

**Science, Philosophy and Spiritualism: A Debate between Sri Aurobindo and
Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment
for award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2009

Date: 29-07-2009

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "Science, Philosophy and Spiritualism: A Debate between Sri Aurobindo and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.



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We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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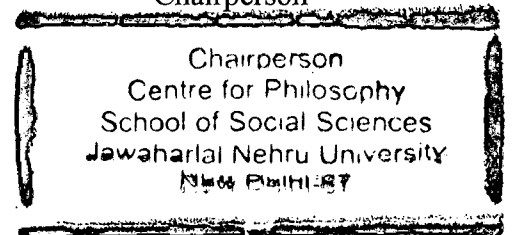
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Tatahagata Biswas

To My Mother

Without Whom Not

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Introduction

This study is concerned with the relation between science, spiritualism and philosophy in the writings of Sri Aurobindo (SA) and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya (KCB). This is one of the major debates in modern Indian philosophy which has constituted it as an academic discipline and has also determined its place in the larger context. The term 'debate' needs some clarification. Here the term has not been used in a direct sense. Both the philosophers are not confronting each other directly; we are attempting to initiate a debate on science, philosophy and spiritualism as conceived by them through a closed study of their work. We will focus on the contestation between Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya and Sri Aurobindo. Both the philosophers were actively engaged with the issues in the backdrop of colonialism and nationalism. Indian intelligentsia was negotiating with the novel phenomenon of colonialism. They were greatly influenced by western philosophies and sciences as well as by the social, political and industrial revolutions. In the light of western education they reinterpreted the traditional epistemologies and social practices. The negotiations were made between positing a world agency on the hand and freedom on the other. In this context, KCB's formulation of human subjectivity as freedom becomes important which is a reiteration of the classical Vedantic position on freedom from the bondage of this world. It is a negation of the material world by continuous process of abstraction and detachment from objects. Indeed in KCB's philosophy the subject has been elaborated as opposed to the object. Subject is what the object is not. Though KCB has tried to give a positive connotation to his theory of freedom but ultimately he accepted the classical Vedantic view of negative conception of freedom. The urge of giving a positive connotation that is a conception of an autonomous subject has been felt because of colonialism and nationalism. The conception of negative freedom is no more sufficient. The question now becomes not only of the emancipation of the individual from the maladies and vices of the material world but also of collective emancipation from the clutches of the foreign power that needs the assertion of worldly agency. Thus the question of *swaraj* (self-rule) becomes the desirable form of freedom rather than *nihisreyasa*. Freedom as *swaraj* is a novel and modern phenomenon. KCB has granted the subjectivity to the body, and in his philosophy

bodily subjectivity is the primary stage of higher subjectivity, but it is only transitional in nature that facilitate the real freedom which is complete renunciation of material world. He finally took recourse into the traditional position of negative conception of freedom by detaching the subject from the material world. He is departing from classical Vedanta while endowing body with subjectivity but he is not giving it the final status as subject. Here he remains a classical Vedantin. In this concept the question of changing the actual world becomes irrelevant. To avoid this problem Sri Aurobindo has introduced in his philosophy the concept of *Sakti* to make his theory of Brahma and salvation dynamic and apt to the age, but he also falls in the same trap. Within the discourse of Vedanta, (both classical and neo-Vedanta) "Freedom is supposed to mean the induction of some kind of total introversion where the subject is left with its bare subjectivity. Strictly speaking, there is not even the freedom for the subject; the subject itself is freedom."¹ There is a certain hesitation in both the philosophers regarding the status of the material world. They were opposing classical Vedanta while asserting its real nature. But finally they were granting it only provisional truthfulness an intermediary reality which neither false (*maya*) nor the Truth. Matter/ body in their philosophy have to be negated, surpassed to become not only free subjects but the freedom itself.

The necessity of owning the country, its history, its past, its geography, human resources and the torrid present has been felt by the cultural elite. The question *swarajya*, *swadesh* was becoming a prominent field of contestation within the discourse of formation of self-hood of the bhadralok class. The urge had been felt to build up a counter-colonial discourse of progress and freedom was fiercely debated. Many societies, institutions had been formed to reassert the agency of the colonized. National Council of Education was one of the prominent nationalist institution of the early 20th century, Aurobindo was the principal of Bengal National College founded by National Council of Education. A process of assimilation was going on through various cultural organs. The Dawn was one of them. The narrative which sought to neutralize the cultural and ethical import of western science to legitimize its adoption

¹ Chattopadhyaya, debiprasad. What is living and what is dead in Indian philosophy. new delhi. People's publishing house. 20001 (fourth edition). Pp. 567.

as economically viable professional option. This in turn set the platform for a revivalist reading of Hindu tradition for a constructive interpretation of the 'sciences' of India. The famous scientist Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy has written a book on Hindu chemistry. Those traditional texts have been looked at through the canon of western science. B.N. Seal, geologist P.N. Bose were the representatives of the revivalist position. They represent the mentality of the emerging class of the professionals. Another prominent thinker of The Dawn Mohendra Lal Sircar was propagating the assimilation between science and spiritualism. He saw in science the ability to serve as the solid foundation to regenerate the ethical and spiritual nature of man. On the one hand these thinkers welcomed science whole heartedly while attempting to disjoin it from materialism. "Hence for our Bhadraklok interlocutor, matter became a manifestation of the supreme Mind; and, since it carries the impress of this Supreme Mind, it is capable of developing 'from higher to lower', being governed by 'fixed and general laws'."² This echoes the Sri Aurobindo's framework. Aurobindo adopted the orientalist binary to his project of integralism. As we have discussed for him "the European mind is characterized by the cults of enquiring, defining, effective practical reason, and the 'cult of life'. Industrialism and the physical sciences prospered on the ebb of the European mind. Contrariwise, the Indian mind was manifest as religious and spiritual but, in addition, there was its intellectual, cultural and material life: these two ebbed and flowed together."³ Philosophy of KCB can be cited as voice of dissent that did not fabricate a synthetic version continuity between east and west, past and present, spiritualism and science. On the contrary he was very much critical of the theory of cosmic evolution. Both the philosophers have envisaged the necessity of reaching to the absolute freedom by transcending this worldliness though the nature of absolute is different. Aurobindo had retained the Advaita concept of Sachidananda Brahma the triunion of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss; on the contrary KCB talked about the three independent absolute contemplated from three different ways, knowing, willing and feeling. What we can know cannot be felt, what we feel that cannot be willed, what we that will cannot be known. Because we can only know facts in proper sense which falls outside of the scope of feeling.

²The Moral Legitimation of Modern Science: Bhadraklok Reflections on Theories of Evolution
Author(s): Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib . Social Studies of Science, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), pp. [9-42.] pp. 19.

³ Ibid. pp.

These are three separate kinds of consciousness. This is the unique way of characterizing absolute is the hallmark of philosophical originality and is a rich source of debate

The debate between worldly agency and subjective freedom has its roots in the thinkers of earlier generation. Rammuhan have tried bridge the gap between negative freedom of renunciation of material world and positive freedom of worldly agency by positing Supreme soul as a mediatory category between this world and otherworld. He has identified the essence of the individual subject with the supreme soul which is efficient and material cause of the universe. Devendranath's formulation follows the path of negative freedom through self-discipline. Unlike Rammuhan he de-linked the negative freedom from the positive freedom of asserting the material world. Worldly agency to him only object-bondage. On the other hand Akshay Kumar Dutta took the opposite direction of asserting the natural and material world. Bankim Chandra (of "What Is Humanity?") went with Dutt. He was not at all convinced with Devendranath denunciation of material world. He wanted to overcome the dichotomy of human subjectivity and worldly agency. He was also not comfortable with Dutt's dissolution of subjectivity into law-like regularities like the objective world.

There were several proposals given to cope with the unprecedented phenomenon of cultural subjection and political domination. India has been projected as the exotic place of mysticism, asceticism and prejudices. The aim was to posit India as other worldly which enabled the colonizers to justify their claim to power. Many indigenous thinkers were enamored with the western way of life and its literary grandeur. As Dr. Krishnadhan Ghosh father of Sri Aurobindo sent his three sons to England at very tender to keep them away all that is Indian⁴. West remained a prominent point of ambivalence throughout Aurobindo's life.⁵ According to Nandy "Aurobindo's spiritualism can be seen as a way of handling a situation of cultural

⁴ Heeghs, Peter. *Sri Aurobindo: A Brief Biography*. Delhi, India .oxford Paperbacks.2006

⁵ Nandy, Ashish. *The Intimate Enemy*. Delhi. Oxford. 1996.

aggression and to the extent it was a language of defiance, seeking to make sense out of the West in Indian terms”⁶. This study investigates “how far the attempt made sense to his society and how far it remained a reduction of the West’s version of the otherworldly Indian.”⁷ We are looking at the issue in comparison with Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya’s view on the matter. To deal with the issue the debate has been placed in broader context of the socio-political and intellectual milieu of the time. Chapter -1 elaborates the political orientation and cultural matrix of the debate. To pursue this work we have dealt with following themes; orientalist imagination of Indian philosophy as wholly spiritualistic and otherworldly through various disciplinary practices. Experts from different disciplines have collaborated the project. The historical-philological methodology of investigating in India philosophy has been criticized for its reductionism, it transform Indian philosophy only to an antiquarian enquiry which certainly has its archival value but it is incapable of studying Indian philosophy as philosophy proper. The politics of archivization has also been indicated in this connection. We have also dealt with colonialism to understand the unique of modern Indian philosophy. Colonialism in India has two distinct phases. Colonialism in its true sense began after 1857 when the colonizers had started to intervene in the educational and other socio-cultural matters and the reactions of indigenous thinkers to this subjugation. Thinkers like Rammohan Roy, Derozio, Keshab Chandra Sen and religious-philosophical movement of neo-vedanta and Brahma Samaj has also been touched upon. The counter narrative of mainstream orientalist constructions has also been mentioned. Daya Krishna has criticized the prevalent view concerning Indian philosophy as irrational. He is for *anviksiki* rather than *darsana*. Scholars like Sheldon Pollock are tracing the root of an indigenous modernity in the corpus of Sanskrit knowledge system of early modern era. In Chapter-2 and Chapter-3 are on Sri Aurobindo and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya respectively. Both the chapters are divided into three sections, each section focuses upon one particular theme. Section –A of chapter -2 deals with Sri Aurobindo’s conception of science in connection with his view on reason, matter, materialism, scepticism and his critique of these categories. Section-B focuses on his conception of philosophy. He always preaches idealism as viable means of human progress while

⁶ Ibid. pp. 85

⁷.Ibid.

acknowledging the contribution made by materialism in human history. Section- C deals with his conception of spirit and his theory of spiritual evolution as the path of reaching the absolute. Necessary comparison has been made both with classical Indian philosophies as well as western thought. Similarly in chapter-3 we have dealt with Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya's view on science, philosophy and spiritualism/ philosophy of spirit in three separate sections. In conclusion a comparison has been made between the two philosophers. Aurobindo's integral view which tells the story of linear progression, whereas, KCB always emphasized on the disjunction between the realms of human enquiry. Another important contribution made by KCB is his formulation of subject as freedom. Though he tried to sketch out a positive conception of freedom but ultimately cannot get out of the total introversion of the subject. The important point is that both the thinkers were hesitant to give the material world, science full recognition. They have accepted science progressively but ultimately take recourse to traditional idealism.

Chapter-1

Historical Background

Indian philosophy is like a tropical forest, where almost all types of thought that have been current in the west since the days of the Greeks, can be found. The writings of the commentators, through successive generations abound in logical precision of thought and true philosophical acumen, which are almost unparalleled....¹. S.N.Dasgupta.

It is the task of India to show the world the way to attain self-determination this is the reason of India's resurgence, this is why god has breathed life into her once more: why great souls are at work to bring about her salvation, why a sudden change is coming over the hearts of her sons. The movement, of which the first outbreak was political, will end in a spiritual consummation.² - Aurobindo.

Other regions give us back what our culture has excluded from its discourse³. - Michel de Certeau.

