tattvas* that are close to *puruṣa* function — *citta*, *prāṇa* and *puruṣa.*)

Variant reading: *mārbumē.*

மார்புக் கீழுந்தி மன மொன்றுய் நின்றிடுஞ்
சார்பு துரிய மதாயிடுஞ் சாற்றிடிற்
சோர்வற நின்றிடுஞ் சுத்தவதீதமாயச்
சீர்புனை யாற்றுமஞ் சேர்ந்திடு மண்ணீலே. 26.

*Mārbukkilundi mana monṟāy ninṟiḍuñ*
*sārbu turiya madāyiḍuñ sāṟṟiḍiṟ*
*sōrvaṟa ninṟiḍuñ suddha vatītamāyac*
*cīrpunai yāṟṟumañ cērndiḍu maṇṇilē.*

At the navel below the heart, consciousness rests in the *turīya* state (when *puruṣa* and *prāṇa* alone function); the fifth *avastha-turīyātīta* is at *mūlādhāra* for which the element is earth. The five *kiḷalaṟasthās* have thus been explained above; in *nirmala śuddha turīya* - a state free from birth, the *Śiva tattvas* function at the same points mentioned

above, in order of five, four, three, two and one respectively. (This represents *nirmala jāgrat, nirmala svapna, nirmala suṣupti, nirmala turīya* and *nirmala turīyātīta*).

Variant reading : *sēr punai* for *sōrvaṟa, sōrvanṟi* for *sōrvaṟa.*

மண்ணெடு நீரு மருவியுடல் தாம்
விண்ணெடு வாயு மேவியுயிர் தாந்
தெண்ணழருனே சேர்ந்து கலந் தொன்ரு
யண்ணலுமாகி யருளுஞ் சிகாரமே. 27.

*Maṇṇoḍu nīru maruviyuḍal tām*
*Viṇṇoḍu vāyu mēvi yuyir tān*
*teṇṇaḷaṟānē sērndu kalan toṉṟā*
*yaṇṇalu māgi yaruḷuñ śikāramē.*

Earth and water form the body; *ākāśa* and air sustain the soul; pure fire combines both the body and soul; and the letter '*śi*' standing for the supreme, showers grace.

This verse indicates how *mukti-pañcākṣara, 'śi'*, actuates the five elements in the body. It is of five divisions - *na ma si va ya.* The first two (*na*+*ma*) combine and duly represent earth and water, forming the body. The last two (*va*+*ya*) represent air and *ākāśa* and energise life. The letter *'śi'* in the centre mingling with fire, reveals itself as the supreme.

In the second line, instead of saying air with *ākāśa* he has used *ākāśa* with air (விண்ணுடன் வாயு). This is more for the rhyme of poetry, what is usually referred to as poetic license.

Variant reading : *maṇṇuḍa* for *maṇṇoḍu; yuḍaladāy* for *yuḍaltām.* Last two lines read thus :

*teṇṇenavānil tānadu sērndavai niṟku maṇṇal vaḍivāy aruḷuñ śikāramē.*

சிகார வகாரஞ் சிவமொடு சத்தி
யகார மதுவே யான்மாவாகும்
நகார மதுவே நற்றிரோ தாயி
மகார மதுவே மலமென லாமே. 28.

*Śikāra vakārañ śivamoḍu śatti*
*yakāra maduvē yānmā vāgum*
*nakāra maduvē naṟṟirō dāyi*
*makāra maduvē malamena lāmē.*

This verse explains *sūkṣma pañcākṣara śi va ya na ma.* The letters *śi* and *va* represent *Śiva* and *Śakti; ya* indicates soul; *na* stands for *mala* known as *tirodhāyi* and *ma* the *malas.*

Variant reading: *vāyiḍum* for *vāgum; malamāgum tāmē* or *malamaduvāmē* for *malamena lāmē.*

மலமான மாமண மாயை நீராகு
நிலைகாமிய மனனெருப்பு மதிகதிர்
பெலமாஞ் சுழுனை யிடை பிங்கலையாகு
மலைவாதி மூலத்தினந்த மாக்கிராணமே. 29.

*Malamāna māmaṇa māyai nīrāgu*
*nilaikāmiya mananeruppu madi kadir*
*belamāñ suḻunai yiḍai piṅgalai yagu*
*malai vādi mūlattinanda māggiraṇamē.*

*Māyā* one of the *malas* is associated with earth that produces smell; water pertains to the persisting *karma*; fire clings to *āṇava*; *agni, candra* and *sūrya* represent *suṣumnā, iḍā* and *piṅgalā* respectively, and add strength to the above; at the end of *āṇava* the source of all ignorance, *malas sans* their potency remain just a shadow of their original state i.e., losing their power to blind souls.

Variant reading:

*mala māṇava māyai kāmiyam*
*ilakādamaiyu misain disain tonṟa*
*mulakāya śuddhañ suṟṟamuyirk kela*
*ma .....ku mākkaiyu māmē.*

ஆக்குஞ் சுழி திறந்தாணவ மற்றிடு
நோக்குங் கலைவிட நுண்காமிய மறுந்
தாக்கிலிடை விட மாயையு மற்றிடுந்
தாக்கும்படி யெனச் சாற்றினன் குருவே. 30.

*Ākkuñ suḻitiṟandāṇava maṟṟiḍu*
*nōkkuṅ kalaiviḍa nuṇkāmiya maṟun*
*tākkiliḍai viḍa māyaiyu maṟṟiḍun*
*tākkum paḍi yenac cāṟṟinan guruvē.*

When *suṣumnā* that elevates is opened, *āṇava* stands destroyed; when *piṅgalā* with its tendency for attachment is lost, *karma* is nullified; *māyā* is removed when *iḍā* is lost. This is the method to destroy the *malas* - so said the guru.

Variant reading: *poruḻenac* for *paḍiyenac.*

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