In this chapter, we would like to understand the debate between Sri Aurobindo (SA) and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (KCB) on science, spiritualism and philosophy from a historical perspective. My interest is in how these two philosophers had visualized the relation among science spiritualism and philosophy in the backdrop of colonialism and nationalism. They reacted differently to cope with colonial hegemony. In this study, my focus is on the contestation between modern western science, materialism and this-worldliness on the one hand and classical Indian spiritualism, and other-worldliness on the other. I am interested in exploring as to how the binary was created and how indigenous thinkers and philosophers reacted to this binary. The debate is important in the sense that it had helped to shape philosophy in India as an academic discipline. The crux of the debate is, *are science, spiritualism*

¹ Dasgupta, Surendra Natha. A history of Indian philosophy. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1922. Vol.v. pp. ix.

² Aurobindo, Sri. *Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo*. Vol-1. Aurobindo Ashram. Pondicherry, India. Popular Edition. 1972. Pp. 81.

³ King, Richard. *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India And'the mystic East'*. Routledge. 1999. [Reprint]. Pp.7.

and philosophy continuous? That is, is there any continuity among them? There are two positions; one holds that there is continuity among them. Other position holds that they are discontinuous. The former position was held by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. The latter position was held by Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya and Rasbihari Das. Thinkers and philosophers like Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay “envisaged the desirability of continuity between matter and spirit, and as a corollary, science and metaphysics. While conceding the significance of western thought, they sought to incorporate it within Indian thought.”⁴ Sri Aurobindo’s attempt was to synthesize matter and spirit, on the contrary, Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya was always emphasizing the difference between matter and spirit; science, spiritualism and philosophy. In Aurobindo’s philosophy, there is progression from science to spiritualism and philosophy. This project tells the story in terms of a linear progression. Historically mainly British and German Orientalisms, that have depicted India as the exotic land of snakes, prejudices, idealism and spiritualism and thus otherworldly. East/ India have been projected as the Other of west/ Europe which is materialist, modern and this worldly. This geopolitics enabled colonialism to validate its claim to colonize, to give itself a philosophical ground and ethical justification. As Hegel said,

Now it is the interest of Spirit that external conditions should become internal ones; that the natural and the spiritual world should be recognized in the subjective aspect belonging to intelligence; by which process the unity of subjectivity and (positive) Being generally-or the Idealism of Existence-is established. *This Idealism, then, is found in India*, but only as an *Idealism of imagination*, without distinct conceptions;-one which does indeed free existence from Beginning and Matter (liberates it from temporal limitations and gross materiality), but changes everything into the merely Imaginative; for although the latter appears interwoven with definite conceptions and Thought presents itself as an occasional concomitant, this happens only through accidental combination. Since, however, it is the abstract and absolute Thought itself that enters into these dreams as their material, we may say that Absolute Being is presented here as in the ecstatic state of a dreaming condition.⁵ [Italics are mine].

⁴ Raghuramraju , A.. *Debates in Indian Philosophy*. Delhi.Oxford. 2006. Page-93.

⁵ Hegel , Wilhelm Friedrich .*The Philosophy of History*..With Prefaces by Charles Hegel and the Translator, J. Sibree, Kitchener.2001. pp. 159.

There were two apparently distinguishable stand toward 'this idealism, then found in India' (see above, Hegel); positivism and romanticism or in Amartya Sen's words, there are three approaches to India Philosophy, viz, Magisterial, Curatorial, Exoticist. The Exoticist approach, generally initiated by romantics⁶. According to Inden, there are three accounts of Indian Philosophy, viz., descriptive account, commentative account and explanatory account.⁷ Through all these various approaches and accounts Orientalists/ Indologists want to establish an intellectual, epistemological dominance over East/ India/ Orient. The knowledge of the Westerners (knower) about East (object) is rational, authoritative, philosophical, critical, scientific; thus superior to the knowledge of Easterners about themselves, because Easterners are irrational, illogical, subjectivist and spiritual.

The presentation and the representation of the Other here is like a dream state An unconscious. Nineteenth century Europe here is the waking state thus rational. Orient had been depicted as a wilderness; a neurosis, which has to be cured. [Here the discourse of Psychoanalysis and discourse of Orientalism overlap]. The neurotic is the internal other of west. Orient (non-Europe/America) is the distant other of west. Similar practices have been observed by in other disciplines of human sciences as well As Inden wrote:

The condensation and displacement which the Indologist attributes to the Indian mind in the characterizing passages of his text make the thoughts and practices of the ancient Indian seem alien and stress his difference from the man of the West. Secondary revision in an account of South Asia goes just the other way. It makes the strange and incoherent seem rational or normal. It is, however, not attributed to the Indian mind. The Indologist himself takes credit for providing the orderly facade for Indian practices. Here the scientific theorist-the physical anthropologist, the racial historian, historical materialist,

⁶ Sen, Amartya. "Indian Traditions and Western Imagination", *Daedulus*, pp. 1-26

⁷ "the descriptive aspect of an Indological account is that, which presents the thoughts and acts of Indians to the reader. The commentative aspect of an account is its frame, often isolable in distinct passages. Those sane thoughts and actions by characterizing them, by indicating their general nature or essence. Since even the most narrowly descriptive work of cholarship on South Asia usually contains (or at least presupposes) a framing commentary "... Inden, Ronald. "Orientalist Constructions of India." *Modern Asian Studies*, 20, 3, 1986, pp. 401-446..

comparative mythologist, social psychologist, historian of religion, structural-functional anthropologist, Parsonian sociologist, or development economist-truly comes into his own. [One might also add the theories of the psychoanalyst to this list, for does he not also do the same thing? The difference, of course, is that he claims his ordering of the patient's material to be rational and not merely a rationalization].⁸

{The presentation and the representation of the Other here is like a dream state. An unconscious.} Nineteenth century Europe here is the waking state thus rational. Orient had been depicted as a wilderness; a neurosis, which has to be cured. [Here the discourse of Psychoanalysis and discourse of Orientalism overlap]. The neurotic is the internal other of west. Orient (non-Europe/America) is the distant other of west. Similar practices have been observed by Inden in other disciplines of human sciences as well. As Inden showed,

The discourse of the Orientalist, we have recently been told, presents itself as a form of knowledge that is both different from, and superior to, the knowledge that the Orientals have of themselves. Backed by government funds, disseminated by universities, supported by the ACLS and the SSRC, endowed by the Ford Foundation, and given more than equal time by the New York Review of Books, the knowledge of the *Orientalist, known nowadays as an 'area studies' specialist, appears as rational, logical, scientific, realistic, and objective. The knowledge of the Orientals, by contrast, often seems irrational, illogical, unscientific, unrealistic, and subjective. The knowledge of the Orientalist is, therefore, privileged in relation to that of the Orientals and it invariably places itself in a relationship of intellectual dominance over that of the Easterners.* It has appropriated the power to represent the Oriental, to translate and explain his (and her) thoughts and acts not only to Europeans and Americans but also to the Orientals themselves. But that is not all. Once his special knowledge enabled the Orientalist and his countrymen to gain trade concessions, conquer, colonize, rule, and punish in the East. Now it authorizes the area studies specialist and his colleagues in government and business to aid and advise, develop and modernize, arm and stabilize the countries of the so-called Third World.⁹ [Italics are mine].

⁸ Inden, Ronald. "Orientalist Constructions of India". *Modern Asian Studies* 20, 3 (1986). Printed in Great Britain. University of Chicago.), pp. 401-446.

⁹ ACLS-American Council of Learned Societies; in Britain one would also want to mention the University Grants Committee. ⁶ Social Sciences Research Council; its British counterpart is the recently renamed Economic and Social Science Research Council.. SSRC.pp.408. Inden states about

The function of all these texts is to portray Indian thoughts, institutions as alien, deviation from the norm. It transforms ancient Indian religious rituals as a deformation of reality. As Louis Renou said about Vedic rituals. ¹⁰ Indian philosophy has been in a similar way reduced only to an antiquarian enquiry. Indian philosophy is presented as archaic. This politics of archivization had been carried out in Orientalist institutions like Asiatic societies and state archives¹¹. As Ronald Inden said,

It [Indian philosophy] presents us with the image of 'archaic civilization' of which India is a leading example, as experiencing their religious knowledge in 'symbolic' and 'mythic' rather than rational and discursive forms.¹²

This is a typical example of curatorial approach to Indian philosophy, which is a dominating trend in Indological research. From the vantage point of curatorial approach, Indian philosophy is a subject matter of philological and historical enquiry but cannot be a subject matter of philosophical inquiry¹³. On the other hand, romantic/ exoticist approach had valorized the spiritual aspect of Indian philosophy. Thus gave one-sided view. As Zimmer said:

the contemporary situation in the academic field concerning orient. Which is more of a American version of Orientalism. As aptly exemplified in Edward Said's book *Orientalism*.

Inden, Ronald. "Orientalist Constructions of India". *Modern Asian Studies* 20, 3 (1986). Printed in Great Britain. University of Chicago.), pp. 401-446.

¹⁰ The Vedic rites are made to conform to a systematic arrangement; mythology may be lacking in system, but ritual is overburdened with it. It appears that originally separate rites were grouped together in vast systems in response to new demands that had arisen in the course of time, and under the influence of an advancing scholasticism... I do not intend to engage in a theoretical consideration of the nature of the ritual. *Ritual has a strong attraction for the Indian mind*, which tends to see everything in terms of the formulae and methods of procedure, even when such adjuncts no longer seem really necessary for its religious experience. [Italics are mine].

Renou, Louis *Religions of Ancient India*. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. Pp.29-30. the first is descriptive. The second part is commentative account.

¹¹ "the [Indian] Philosophical thought is reduced to the mythical, religion to psychology, the social or political to the economic, the cultural to the biological" Ibid. pp/ 415.

¹² Ibid. pp. 416.

¹³ The merit of curatorial approach (and Indology as an academic discipline) is that, it discovered, translated, interpreted, preserved texts which otherwise would have been in oblivion. This study admires the contribution of philological-historical approach but simultaneously it is also conscious about the serious limitation of these approaches to study Indian thoughts. It failed to appreciate Indian philosophy as philosophy proper. Perhaps this was not the objective of the concerned discipline. And this is precisely the point I am emphasizing here.

We of the occident are about to arrive at a crossroads that was reached by the thinkers of India some seven hundred years before Christ. This is the real reason why we become vexed and stimulated, *uneasy yet interested*, when confronted with the concepts and images of Oriental wisdom.... India's teachings force us to realize what its problems are. But we cannot take over the Indian solutions. We must enter the new period our own way and solve its questions for ourselves, because though truth, the radiance of reality, is universally one and the same, it is mirrored variously according to the mediums in which it is reflected. Truth appears differently in different lands and ages according to the living materials out of which its symbols are hewn. ... the chief aim of Indian thought is to unveil and integrate into consciousness what has been thus resisted and hidden by the forces of life – not to explore and describe the visible world. The supreme and characteristic achievement of the Brahman mind (and this has been decisive, not only for the course of Indian philosophy, but also for the history of Indian civilization) was its discovery of the self (atman) as an independent, imperishable entity, underlying the conscious personality and bodily frame... the effort of Indian philosophy has been, for millenniums, to know this adamant self and make knowledge effective in human life. And this enduring concern is what has been responsible for the supreme morning calm that pervades the terrible histories of the Oriental world - histories no less tremendous, no less horrifying, than our own. Through the vicissitudes of *physical change a spiritual footing* is maintained in the peaceful-blissful ground of Atman; eternal, timeless, and imperishable.¹⁴ [Italics are mine]

The Orientalist and Romantic discourses share the same premises. Firstly, both of them fashions love of the exotic, and the unique. Secondly, there is a search for the origin also. Thirdly, both of believe in organic relation between languages and societies. Orientalism also inherits the dichotomy inherent in romanticism. On the one hand it wanted to preserve local diversity on the other they also have tried to maintain a global unity¹⁵. The politics of Orientalism and Indology lies more in the fact that while valorizing all that is “Indian”, give positive impetus to Hindu chauvinism. As Kaushik Bagchi said:

The indologist's picture of India was therefore bound to mirror in certain ways the ideas of the class that maintained itself as the sole authors, guardians, and interpreters of these texts (Sanskrit), mainly brahmins and upper-class hindus. In certain fundamental ways, commentaries on indian society such as Garbe's were thus within the same discursive

¹⁴ Zimmer, Heinrich. *Philosophies of India*. Translated By Joseph Campbell. Motilal Benarasidas. Delhi. Reprint , 2005. Pp.1-4.

¹⁵ Bagchi Kaushik, “An Orientalist In The Orient: Richard Garbe's Indian Journey, 1885-1886”. *Journal of World History*, Vol. 14, No.3, University Of Hawaii. 2003.

universe as “orthodox” hindu constructions. Not surprisingly, orientalist scholarship, as we have seen earlier, became a reservoir that fed hindu pride and chauvinism, thus completing the circle that began with “Orientalism [feeding] on an existing, dominant discourse carried on by Brahmin elite”.¹⁶

This formulation satisfied the conservative section of hindu society. They were very eager to receive any suggestion coming from the Europeans that enabled them to reinstate their social status. Thus, they incorporate the valorized picture of Indian culture, philosophy. They were eager recipient of any idea which has the potential to reinforce their superiority.¹⁷ The agenda here is to marginalize the internal other of Germany that is Jews and build up a story of Aryan race while juxtaposing classical India on nineteenth century Germany. This problematizes the contention of German engagement with orient as “purely academical/ cognitive”. Many Indologists became ardent supporter of Nazi party. As Bagchi said:

The innocence of German Orientalism is also suspect from another perspective. Several writers have pointed to German society’s “internal other”, at whom distancing and control was directed rather than toward the non-european Other. More specially, the German other was the Jew, and German Orientalism’s complicity in the process of marginalizing this “Oriental within” became all too clear in the Nazi era, when many Indologists became active collaborators with the “Aryan” establishment¹⁸.

This attitude is not limited to westerners. Indigenous thinkers are also nurtured under same ideological rubric as is evident in their writings on Indian philosophy. The typical example is Radhakrishnan, who became the authoritative representative of Indian philosophy.¹⁹ In the, *Indian Philosophy Vol.1* in first chapter he essentialized

¹⁶ Ibid.pp. 312. [comment on Garbe’s position].

¹⁷ This is exactly what German Orientalists provided. David Knof and O.P.Kejriwal have pointed to the supposedly rejuvenating effect of British Orientalism on Indian cultural pride and awareness. A similar argument for German Orientalism has been developed by ‘Nirad Chaudhuri in his biography of Max Muller’. Ibid. pp. 298.

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 322.

¹⁹ As he wrote in the very beginning of his, book *Indian Philosophy Vol.1*:

Though the world has changed considerably in its outward material aspects, means of communication, scientific inventions, etc., there has not been any great change in its inner spiritual side. The old forces of hunger and love, and the simple joys and fears of the heart, belong to the permanent stuff of human nature. The true interests of humanity, the deep passions of religion, and the great problems of philosophy, have not been superseded as material things have been. Indian thought is a chapter of the history of the human mind, full of vital meaning for us. The ideas of great

Indian philosophy, by spirituality. Thus he succumbs to romantic construction of Indian philosophy. As he said:

Philosophy in India is essentially spiritual. It is the intense spirituality of India, and not any great political structure or social organization that has developed, that has enabled it to resist the ravages of time and the accidents of history... *The spiritual motive dominates life in India.* Indian philosophy has its interest in the haunts of men, and not in supra-lunar solitudes, the *Gita* and the *Upanisads* are not remote from popular belief. They are the great literature of the country, and at the same time vehicles of the great systems of thought. The *Puranas* contain the truth dressed up in myths and stories, to suit the weak understanding of the majority. The hard task of interesting the multitude in metaphysics is achieved in India.... The founders of philosophy strive for a *socio-spiritual reformation* of the country. When Indian civilization is called a *Brahminical*; one, it only means that its main character and dominating motives are shaped by its philosophical thinkers and religious minds, though these are not all of Brahmin birth. The idea of Plato that philosophers must be the rulers and directors of society is practiced in India. The ultimate truths are truths of spirit, and in the light of them actual life has to be refined.²⁰ [Italics are mine]

Here Radhakrishnan is retelling the story as foretold and already formulated in Orientalist and Indological discourse much earlier by western philologists and cultural historians like William Jones, Max Muller James Mill and John Stuart Mill, inheriting a colonial discourse in a more subtle and reliable detail and rigour shows a close relation between religion and philosophy. Here philosophy played a secondary role to religion. This formulation enabled Indology to project India and its philosophies as mystical. As Daya Krishna said,

The close relation between philosophy and religion , and religion and mysticism which is supposed to be the hallmark of Indian thought was strongly advocated by him [Radhakrishnan] both in his numerous speeches and writings and this helped to strengthen the mystical image of Indian philosophy and culture which has been built right from Ram

thinkers are never obsolete. They animate the progress that seems to kill them. The most ancient fancies sometimes startle us by their strikingly modern character, for insight does not depend on modernity. Radhakrishnan, S. Indian Philosophy. Vol.1. Oxford University Press. 2006. Pp.7.

²⁰ Ibid. pp.25.

Mohan Roy onwards and had come *almost an axiomatic truth about Indian philosophy.*²¹ [Italics are mine]

Daya Krishna alleges Radhakrishnan further by saying:

Radhakrishnan, along with many others, played a decisive part in presenting this deep dichotomy (between philosophy and *darsana*) philosophical traditions of India and west, forgetting the long linkage of philosophy with the ideology of “good life” in the west as well as the long tradition of hard-core ratiocinative thinking and where skeptics and agostics were as frequently found as those who believed in something transcendent. Yet, even the latter were never unquestioning believers, for if they were so, they were never regarded as philosophers.²²

In this sphere of cultural and intellectual subjugation, in accepting the academic norms as set forth by the colonizer, the power of colonialism rests. As stated by Ashish Nandy:

Modern colonialism won its great victories not so much through its military and technological prowess as through its ability to create secular hierarchies incompatible with the traditional order. To them the new order looked like- and here lay its psychological pull- the first step towards a more just and equal world. That was why some of the finest critical minds in Europe – and in the East – were to feel that colonialism, by introducing modern structures into the barbaric world, would open up the non-west to the modern critical – analytical spirit.²³

Therefore, Colonialism becomes the very cannon of the perception as well as reception of classical Indian philosophy and past traditions. In this chapter, we are going to look at colonialism not from the point of view of political economy though some consideration about it can lay the foundation of our study. Colonialism in its naivety is “the establishment by more developed countries of *formal political authority* over areas of Asia, Africa, Australia, and Latin America. It is distinct from

²¹ History Of Science, Philosophy And Culture. In Indian Civilization. [PHISPC]. General Editor. D.P. Chattopadhyay. Vol. X, Part. 1. “Developments In Indian philosophy From Eighteenth Century Onwards: Classical And Western”. By Daya Krishna. Centre For Studies In Civilizations. [CSC]. First Published In 2002. Reprinted In 2006. Distributed By Motilal Benerasidas. {Munsiram Manoharlal Publishers, Pvt. Ltd.}. pp. 306.

²² Ibid.

²³ Nandy Ashish. The Intimate Enemy. Oxford Paperbacks. 1996. Pp. Ix. (Preface).

the spheres of influence, indirect forms of control, semi-colonialism, and neo-colonialism.”²⁴(Italics are mine). “The age of modern colonialism began with the global expansion of trade and conquest by European powers”.²⁵ Indeed British East India Company came to India overtly with commercial purpose, which they never had abandoned. However, this is not the whole truth. British colonialism had touched every major sphere of life of the people of Hindustan; those spheres were changed fundamentally. It is as true in the domain of epistemology and cognitive categories (which shapes the worldviews and the categories through which individuals/ groups/ communities cognize, organize and systematize and subsequently act according to those categories) as in the domain of economy and material conditions. Here the focus is upon the epistemological and the domain of cognition. How the battles were fought and negotiations had been made.

The establishment of British suzerainty in the later half of eighteenth century prompted British officials, missionaries and scholars to acquire knowledge of the classical languages of India, of the structure of Indian society and of values and manners of her people. The diverse responses of the native intellectuals to the ferment created by all these may be better understood in the light of the principal features of Indian society and culture prevailing at that time. The essential features of the comparatively stable Indian socio-cultural system that persisted with minor variations down the British times. We can describe it as follows: Economically its base was mainly agriculture, the tools and implements did not register any remarkable change through time, and arts and crafts mostly connected with such poorly developed production grew. Socially its framework mainly consisted of comparatively self-sufficient village communities in groups of contiguous villages; caste was the typical Indian institution to accommodate various socio-economic strata and nascent classes, binding them together in groups and ensuring such constitutions an occupational protection as well. Ideologically the outstanding feature of Indian culture, the foundation of all its religion and philosophy, was the idea of karma and rebirth, which

²⁴ Marshall, Gordon Edited Oxford Dictionary of Sociology. Indian Edition. Oxford University Press. New Delhi. 2004. Pp.92.

²⁵ Bottomore, Tom, Laurence Harris, V.G. Kiernan, Ralph Miliband Eds. Dictionary Of Marxist Thought. Second Edition. Maya Blackwell, World View Reference. New Delhi. 2000. Pp. 94-100.

discouraged, in general, social mobility and individual initiative and secured social stability thereby. Of course, new institutions and laws had grown, though somewhat haltingly, while literature, arts and philosophies blossomed. The railways, the press, the western system of education, clubs and associations: all shook the prevalent socio-economic order. It was as if the British were working as “the unconscious tool of history”. Nevertheless, the processes of exploitation unleashed by them destroyed the possibilities of development of industries and a modern economic system in India. The British rule, rather systematically destroyed the native industries of India for the benefit of the industries in Britain and their market in India. Even though it sought to tie down the people it ruled to colonial backwardness, it released new historical forces within the Indian fold by throwing the traditional economic system and socio-economic order out of gear. It gave birth to a desire for material advancement and better amenities and living conditions of individuals, as distinguished from groups or communities. Simultaneously, it gave birth to a spirit of inquiry in the minds of the native intellectuals who were exposed to western education. Both the social reformists and the conservatives took a fresh and critical look at their own society and culture as a reaction to western interpretation of the same.

We can divide British colonialism and colonization into two phases one is more spontaneous and other can be called “systematic colonization”²⁶ in the first phase, between 1757 and 1857, colonizers had mostly concentrated their attention to the political domination. The policy was not to tamper the cultural rubric of Indian society. However, after 1857 India came under the British Empire. The administration had been shifted from British East India Company to the Queen. This had a lasting

²⁶ “Where the capitalist has at his back the power of the mother-country, he tries to clear out of his way by force, the modes of the producer. The same interest, which compels the sycophant of capital, the political economist, in the mother-country, to proclaim the theoretical identity of the capitalist mode of production with its contrary, that same interest compels him in the colonies to make a clean breast of it, and to proclaim aloud the antagonism of the two modes of production. To this end he proves how the development of the social productive power of labour, co-operation, division of labour, use of machinery on a large scale, &c., are impossible without the expropriation of the labourers, and the corresponding transformation of their means of production into capital. In interest of the so-called national wealth, he seeks for artificial means to ensure the poverty of the people. Here his apologetic armour crumbles off, bit by bit, like rotten touch-wood. It is the great merit of e.g. Wakefield to have discovered in the colonies the truth as to the conditions of capitalist production in the mother-country. As the system of protection at its origin attempted to manufacture a capitalist artificially in the mother-country, so Wakefield’s colonization theory, which England tried for a time to enforce by acts of parliament, attempted to effect the manufacture of wage-workers in the colonies. This he calls “systematic colonization” “. Marx, Karl, Capital. Vol-1. Progress Publishers. Moscow. U.S.S.R. 1986. Pp. 717.

effect in Indian society not only in political domain but also in the domain of education, culture and philosophy as well as in economy. In this study, we are focusing on this second phase of British colonial rule where it became more emphatic²⁷. Before 1835, the colonial stance was to impart education through Sanskrit and Arabic/Persian. However in 1835, Macaulay's minutes on educational policy brought a paradigm shift, now English became the sole medium of instruction. The intention was to form an English educated elite and upper middle class, who will act as liaison between government and the people governed. Who will carry forward the project of modernization and serve as clerks. As a corollary, it was also said that it would develop the vernacular languages, which eventually did happen. Exposure to European philosophy, science, literature, jurisprudence, statecraft did give birth to modern Bangla modern Marathi, and other Indian languages. This approach is Anglicist as Macauley was very clear in his mind about the purpose of his recommendation on education as he said,

I feel ...that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population²⁸.

The Underlying assumption was a theory of culture that is called *Filtration Theory*. This theory was later further refined by John Stuart Mill in his dispatches from the Office of the East India Company. The theory assumed that, "a unified culture is necessary in a differentiated society, but that a scarcity of resources forbade an expensive English education being available to the general Indian population. Instead leisured Indian elite would be given an English education that would enable them to act as the agents of Westernization, communicating to the larger native population the manifold benefits of Western culture—thereby, of course, strengthening Western

²⁷ Prehistory of this phase would come as necessary reference to understand this second phase better.

²⁸ Macauley, Thomas Babington .Sources Of Indian Tradition . "Minute On Education". New York, In: W. T. De Bary Et Al. (Eds)Columbia University Press). 1958, P. 601.

cultural hegemony in various complex ways”²⁹. Macaulay expressed his justification while saying:

There are in this very town native who is quite competent to discuss political or scientific questions with fluency and precision in the English language. I have heard the very question on which I am now writing discussed by native gentlemen with a liberality and an intelligence which would do credit to any member of the Committee of Public Instruction.³⁰

This policy was successful in spreading western ideas. It got concrete shape in building universities in three presidencies in 1857 (Calcutta university, Bombay university and Madras university). This revolutionized Indian way of thinking. On the hind side, it gave a space for interaction at national level, which resulted in formation of Indian national congress and Indian nationalism. It also altered radically the way the cultural elite think. Henry Louis Derozio (1817-1823: lecturer in philosophy and history in Presidency College then Hindu College, Calcutta) along with Rammuhan Roy (1777-1833), (whom Rabindrnath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru called the first modern man of India.) influenced the youth of that time, famously known as “Young Bengal”. Moreover, the spirit of nationalism manifested itself in the rediscovery and reinterpretation of India's indigenous intellectual traditions, presented anew in relation to Western thought. India has been rediscovered from the point of view of several disciplinary practices. As Roy.W. Parreett says,

Philosophy is but one example of this trend. India has, of course, a rich and venerable native tradition in philosophy, including an enormous philosophical literature written in the Sanskrit language. But after 1857 it was *Western* philosophy that formed the basis of the curriculum in the Indian universities, with traditional Indian philosophy being, East at first, ignored or despised. (Hence, even today in India a philosophy department, heavily devoted to Western philosophy is part of most major universities). However, the education of Indians in Western philosophy also made possible the growth of a class of Indian philosophers equipped to represent in English the riches of the Sanskritic tradition, particularly in its various relations to Western philosophy. Thus their colonial education in Western philosophy was a necessary condition for Surendranath Dasgupta and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan being able to write their pioneering English language histories of Indian philosophy, and these works were followed by other

²⁹ Roy W. Perrett..”Truth, Relativism and Western Conceptions of IndianPhilosophy”. *Asian Philosophy*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1998 19

³⁰ Macauley Op. Cit., Note 2, Pp. 600-601.

more specialised studies by modern Indian philosophers like K.C. Bhattacharya, Satischandra Chatterjee, D.M. Datta, Mysore Hiriyanna, T.R.V. Murti, etc.—a interpretive tradition continued in recent times by Indian philosophers like J.N. Mohanty and B.K. Matilal. *Macauley's hoped-for class of interpreters began not just to convey Western knowledge to Indians, but also Indian knowledge to Westerners.*³¹ (Italics are mine).

Macaulay was not a lone voice, the father of modern India Raja Ram Muhan Roy was arguing forcefully for introduction of western education. As he wrote to governor-general Lord Amherst:

This seminary ... can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society. The pupils there will acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India..... no improvement can be expected from inducing young men to consume a dozen years of the most valuable period of their lives in acquiring the niceties of *Vyakaran* or Sanscrit Grammar, for instance, in learning to discuss such points as the following: *khada*, signifying to eat, *khadati* he or she eats, query, whether does *khadati* taken as a whole convey the meaning he, she or it eats, or are separate parts of this meaning conveyed by distinctions of the words ...? Neither can much improvement arise from such speculations as the following which are the themes suggested by the Vedanta: In what manner is so absorbed in the Deity? What relation does it bear to the Divine Essence? Nor will youdis be fitted to be better members of society by the *Vedantic* doctrines which teach them to believe all visible things have no real existence... and therefore the sooner we escape from mem and leave the world the better. Again, no essential benefit can be derived by the student of the *Mimamsa* from knowing what it is that makes the killer of a goat sinless by pronouncing certain passages of the Vedanta and what is the real nature and operative influence of passages of the *Vedas*.,The student of the *Nyaya Shastra* cannot be said to have improved his mind after he has learned from it into how many ideal classes the objects in the universe are divided, and what speculative

³¹ Roy W. Perrett. "Truth, Relativism and Western Conceptions of Indian Philosophy".

Asian Philosophy, Vol. 8, No. 1, 19. 1998

relation the soul bears to the body, the body to the soul, the eye to the ear, &c.³²

Contemporary scholarship in indigenous knowledge system tells a counter narrative to the formulation of Rammohan Roy. According to scholars like Sheldon Pollock, Van der Veer, Karin Preisendanz there was living tradition in Sanskrit scholarship where new innovations were taking place. New interpretations were emerging to understand the prevailing traditions. New intellectuals were coming with novel sense of time and history. Especially the logico-linguistic school of *Navya Nyaya* which originated in Mithila in late thirteenth century to early fourteenth century. Gangesa's *Tattacintamani* (Wishing Stone of Philosophical Principles) is the seminal text of this tradition. Raghunath Siromani (fl ca. 1550, Assam, Navadip, Mithila) was another important figure³³. Despite this complexity seventeenth century had brought with it 'objectively innovative' kinds of scholarship. This objective innovativeness had led to a new conception of development of knowledge. As Pollock, said,

We are able to perceive a sharp line being drawn, for the first in Indian history that systematically separated present knowledge from its past forms. At the same time, new social facts in the life-world of the Sanskrit intellectuals (including philosophers) begin to manifest themselves. Nor least of these was the opportunity for increased circulation in unfamiliar conceptual universes, especially in Mughal north India but elsewhere as well, where interactions with Persianate intellectuals or Europeans became more common and more cordial.³⁴

Pollock and others have cited the absence of chronological record of developments of thoughts as one of the obstacle to know and to write the intellectual history of philosophy in general Indian philosophy in particular. This methodological problem has its roots in the very premises of philosophy as an intellectual pursuit. Philosophies in East as well as anywhere else posit itself outside of temporality; it deals with timeless problems, such as soul, substance and the nature of time itself. As Pollock said,

³² Roy, Rammohan (1958) Letter On Education, In: De Bary Et Al., Op. Cit., Note 2, P. 593-595.

³³ Pollock, Sheldon. 'New Intellectuals in Seventeenth- Century India'. Reprinted From. *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 38, 1 (2001). Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd. New Delhi. Pp.6.

³⁴Ibid.

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The first thing to remember is that for much of its existence and across most of its communities of practitioners, systematic thought in south Asia completely and utterly erased all evidence of its temporal being: it presented itself as something that took place entirely outside of time. In this, Sanskrit thought differed little from theory and practice of European philosophy (modern no less than scholastic), which in its very core projects itself as discourse that transcends historicity as a relevant condition of its possibility. In India this kind transcendence was achieved most notably by the elimination of all historical referentiality. The names and times and places participants in intellectual discourse across fields are largely excluded even where such exclusion makes it appreciably more difficult to follow the dialogue between disputants that forms the basic structure of most Sanskrit philosophical exposition.³⁵ [Italics are mine].

As an example (as cited in Pollock) we see that when Kumarila (seventh century) was criticizing Buddhist logician Dingnaga (fifth century) nowhere in his writing he had mentioned the name of Dingnaga. Again, when Kumalira had been criticized by Santaraksita (eighth century) Kumarila's name was absent. Even the names of Vedantic philosophers such as, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva was absent when their philosophies were fiercely debated throughout ninth to fifteenth century. The status of later philosophers in Indian philosophy was reduced to commentators. Later philosophers mainly project themselves as inferior partners as compared to their predecessors. In India unlike western philosophy, the past dominates the present, always a conversation partner. As cited by Pollock.

In India, however, this mode of discourse also implied that all intellectual generations, disembedded from any spatio-temporal framework, were thought of as coexistent; the past was very conversation partner. It was also viewed as a superior partner, the master who made the primary statements in a discussion upon which later participants could only comment. In the face of the grandeur of the past, intellectuals typically assumed an attitude of inferiority: the universe was systematically entropic, and intellectual effort could be nothing but a quest to recover what had once been known more perfectly, but now was lost.³⁶

This situation is more evident in case of *Nyaya* commentarial tradition as Karin Preisendanz said,

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 7.

³⁶ Ibid.

However, as has been observed by others with respect to Sanskrit commentarial literature in general, according to the – mostly only implicit – understanding of the authors of these commentarial works the individual aphorisms already contain the opinions and positions explicated by themselves in the light of the contemporary state of philosophical discussion; the doctrinal edifice which has been sketched in the *Nyayasutra*, including the rival critiques and positions, thus anticipates – as we would express it – the later developments or can harmoniously accommodate them. No express claim is made to personal intellectual originality or innovation on the part of the individual thinkers; it is rather explicitly denied in some cases. A further explicit authorial attitude to be encountered is that the commentarial activity serves the re-establishment of doctrinal positions expressed in the foundational work which have been misunderstood by opponents and therefore attacked or dismissed, with the result that their real meaning has become concealed. [Italics are mine].³⁷

The writer of *Nyayavartika* which is a commentary on *Nyayabhasya*, Uddyotkara (sixth century) wrote in opening section, the auspicious invocatory verse (mangalasloka):

Yad aksapadh pravaro muninam samaya jagato jagada/

Kutarkikajnananivartitihetih karisyate tasya maya nibandha//.

In the following I will [now] compose a compendium of the teaching (*sastra*) that has been proclaimed by *Aksapada*, the foremost of sages, for the sake of the world's [mental and spiritual] peace, [a compendium] which [should] cause the misperceptions of poor logicians to vanish.³⁸

The intellectual scenario was changing fourteenth century onwards, and it came to its full in seventeenth century. When the designation 'new' ceased to connote any negative resonance, instead it had started to signify 'furthest point of development in a discourse'.³⁹ New genre of writing and composing philosophical works were coming into being; *Kaustabha* was one of them. The term *Kaustabha* literally refers "to the gem made manifest at the primieval churning of the milk ocean by the gods and worn

³⁷ Preisendanz, Karin. 'The Production of Philosophical Literature In South Asia During The Pre-Colonial Period (15th To 18th Centuries): The Case Of The *Nyayasutra* Commentarial Tradition'. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. (Springer). 2005. 33:55-94. Pp. 55-94.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

beast of *Visnu*.”⁴⁰ *Mahadeva Punatambekara's* (fl. 1675, a Maharashtrian 'from Punyastambha' on Godavari) *Nyayakaustabha* is an exemplary work. Here he dealt with issues of epistemology and metaphysics following the canon set forth by *Tattacintamani*. The main feature of the text is its awareness toward historicity. There are certain periodization took place in the writing of the text. *Mahadeva* had positioned authors in their respective time. Authors were not only mentioned but also categorized throughout his work. Those categories are as follows: *pracina* (ancients), *pracinanuyayin* (followers of ancients), *navina* (moderns), *atinavina* (most up-to-dates), *adhunika* (contemporaries)[±]. These categories are as valid for *nyayaikas* as for *mimamsakas*, *vaisesikas*, grammarians, hermeneuticians and literary theorists.⁴¹ Others had added still more variety such as; *navyatara* (very new), *abhinava* (brand new)⁴² distinction made by Kaunda Bhatta (fl. 1650. Maharashtra/ Varanasi). There are further distinction made by gaga bhatta (ca. 1600-85. varanasi) such as; *ciramtana* (the oldest), *jirna* (the elders) ±. There are other significant distinctions made by Annam Bhatta (fl. 1560. Andhra/Varanasi) between *svatantra* (independents) and *sampradayika* (traditionalist)⁴³. The designation new was not always carrying single connotation. Sometimes it had been used in pejorative sense by scholars such as Kamalakara. On the contrary, to Siddhicandra (1587-1666. Delhi) it was a proud self-description.⁴⁴

One cannot infer from the examples given above that the periodization is a novel phenomena of seventeenth century or the century preceding it. Avinava Gupta (ninth century-tenth century. 1000. Kashmir) had already used similar categories while positing the status of his own view, which is according to Pollock, "a radically new

⁴⁰ Pollock, Sheldon. 'New Intellectuals in Seventeenth- Century India'. Reprinted From. *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 38, 1 (2001). Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd. New Delhi. Pp.6.

[±] In recent times *adhunika* refers to moderns and *navina* to contemporaries. Thus modern Indian philosophy is translated as *adhunik bharater itihās* (in Bengali).

⁴¹ Mishra, Umesh Edited. *Nyayakaustabha Pratyaksakhanda*. Written By Mahadeva. Varanasi. 1930. [Cited In Pollock].

⁴² Sastri, rama Krishna edited. *Navyatara padarthadipika*. Varanasi. 1900. pp. 21. [cited by Pollock].

[±] *jirna* had been used in positive sense. Now it generally used negatively

⁴³ Jha, ramchandra edited. *Tarkasamgraha*. By annam bhatta. Varanasi. 1990.

⁴⁴ He Had Used The Connotation New To Himself In His *Kavyaprakasakhandana* (Critique Of *The Treatise On Literature*). This Is A Systematic Attack On Mammata's Eleventh-Century Classic.

understanding of the very object of aesthetic analysis".⁴⁵ He posited his view concerning *rasa* as new in relation with his predecessor *dandin* (late seventh century). He held *dandin's* view concerning *rasa* theory/ literary theory as *ciramtana* (most ancient). Then what is 'new' in this era of innovations? The peculiarity of this era lies in the reception and modulation of periodization that is a sense of time now (seventeenth century) becomes the core of the very organization of philosophical discourse and its disciplinary practices. As Pollock says,

In the seventeenth century, historicist periodisation for the first time becomes the very modality of understanding how knowledge is to be organised, and, more important, how new knowledge can actually be produced.⁴⁶

This periodization is also evident the way the texts had been approached. This era is innovative in the mode of reinterpreting the foundational texts.. Especially in the case of *nyayasutra*. In this case it was possible because of the absence of Buddhism as a fierce philosophical rival which also due to Muslim invasion. [±]as cited in Karin Preisendanz:

After the demise of Buddhism in India and the firm establishment of Muslim rule in the north, related but categorically distinct external factors which must have jointly influenced the motivations of the scholars, we can observe. In the fifteenth century, a return of concern with the *nyayasutra*, the ancient foundational work of the *nyaya* tradition, accompanied by a new kind of focused and increasingly intense interest in inter alia the evaluation of sporadic earlier text-critical remarks and positions; furthermore, the formerly prominent engagement in controversies with Buddhist philosophers occasioned either directly by topics addressed in the sutra or indirectly by related reflections in the sub-commentaries gives way to the endeavor to present and comment upon, wherever appropriate, the relevant topical discourse found in recent and contemporary *navya-nyaya* treatises. The mentioned turn together with the new attitude may well have been part of a historicist search for originality and authenticity which in this case, i.e., with regard to the *nyayasutra*, had become possible because there was no longer any psychological and ideological need to respond to the Buddhist

⁴⁵ Pollock, Sheldon. 'New Intellectuals in Seventeenth- Century India'. Reprinted From. *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 38, 1 (2001). Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd. New Delhi. Pp.6.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

[±] As also stated above, the demise of *Nalanda*, the apex institution of Buddhist learning at that point of time. See page 1-2.

challenge in any interpretation of and comment on the sutra as internally undisputed and unambiguous foundation of the *nyaya* tradition vis a vis the Buddhist critics was not felt any longer. The historicist stance indicated by the text-critical approach is also reflected in the more and more prominent historicist periodizations that had been expressed in the works of the *nyaya* tradition in north-Eastern India already in the thirteen century. Both intellectual phenomena, the historicist search for originality and authenticity as well as the historicist periodizations, may have been influenced by the increasing intellectual interaction of the non-muslim elite with Islamic culture which can be specially demonstrated for some *nyaya* scholars, the former phenomena having possibly been motivated by the wish to assert one's own cultural identity and – in view of the clear realization of the historical antiquity of the object of examination – superiority vis a vis the Muslim rulers. This latter inner motivation may have coincide with or been reinforced by the external factor of the boosted promotion of Sanskrit scholarship by local non-Muslim rulers, some of them Sanskrit scholar themselves and some related to prominent scholars through family ties, for their own purposes of cultural self-assertion and legitimization.⁴⁷

Innovation is not limited to *nyaya* tradition alone. Apart from *nyaya* tradition in other branches of philosophical studies, this re-looking at their respective tradition was taking place. In sixteenth and seventeenth century the "new *mimamsakas*" were appearing in the discursive field. Foundational texts had been engaged with which were ignored by the thinkers of previous four centuries. Parthasarathimisra's (11th century) *sastradipika* had received more or less ten commentaries in this era. (Parthasarathimisra had not received any attention from 11th century to sixteenth century). Some obscure texts had also been brought to scholarly attention such as, Somesvarabhata's *nyayasudha*, which is a voluminous commentary on Kumarila's *tantravarttika*. Appayya Dikshit one of the exemplary figure of *mimamsa darshan* had referred frequently to somesvara's work while commenting on *sastradipika*. Appayya Dikshit was accused of plagiarism (plagiarizing Somesvarabhata) by the 17th century jurist Kamalakarabhata while he was composing his own commentary on *Sastradipika*. However in spite of the charge of plagiarism Appayya Dikshit's work became influential. It had contributed positively in transformation of *mimamsa*. This is evident in the work of another important philosopher in *mimamsa* tradition Sankarabhata, who is the first major critique of Appayya Dikshit. In his

⁴⁷ Preisendanz, Karin. 'The Production of Philosophical Literature In South Asia During The Pre-Colonial Period (15th To 18th Centuries): The Case Of The Nyayasutra Commentarial Tradition'. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. (Springer). 2005. 33:55-94. Pp. 55-94.

mimamsabalaprakasa which is a commentary on *sastradipika* he was juxtaposing Parthasarathimisra and Somesvarabhata by presenting them side by side and posing them as opposed to each other in relevant contexts. He had cited their works, quoted frequently from them. Sankarabhata's work was the trend-setter in academia of Varanasi. Here he provided a methodology of engagement with previous work in a text-critical and hermeneutical manner. Sankarabhata's methodology had been taken up by Apadeva in his work *Mimamsasanyayaparakasa* and Dinkarabhata in his work *Bhattadinkara*. Both were doing philosophy in Varanasi. This new way of reading and approaching previous work brought about the "scholastic turn" in *mimamsa*. This is a critical interrogation with the tradition. The scholastic turn had shown that the tradition is polyphonic. There is not a singular voice in the tradition. Tradition is not monolithic. The new philosophers had shown this not overthrowing tradition per se but by pick and chose positions from within. They had established their view by citing from authoritative works of the tradition by new techniques of deciphering meaning from those texts on key issues. This led to the problematization of tradition and past. Tradition ceased to be a homogenous entity. What was the position regarding core philosophical issues was becoming more and more complex. This Complexity of tradition was unprecedented in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this discursive space it was becoming really difficult to divide philosophers. We cannot divide them between "followers of Somesvara" and "followers of Parthasarathi" for instance. The approach here is case by case study. The method was to study issues more than the doctrines. Specific problems were chosen, existing views on those problems were examined. Study of specific problems in above stated manner involves criticism of traditional doctrines concerning those problems. As McCrea said:

What seems to begin as an effort to extract coherent doctrines from the putatively authoritative works of the tradition leads to a situation in which this authority is routinely called into question, and, for some at East, the identification of problems in the traditionally established views of *mimamsa*-attacking, rather than upholding, what have heretofore been regarded as the truths of the system-becomes the primary business of the *mimamsakas*.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ McCrea, Lawrence. "Playing With The System: Fragmentation and Individualization In Late Mimamsa." *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. Vol.36. No, 5-6.Pp. 575-585. Ocstober. 2008.

Adaptation of new methodology marks a departure from doctrinal coherence of the tradition. It came into existence not from self-conscious desire of starting afresh but from detailed engagement with tradition. A breakdown in “reflexive adherence to tradition”⁴⁹. Appayya Dikshita in his work *Vidhirasayana* had critiqued kumarilabhatta (7 th century). In vidhirasayana appayya dikshit had criticized three basic injunctions as defined by Kumarila. It had received almost a dozen criticisms. Though it is wrong to assume that he is fierce fully criticizing Kumarila on the contrary his claim was modest. As is evident from what he said in that very work, which is as follows: *vikhyata munivaryasuktisu vidha tisro vidhisrotasam/acaryair visadam viviktavisaya tas ca vyavasthapitha/ kim tatrasti vicaryam aryamathite marge nisargojjvale/nanodaharanais tut ah pravisadikartum pravartamahe//* which means: the three divisions of the injunctive stream are well known in the statements of the best of *muni*-s (jimini). What else is left to be analyzed on this naturally brilliant trail blazed by the teacher? Nevertheless, I will strive, by means of various examples, to clarify these [three categories of injunction].⁵⁰ Appayya Dikshit provided an alternative definition of three types of *vidhi*-s or *Vedic* injunction. The authorial intention was of clarification rather than a rejection of Kumarilabhatta’s thesis. In spite of his modesty Appayya Dikshit’s work had been received as an attack on Kumarila rather than mere clarification. Sankarabhatta launched an attack on Appayya Dikshit in his *Vidhirasayanadusana*. Sankarabhatta was critiquing Appayyabhatta and upholding Kumarila’s thesis. Sankarabhatta’s path had been followed by Apadeva and Dinkara. These thinkers were not taking their predecessors for granted. Tradition was for them potentially open to engage with critically. it is important here to take note of that, the critical engagement though potentially applicable to foundational works also still in practice the engagement mostly remain with later thinkers. But it is also true that once the Pandora’s Box is open any limits could be transcended. The historical criticism could also be applied in case of foundational texts. As McCrea put it: yet once criticizing traditional interpretations of the system becomes generally accepted, and the scholastic and critical method of Sankarabhatta’s Balaprasiddhi catches on, it is hard to limit the scope of historical

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Sastri, Mukunda Edited. *Vidhirasayana of Appayya Dikshit*. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series 13. Varanasi. Vidyavilasa Press. Opening Lines. [Translation By McCrea].

criticism of the tradition within the bounds these authors accepted. There is nothing in principle to prevent the same method from being applied even to the foundational texts of *mimamsa*. It is simply a question of pushing back. The boundary within which criticism is permitted. And this is exactly what happened.⁵¹ Khandadeva's *mimamsakaustabha* is systematic criticism of Kumarila and Jaimini.

These studies however recognize the characteristic difference that colonialism had brought to the conceptual categories of the colonized minds. The scholarship on Indian intellectual (Sanskrit) tradition has also shown that the life-world and intellectual universe of classical way of doing philosophy remained intact throughout Islamic rule. As Daya Krishna explicates it,

The long period of Islamic rule in different parts of India had hardly left any impression on traditional modes of indigenous learning as there seems to have been a strict segregation of Arabic and Persian institutions of learning from those that carried on the maintenance, transmission and development of the classical knowledge of India. Also, the system of patronage of traditional was not affected in any way by the new political climate that occurred in different parts of the country.⁵²

There was no interaction happening between these two ways of philosophizing. However, the scenario is very different in other discourses; viz mathematics, architecture, astronomy. (This absence of dialogue in the domain of philosophy between these two ways of philosophizing should also be a concern for the researchers in respective fields. This project acknowledges this matter but delving in this issue is outside of the scope this project). Indian philosophy under Islamic rule not only remained as it was but new *innovations*, new interpretations took place through out Islamic rule especially in late pre-colonial and early colonial period in Indian intellectual history. Thus was living corpus of philosophical literature. (This is evident in the case of *navya-nyaya*, *mimamsa*, literary theory and other philosophical disciplines). As Kalidas Bhattacharya said,

⁵¹ McCrea, Lawrence. "Playing With The System: Fragmentation and Individualization In Late Mimamsa." *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. Vol.36. No, 5-6. Pp. 575-585. October. 2008.

⁵² Krishna, Daya . "Developments In Indian Philosophy From Eighteenth Century Onwards: Classical and Western." *Project on History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*. {PHISPC} General Editor D.P. Chattopadhyay Vol- 10. Part 1. Centre for Studied In Civilizations {CSC}. First Published In 2002. Reprinted In 2006. Distributed By Motilal Benerasidas. {Munshiram Manoharlal Pvt. Ltd}. Pp.289.

‘Traditional Indian philosophy’ is the corpus of philosophical doctrines and dissertations that have been current in India for at least two millenniums and communicated from generation to generation mainly through Sanskrit language and largely also by through Pail... and *Prakrit* The beauty of the whole tradition is that it was a perfectly *living* widespread study among Indian philosophers till only the other day – till, one may say, a hundred and twenty-five years back... this was the case *even during the whole period of Muslim rule in India*. (1982: 171-2). [Italics are mine].⁵³

Colonialism had brought with it an epistemological break. A break with the living philosophy. That is why colonial intervention had been seen as a *cultural subjection*.

As Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya said,

There is cultural subjection *only where* one’s traditional cast of ideas and sentiments is superseded *without* comparison or competition by a new cast representing an *alien* culture which passes one like a ghost⁵⁴- Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (*Swaraj in Ideas*).

Here the spectre of the colonizer is haunting the indigenous thinkers. They were alienated from west by means of space and race they were alienated from their own traditions by not being a part of it. West was no more a mere physical geographical entity. It had reached the mindscapes of the non-west. This is the advanced form of colonialism. As Ashish Nandy put it,

This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and releases forces within the colonized societies to alter cultural priorities once for all. In the process, it helps generalize the concept of the modern west from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The west is now everywhere; within the west and outside.⁵⁵

It is also an epistemological category through which the Orient, the non-west have viewed themselves, their history, tradition. The relation between one’s own tradition and modernity is a complex one. It had developed differently in various parts of the world. The reaction depends upon the nature of the tradition along with other factors. In Africa there is no written philosophy prior to colonial invasion. For this reason, it

⁵³ Bhattacharya, Kalidas. ‘Traditional Indian Philosophy As Modern Indian Thinkers View It’, In *Indian Philosophy: Past And Future*. Edited By Pappu Rama Rao. S.S., And R. Puligandla. Matilal Benerasidass. New Delhi. 1982.Pp.171-224.

⁵⁴ <http://www.indiatogether.org/dec/2007/opi-swarajsci.htm>

⁵⁵ Nandy ashish. *The intimate enemy*. Oxford paperbacks. 1996. pp.xi. (preface).

was easy for the western scholars, administrators, invaders to tag African philosophy as ethnophilosophy (Ethnophilosophy involves the recording of the beliefs found in African cultures. Such an approach treats African philosophy as consisting in a set of shared beliefs, a shared world-view -- an item of communal property rather than an activity for the individual, which is not philosophy proper)[±]. The aim was same in case of India also but in India, there are various kinds of written literature along with oral traditions and folk beliefs. The conditions were different for contemporary Indian philosopher than an contemporary African philosopher; Indian philosopher is in an advantageous position. As aptly pointed out by Kwasi Wiredu,

The African philosopher writing today has no tradition of writing philosophy in his continent to draw[±] upon. In this respect, his plight is very much unlike that of say, the contemporary Indian philosopher. The latter can advert his mind to any insight that might be contained in a long-standing Indian heritage of written philosophical meditations; he has what he might legitimately call classical Indian philosophers to investigate and profit by. And if he is broad-minded, he will study western philosophy and try in his own philosophizing to take cognizance of the intellectual developments that have shaped the modern world. Besides all this, he has, as every people have, a background of unwritten folk philosophy, which he might examine for whatever it may be worth. Notice that we have here three levels of philosophy: we have spoken of a folk philosophy, a written traditional philosophy and a modern philosophy. Where long-standing written sources are available, folk philosophy tends not to be made much of. It remains in the background as a sort of diffused, immanent, component of community thought habits whose effects on the thinking of the working philosopher is largely unconscious[±]. Such a fund of community thought is not the creation of any specifiable set of philosophers; it is the common property of all and sundry, thinker and non-thinker alike, and it is called a philosophy at all only by a quite liberal acceptance of the term. Folk thought, as rule, consists of bald assertions

[±] Ethnophilosophers attempt to show that African philosophy is distinctive by treading heavily on the 'African' and almost losing the 'philosophy'. Their main rivals, the professional philosophers, adopt the view that philosophy is a particular way of thinking, reflecting, reasoning, that such a way is relatively new to (most of) Africa, and that African philosophy must grow in terms of the philosophical work carried out by Africans and applied to (perhaps not exclusively) African concerns. Thus they tread heavily on the 'philosophy', but risk losing the 'African'; this risk, however, is by no means unavoidable, and many African philosophers have successfully avoided it, including Kwame Anthony Appiah, Kwame Gyekye, Kwasi Wiredu, Oshita O. Oshita, Lansana Keita, Peter Bodunrin, and Chukwudum B. Okolo.]

[±] The Arab portions of Africa are, of course, an exception, though even there what we have is the interaction between indigenous thought and greek influence.

[±] "traditional" here still has the pre-scientific connotation. Of course, if one should speak of traditional British empiricism, for example, that connotation would be absent.

without argumentative justification, but philosophy in the narrower sense must obtain not just theses. Without argumentation and clarification, there is, strictly, no philosophy.⁵⁶

In case of India (as discussed above), there exist a heterogeneous mass of written philosophy (in both academic and popular sense) in varied languages[±]. Therefore, it was not possible for colonizers to tag Indian philosophy as ethnophilosophy. However, it is very much true until today that Indian philosophy is not regarded as philosophy proper. It could be a subject matter for historical, philological interest but not for serious philosophical inquiry. It had created another problem for the colonies, how to cope with their tradition, past. That is why different interpretation of history and tradition were taking place. New philosophical-religious movements were happening to counter the loss of self in the face of colonial hegemony. One of the prominent movements of nineteenth century was neo-vedic/ neo-Vedantic movements such as *Bramho Samaj*; started with Rammuhan Roy later carried forward by Devendranath and Keshab Chandra Sen, Aksay Kumar Dutta as they in their own way had tried to amalgam western positivism, rationalism, utilitarianism with *Vedantic* philosophy. These movements show the ambivalent reaction to cultural adjustment in the wake of colonialism. They sought for inspiration from classical texts especially *upanisads* and *bhagavat gita* while almost completely ignoring the varied traditions of hermeneutics, philosophy of logic and language that were there in immediately previous century (as shown above, see the discussion on counter narrative of Indian philosophy by recent scholarship; Pollock and others). They had tried to amalgam classical Indian philosophy with enlightenment thought and French revolution. Daya Krishna points out;

It is interesting to note that while most of the thinkers in Bengal and elsewhere turned to the *upanisads* for their inspiration, and bypassing the long controversy regarding their interpretation as embodied in the debate between *advaitins* and the non-*advaitins*, found in the doctrine of the formless absolute the ground for a new reconciliation between one of the oldest philosophical traditions of India and the challenge from the west which emphasized the knowledge of the world in all its

⁵⁶ Mosley, Albert G. (ed.). *African philosophy: selected readings*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1995. pp. 166.

[±] classical philosophy mainly written in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali. But if we include bhakti poets and lokayatikas, such as Bauls, Tantra then regional languages were also the medium of philosophical transactions.

multiplicity and the use of this knowledge for the intellectual, material and cultural prosperity of man. The ideals of equality and fraternity which the French revolution had bequeathed to mankind which the liberal British thought brought to India were seen as expressions of the fundamental *vedantic* truth embodied in such *upanisadic* statements as “*sarvam khalividam-brahman*”.⁵⁷

Despite its serious limitations, the western interest in Indian society created a ferment which led to the growth of the social activity in the subcontinent. A number of literary and scientific associations marked the intellectual scenario of eighteenth and nineteenth century India. Most notable was the Asiatic society of Bengal founded in 1777 by world famous Sanskritist and Indologist, Sir William Jones. It encouraged work in Indology, Comparative Philology, Comparative Mythology, Comparative Jurisprudence, History and Anthropology. Its deliberations and publications, including the Asiatic miscellany covered a wide range of social institutions and problems. The academic association started in Bengal in 1828 under the inspiration of Henry Derozio, kindled in the minds of young men such as Pyari Chand Mitra, Dakshina Ranjan Mukherjee and Rev. K.M. Banerjee a questioning spirit with regard to, literary and philosophical issues as well as contemporary social institutions and problems. The active but short-lived society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838-1843) examined themes like prostitution, the Hindu widow, and women education. Another notable society of the time of that time, also in Calcutta, was the *Tattwabodhini Sabha*. Founded in 1839, it discussed social conditions and problems and questioned several established customs and institutions. Rammohun Roy Rammuhan’s crusade against Sati and his views on religion, position of women, and rural society anticipated several major concerns that were to characterize Indian society later. Other notable thinkers and reformers of the time were Aksay Kumar Dutta (1820-1886), Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Pyari Chand Mitra. Such activities were not confined to Bengal alone. Yogendra Singh mentions swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Dadabhai Naoraji (1825-1917), Lala Lajpat Rai (1824-1901) and several others in creating intellectual and social awareness in the country about India’s cultural and civilizational strengths and yet pleaded for radical reforms in society in

⁵⁷ Krishna. Daya “Developments In Indian philosophy From Eighteenth Century Onwards: Classical And Western”. *History Of Science, Philosophy And Culture In Indian Civilization*. General Editor. D.P.Chattopadhyay. Vol.X, Part.1. New Delhi. Centre for Studies In Civilizations. First Published In 2002. Reprinted In 2006. Distributed By Motial Benerasidas. { Munsiram Manoharlal Publishers, Pvt. Ltd.} pp.-291.

order to meet the challenges of western civilization and its colonial expansionism. There are other notable societies such as The Literary Society of Bombay (1829) it used to publish a journal namely, Transaction of the Literary Society of Bombay. It had published a comprehensive empirical survey of a small town, Lon. The volume published another comparable statistical survey of the "Purdah of Jumboosur." The Madras Journal of Literature and Science, started in 1835, published historical and ethnographic studies and surveys of cities and villages. The Beneras Institute founded in 1861 was popular and active. Intersection on Social Progress received important papers regularly on Ethnography and social problems. The Oudh Scientific Society of Lucknow was also concerned with social problems. A paper on "Sociology of India" was presented before it by Syed Shurrafoodin. A Society for Sociological Studies was established in Jaipur in 1869. Other important association was Bengal Social Science Association (1867-1878) its object was to collect, arrange and classify series of facts bearing upon the social, moral and intellectual condition of Bengal, and by such means to assist in the promotion of measures for the good of the country". Through questionnaire the association collected of a great deal of data. The papers presented at its meetings also demonstrated an attempt at systematization and logical analysis of facts about Bengal and other parts of India. The other important journal was the *The Dawn*. In this intellectual and political milieu within which both the thinkers were doing philosophy from their own vantage point. In this cultural milieu Sri Aurobindo and K.C.Bhattacharyya were formulating their philosophy. In the next two chapters we will discuss their view in detail.

Chapter-2

Sri Aurobindo on Science, Philosophy and Spiritualism

Is there any continuity among science, spiritualism and philosophy? Between matter and spirit? According to Sri Aurobindo there is continuity among science spiritualism and philosophy. He thought that matter and spirit are not of two radically different kinds of entities. Spirit is a refined form of matter filtered through various stages of evolution. Matter is a gross spirit, implicit and unconscious. Thus, there is a synthesis between matter and spirit, science and spiritualism. The evolution from matter to spirit is possible because essentially matter and spirit are made up of the same stuff, that is, consciousness. The Supreme, the divine is pure consciousness; He cannot be corporeal in nature. Likewise, the allied disciplines namely science and spiritualism, which study matter and spirit, are very much compatible. The distinction is apparent, though differences are not hallucinatory in the realm of practicability (*vyabharik*), but in ultimate analysis, they are one. Matter is involved in life, life in mind, and mind through various phases in Supermind and through Supermind to spirit or the *Sachchidananda*. The Spirit, the Absolute descends by the process of involution. Through evolution, matter journeys back to the divine, the Absolute, the supreme, the Divine; which is the ultimate destination.

Section –A. Sri Aurobindo’s View on Science.

In this chapter, we are looking into Sri Aurobindo’s view on science spiritualism and philosophy. In this section, we will discussing his view on science in relation to materialism, matter, reason and other related concepts. As brought up in England, Sri Aurobindo was exposed to the scientific temper prevailed at that time. A science which celebrates (a) objectivity which “sees a universal force of Nature which is the

one reality and of which everything is the process,”¹ and, (b) value neutrality. This neutrality enables science to distinguish the knower from the known, fact from value. It is universal, formal, organized body of knowledge about the natural, physical world. It sprouted from Enlightenment and the Age Of Reason which believed in power of human reason to combat superstition, ignorance, religious authority and hereditary aristocracy. Doubting every pre-given statement, dictum or prejudices became the hallmark of this age. Man, as a thinking being, was emphasized which is evident in Descartes famous formulation, *cogito ergo sum*. Sri Aurobindo was very much influenced by the methodology of science, its rigour and dispassionate way of analysis, unbiased scrutiny and examination of its findings and its epistemological optimism. Moreover, science is also an organized skepticism that distinguishes it from other branch of knowledge such as theology and metaphysics. Scientific skepticism has served mankind immensely. It helped man to get out of the slumber of misplaced mysticism and looseness of religious and ritualistic obscurantism which are the hindrances to human progress. Everything for science is an object of critical enquiry. There is nothing sacred and profane in this scientific age. It objectifies its subject matter by breaking it in parts. This, in turn, compartmentalizes the endeavour of knowledge. And “he has had to proceed piecemeal, by partial experiments, by creation of different types, by a constant swinging backward and forward between the various possibilities before him and the different elements he has to harmonise”². Because reason cannot operate without dualities, it gives a fragmentary view of nature. Though it is also true, that this is the reason of its success in the realm of the physical and the vital. Its optimism is sustained by its epistemology, its spirit of enquiry which is empirical and logical. Through its logic and empirical outlook science demystifies the world by observing natural, physical phenomena. Ultimately it formulates laws, theories, hypothesis to explain nature in materialistic/ physicalistic terms. This is the nature of science as Sri Aurobindo said,

¹ Aurobindo, Sri. “The Human Cycle; The Ideal Of Human Unity”, *Social And Political Thought*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry .Vol 15. 1972. pp.15.

² Ibid. pp. 96.

Science in its very nature is knowledge, is intellectuality, and its whole work has been that of the Mind turning its gaze upon its vital and physical frame and environment to know and conquer and dominate Life and Matter. The scientist is Man, the thinker mastering the forces of material Nature by knowing them. Life and Matter are after all our standing-ground, our lower basis and to know their processes and their own proper possibilities and the opportunities they give to the human being is part of the knowledge necessary for transcending them. Life and the body have to be exceeded, but they have also to be utilised and perfected³.

‘Our age’ wrote Kant “is in a special degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit”⁴. Nothing was therefore taken for granted. This criticality gave a new momentum, enabled humankind to come out of the trap of closed and dogmatic thinking and finally revealed a positive relationship between reason and freedom, science and truth. Agreeing to this spirit of critical enquiry Sri Aurobindo said,

Here a science which provided a standard, a norm of knowledge, a rational basis for life, a clear outline and sovereign means for the progress and perfection of the individual and the race. The attempt to govern and organise human life by verifiable Science, by a law, a truth of things, an order and principles which all can observe and verify in their ground and fact and to which therefore all may freely and must rationally subscribe, is the culminating movement of European civilization.⁵

Reason had displaced God and Church as the point of reference, giver of meaning and signification. In this context, Categorical imperative of Kant can be seen as a proposal of alternative self-legislative, universal law in absence of religious authority. An alternative centre was needed to “put a rein on desire and interest by providing at least some intellectual and moral test which these two powerful and

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kant, Immanuel. *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics That Will Enable Come Forward As Science*. Translated By Paul Carus. Hackett: Indianapolis Inc. 1783

⁵ Aurobindo, Sri. “The Human Cycle; The Ideal of Human Unity” *Social and Political Thought*. ; Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry .Vol 15. 1972. pp.15.

dangerous forces must satisfy before they can feel justified in asserting their claims on life”⁶ after the displacement of old centres.

According to Sri Aurobindo the source of life and existence is spiritual, that is the Absolute consciousness. The source of all materiality and vitality is also spiritual. Western materialism has overlooked this; it misunderstood altogether the source with the base. As he said, “The mistake made by European materialism is to suppose the basis to be everything and confuse it with the source.”⁷ Every finite being is the manifestation of the infinite. Moreover every finite is trying in its own way to convey the message of the infinite.

[T]he root of the difficulty is this that at the very basis of all our life and existence, internal and external, there is something on which the intellect can never lay a controlling hold, the Absolute, the Infinite. Behind everything in life there is the Absolute. Everything finite is striving to express an infinite which it feels to be its real truth. Thus there is not only an Absolute, an Infinite in itself which governs its own expression in many forms and tendencies, but there is also a principle of infinite potentiality and variation quite baffling to the reasoning intelligence; for the reason deals successfully only with the settled and the finite. In man this difficulty reaches its acme. For not only is mankind unlimited in potentiality; not only is each of its powers and tendencies seeking after its own Absolute in its own way and therefore naturally restless under any rigid control by the reason; but in each man their degrees, methods, combinations vary, each man belongs not only to the common humanity, but to the Infinite in himself and is therefore unique.⁸

This striving, longing for the Absolute transgresses the reach of the reason. All these individual strivings, though for the same infinite, contained within themselves their own peculiar variations. Rational intellect is not (and cannot be) a dweller of this domain of existence. The Spiritual, the Absolute is above the surveillance of reason. Though it is true that reason (Mind) is the highest stage of human progress

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Aurobindo, Sri .*Collected Works Of Sri Aurobindo*, Vol.22, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry, 1972. p.197

⁸ Aurobindo, Sri. “The Human Cycle; The Ideal of Human Unity”*Social and Political Thought.* ; Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry .Vol 15. 1972. p. 93

hitherto attained by him. Reason therefore has become the 'governor of life' though not the supreme one, but a messenger, a minister who could administer our thinking. The real Governor is spirit. Reason is a servant of the real or ultimate Governor. As he said, "the spirit in man is attracted to or withdraws from it. For it is really that which decides and reason is only a brilliant servant and minister of this veiled and secret sovereign."⁹ It is only a temporary, messenger, A minister an agent a makeshift arrangement not a real governor. It cannot legislate any command, can only give suggestions. According to Sri Aurobindo,

It is because this is the reality of our existence that the intellectual reason and the intelligent will cannot deal with life as its sovereign, even though they may be at present our supreme instruments and may have been in our evolution supremely important and helpful. The reason can govern, but only as a minister, imperfectly, or as a general arbiter and giver of suggestions which are not really supreme commands, or as one channel of the sovereign authority, because that hidden Power acts at present not directly but through many agents and messengers. The real sovereign is another than the reasoning intelligence. Man's impulse to be free, master of Nature in himself and his environment cannot be really fulfilled until his self-consciousness has grown beyond the rational mentality, become aware of the true sovereign and either identified itself with him or entered into constant communion with his supreme will and knowledge.¹⁰

Intellect/ reason as the temporary governor perform the role of facilitator. It gives the mind the exposure to farther illumined stages of mental progression. It makes the instincts and impulses conscious about themselves by reflecting upon the laws of their actions. It acts as 'guide', 'liberator' and 'teacher' who enable them to be self-conscious of themselves while helping them coming out of the lower to higher degrees. It provides the ability to 'look beyond themselves'. Reason also is the 'purifier' of hedonistic impulses, it settles the quarrel between the hedonistic, aesthetic with the ethical. It gives the impulse a practicality. As the liaison between reality and pleasure it allies the pleasure "more closely to the strong actualities of

⁹ Ibid. pp. 100.

¹⁰ Ibid.

life”¹¹. Reason is the ‘judge’ and the ‘legislator’. It fixes certain rules, ‘provide systems’ and ‘regularise combinations’. These necessary measures pave the way for sound foundation for humankind. To execute all these tasks it has to employ the faculty of doubt to evaluate its achievements. It fixes new set of rules according to the call of the hour and in case where the old rules were found inadequate. This is the procedure of human progression. That is why reason

has to bring in its own saving faculty of doubt. Under the impulse of the intelligence warned by the obscure revolt of the oppressed springs of life, ethics, aesthetics, the social, political, economic rule begin to question themselves and, if this at first brings in again some confusion, disorder and uncertainty, yet it awakens new movements of imagination, insight, self-knowledge and self-realization by which old systems and formulas are transformed or disappear, new experiments are made and in the end larger potentialities and combinations are brought into play. By this double action of the intelligence, affirming and imposing what it has seen and again in due season questioning what has been accomplished in order to make a new affirmation, fixing a rule and order and liberating from rule and order, the progress of the race is assured, however uncertain may seem its steps and stages.¹²

The movement of reason can also be inward. It not only systematizes knowledge about the external world and our attitude toward it. It also can lead us to the road to divination. It can give us the knowledge of the universal principle derived from a greater Truth ‘from behind the veil’. This knowledge is an indirect knowledge. Because, reason has no access to the supreme Truth.

[I]t receives and turns what it can seize of them into *intellectual forms* and these provide us with large governing ideas by which our efforts can be shaped and around which they can be concentrated or massed; it defines the ideals which we seek to accomplish. It provides us with the great ideas that are forces... ideas which in their own strength impose themselves upon our life and compel it into their moulds. Only the forms we give these ideas are intellectual; they themselves descend from a plane of truth of being where knowledge and force are one, the idea and

¹¹ Ibid. p. 94.

¹² Ibid.

the power of self-fulfilment in the idea are inseparable.¹³ [*Italics are mine*].

Reason translates the universal ideals in the realm of the physical and the vital. In this process of translation a change of signification happens. Because, reason always operates with its dualistic categories. It poses self and other, individualism and collectivism as binary opposites; each term of these binaries have significance in their own peculiar way. Thus we cannot dismantle one totally in favour of the other. For this reason the highest principles which are in their origin are one and the same produce conflict while passing through the mediation of reason and intellect. In spite of this major disadvantage reason also enable us to strive beyond it and look for greater consciousness. It opens up a whole new avenue for self-knowledge and self-realisation to attain this greater consciousness where all dualities, conflicts resolve.

Unfortunately, when translated into the forms of our intelligence which acts only by a separating and combining analysis and synthesis and into the effort of our life which advances by a sort of experimental and empirical seeking, these powers become disparate and conflicting ideals which we have all the difficulty in the world to bring into any kind of satisfactory harmony. Such are the primary principles of liberty and order, good, beauty and truth, the ideal of power and the ideal of love, individualism and collectivism, self-denial and self-fulfilment and a hundred others. That indeed belongs to a larger and higher consciousness, not yet attained by mankind, where these opposites are ever harmonised and even unified because in their origin they are eternally one. But still every enlarged attempt of the intelligence thus dealing with our inner and outer life increases the width and wealth of our nature opens it to larger possibilities of self-knowledge and self-realisation and brings us nearer to our awakening into that greater consciousness.¹⁴

Science/ reason have a double role to play. On the one hand it is a dispassionate enquiry that is search for truth for its own sake without any 'ulterior motive'; on the other hand science (reason) is also practice oriented with the desire to govern the life

¹³ Ibid. p. 95

¹⁴ Ibid.

and the world. It is the unique feature of reason (science) that it can reflect upon the other faculties like passion and on itself. It can discover laws of the things. It is not confined to the immediacy of senses. It can envisage possibilities of higher truths. Thus reason enjoys relative superiority to the other faculties like senses. Both sides of the function of reason have their distinctive role in human life. Scientific knowledge has an applied aspect which is an essential element of its being other than pure contemplation. According to Sri Aurobindo this practice orientation of reason/science is the cause of the malady of confusion and imperfection. "It is when it tries to apply ideas to life that the human intellect stumbles and finds itself at fault."¹⁵ He stresses on the contemplative, pure, formal aspect of reason and science. Poets and artists works with aesthetic forms for the delight of the human race. Likewise scientists and philosophers should also engage themselves with the pure forms of knowledge. As he said, "In the work of the philosopher, the scientist, the savant labouring to add something to the stock of our ascertainable knowledge, there is as perfect a purity and satisfaction as in that of the poet and artist creating forms of beauty for the aesthetic delight of the race."¹⁶ The reason behind the shortcomings of the Reason is that while applying itself in the world of senses it loses its focus; it becomes "the servant of something other than the pure truth."¹⁷ And it cannot remain altogether impartial also. For to remain so, it has to divorce itself from practice. The crux of Sri Aurobindo's view concerning reason is that it is an imperfect light. All its own it cannot bring harmony. It is a tool though a highest tool hitherto attained by humankind. Because, it can give rise equally to 'rationalistic, altruistic humanitarianism' and 'vulgar commercialism'. Science which takes reason as its guide also imbibes the loopholes of rationalistic enterprise. Thus it is also an incomplete discipline, limited in its scope and application in the higher sphere of human endeavor. As he said,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 98.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Science pursuing its cold and even way has made discoveries which have served on one side a practical humanitarianism, on the other supplied monstrous weapons to egoism and mutual destruction; it has made possible a gigantic efficiency of organisation which has been used on one side for the economic and social amelioration of the nations and on the other for turning each into a colossal battering-ram of aggression, ruin and slaughter. It has given rise on the one side to a large rationalistic and altruistic humanitarianism, on the other it has justified a godless egoism, vitalism, vulgar will to power and success. It has drawn mankind together and given it a new hope and at the same time crushed it with the burden of a monstrous commercialism.¹⁸

Science is not the only candidate for this allegation. Idealistic philosophy can also be as lethal in its destructive service of mankind as science. Thus Sri Aurobindo here is not victimizing science alone for its ill deeds. As he said,

Idealistic philosophy has been equally at the service of the powers of good and evil and provided an intellectual conviction both for reaction and for progress. Organised religion itself has often enough in the past hounded men to crime and massacre and justified obscurantism and oppression.¹⁹

Reason as a tool also operates within other discourses. In philosophy it is being used to justify the opponent schools of thought. In aesthetics and in politics it does the same. It is used to substantiate both classicism and romanticism, both for and against communism. It has no position of its own. It is only a medium. It is only able to make 'eclectic combination and synthetic harmony'. The rationalist mind cannot attain the truth because of his reservations to the faculty of reason itself. He thinks that the reason he has for a particular position is the only correct reasons, other's reasons are wrong. In spite of these deficiencies the collective human reason will attain purity and clarity on which a rational society can be established.²⁰ Despite of such weaknesses science, reason are not considered as completely valueless. "Its inconstancy, its divisibility against itself, its power of sustaining opposite views are

¹⁸ Ibid. p 99.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 100.

the whole secret of its value.’²¹ Its legitimate function is to justify man’s action through its arduous and rigorous process which in turn enables him to journey toward higher lights. As he said, “The first business of reason then is to justify and enlighten to him his various experiences and to give him faith and conviction in holding on to his self-enlarging. It justifies to him now this now that, the experience of the moment, the receding light of the past, the half-seen vision of the future.”²² Reason cannot arrive at the final truth. Its laws, formulations, hypothesis’ are all tentative; they can be refuted, can be falsified at least in principle²³. That is why Sri Aurobindo is critical about founding a perfect society on solely rational basis. But it is through reason only mankind can think beyond its limit. It purifies the lower faculties of humankind. Thus can strive for the suprarational. As he said,

A purely rational society could not come into being and, if it could be born, either could not live or would sterilise and petrify human existence. The root powers of human life, its intimate causes are below, irrational, and they are above, suprarational. But this is true that by constant enlargement, purification, openness the reason of man is bound to arrive at an intelligent sense even of that which is hidden from it, a power of passive, yet sympathetic reflection of the Light that surpasses it.²⁴

He thought that at the level of base, science is successfully performing its role, but it is only a preliminary though necessary stage of human progress. In Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy the discourse of progress is linked with the process of evolution. Through the process of evolution of human life that is, spirit is ‘progressing’. Progress is not limited only in the outward realm but also extends to the inward realm. Moreover, inward progress is more important. As he said, “outward progress was the greater part of its aim and the inward is the more essential, but the inward

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ According to philosophers like Popper, this is the merit of science that any of its hypotheses can be falsified at least in principle. This differentiates it from non-sciences.

²⁴ Aurobindo, Sri Social and Political Thought. The Human Cycle; The Ideal Of Human Unity; War And Self-Determination. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry .Vol 15. 1972. p. 101.

too is not complete if the outward is left out of account”²⁵. Without progress, human life (or any life form whatsoever) cannot sustain itself in this world. Thus ‘progress is the heart of life’. As he said,

Progress is the very heart of the significance of human life, for it means our evolution into greater and richer being; and these ages by insisting on it, by forcing us to recognise it as our aim and our necessity, by making impossible hereafter the attempt to subsist in the dullness or the gross beatitude of a stationary self-content, have done a priceless service to the earth-life and cleared the way of heaven. Outward progress was the greater part of its aim and the inward is the more essential, but the inward too is not complete if the outward is left out of account.²⁶

Human progress has a double movement. As Aurobindo said, “a double movement of self-illumination and self-harmonising with the intelligence and the intelligent will as the intermediaries between his soul and its works”²⁷. For a time being it might be the case that progress concentrating on the outer sphere of human existence but in the long run it has to be concentrated on the inward. He was preaching equally rigorous disciplines of spirit, which is a higher-level study. Science for him is a necessary preliminary pursuit and through the process of evolution it will reach the stage of more rigorous stage of spiritual discipline²⁸.

Science has been declared suspect as a guide or instructor of mankind and bidden to remain parked within her proper limits, because she was for long the ally of the material view of existence, a suggester of atheism and agnosticism, a victory-bringer of materialism and scepticism, the throne of their reign or pillar of their stability. Reason

²⁵ Aurobindo, Sri ‘Materialism’, *Collected Works*. Vol.16. The Supramental Manifestation And Other Writings, Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram. 1972. p. 248.

²⁶ Aurobindo, Sri.. “The Human Cycle; The Ideal Of Human Unity”, *Social And Political Thought*. Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Vol. 15, 1972, p.15.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 96.

²⁸ Adhering still to the essential rigorous method of science, though not to its purely physical instrumentation, scrutiny, experiencing, holding nothing for established which cannot be scrupulously and universally verified, we shall still arrive at supraphysical certitudes. There are other means, there are greater approaches, but this line access too can lead to the one universal Truth. Sri Aurobindo talks about this in his essay. “Materialism” published in his *Collected Works*. *The Supramental Manifestation. And Other Writings*, Vol.16. p. 248.

has been challenged because rationalism and free-thought were appropriated as synonyms of materialistic thinking.²⁹

Along with skepticism and rationalism, materialism is another ally of science. Materialism is the world view of science. Natural and physical sciences deal with the matter and lower level life-forms and Psychology deals with the behavior of human beings. Materialism gives a mechanistic picture of the world. Sri Aurobindo is not in the camp of those “whose temperament and imagination dally lovingly with an idealised past”³⁰, who accuse materialism “for the cultural, social, political changes which they abhor, regarding them as a disturbance - happily, they believe, temporary - of eternal moral values and divinely ordained hierarchies.”³¹ Sri Aurobindo looked at materialism much more maturely and discursively. He was not blind to either its merits, its success that is the positive role it has been playing to explore the natural and physical world, or the limitations of materialism. But he is certainly against the mechanical picture of the universe that can be validly derived from materialism. He is also unhappy with psychology as it gives explanation of the workings of human behaviour in terms of mechanical and chemical laws. It reduces psychology to physiology. It reduces human mind to mere stimulus-response equation which has been criticized by Sri Aurobindo. Because “Only a limited range of the phenomena of life and mind could be satisfied by a purely psycho-physical or bio-physical explanation, and even if more could be dealt with by these data, still they would only have been accounted for on one side of their mystery, the lower end”³². Sri Aurobindo is critical to this tendency. He is for spiritual view of the matter and science: While defining physical sciences he said, “Physical science has before its eye two eternal factors of existence, Matter and Energy, and no others at all are needed in the account of its operations. Mind dealing with the facts and relations of Matter and Energy, as they are arranged to the senses in experience and continuative

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

experiment and are analysed by the reason, would be a sufficient definition of physical science”³³.

Materialism has been seen by Sri Aurobindo as an important period in human history, it contains within itself considerable amount of truth, though they are of lesser category. It came as a rebel, ‘an aggressive thinker’. It cannot be tagged as the period of degeneration. It is not full of errors on the contrary it is the era of creativity, impartial enquiry, ‘patience of research’, ‘scrupulosity’ and ‘accuracy’³⁴. Though it is true that materialistic science have hitherto carried its research only in the sphere of the physical and the vital, the methodology it has generated is capable of going beyond the region already captured by science. Sri Aurobindo alleges science for not going beyond its territory. Its hesitation to move ahead and carry forward the same method with necessary modifications in the realm of the mental and the psychical is criticized. According to Sri Aurobindo, the reason behind this is that science is too enamoured by its materialistic world view. But he also believed that one day it is bound to take off from the base it has already made. There is no reason why it cannot be done with intellectual rectitude and same amount of curiosity that sciences employ in the realm of the physical. Materialism still has the relevance as many scientists are working within the materialist fold. As he said,

Materialism may not be quite as dead as most would declare it to be; still held by a considerable number of scientific workers, perhaps a majority, - and scientific opinion is always a force both by its power of well-ascertained truth and its continued service to humanity, - it constitutes even now the larger part of the real temper of action and life even where it is rejected as a set opinion.³⁵

The material world, the earth is the basis of everything. According to Sri Aurobindo it is the foundation of the workings of the spirit and the universal truth from which the intellectual force of materialism sprouts. As he said,

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid.

But the intellectual force of materialism comes from its response to a universal truth of existence. Our dominant opinions have always two forces behind them, a need of our nature and a truth of universal existence from which the need arises. We have the material and vital need because life in Matter is our actual basis, the earthward turn of our minds, because earth is intended to be the foundation here for the workings of the Spirit. When indeed we can scan with a scrupulous intelligence the face that universal existence presents to us or study where we are one with it or what in it all seems most universal and permanent, the first answer we get is not spiritual but material.³⁶

The subject matter of physical sciences is matter. So, it has to be some extent, or at least materialistic. Because “so long as it deals with the physical, it has for its own truth's sake to be physical both in its standpoint and method”³⁷.

At the Initial stage, there is a justification for science not to indulge itself to kind of imagination and intuition. It should stick to its rigorous method of experience and experimentation. It should not entertain any kind of distraction which draws it “out of the circle of the phenomena of objects, as they are represented to the senses and their instrumental prolongations and away from the dealings of the reason”³⁸. It is obvious that science will interpret man in the terms of the cosmos, not the cosmos in the terms of man. This cosmo-centricity is inherent in scientific endeavour. It should stand in opposition for its own existence to the subjective idealist stand which propagates the ontological dependency of objects on the subject. Things are not mere creation of individual mind; they exist independently and irrespective of human knowledge. External things are there even before the arrival of human being and will last even after its extinction. Sri Aurobindo here is taking a realist standpoint though provisionally. He is saying that the external objects exist independently of individual mind, but it is a function, a transformation of the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

supreme consciousness.³⁹ He believed in the independent reality of external objects. He enquired, “whether it is not a result rather than a cause of Matter, coming into being, as it seems to do, only in the frame of a material inconscient universe and apparently able to exist only on the condition that that has been previously established”⁴⁰. For this reason at least to begin with science has to be at least materialistic. It has to start from the matter. Matter is the foundation of creation. All the other and higher forms such as life, mind depends on the physical principle of matter. It is the seed of the tree of creation. As he said,

We see something of its [life] foundation and its principle, we look upward to its high potentiality and ultimate divine out-flowering. But there is one principle below all the others which we have not yet sufficiently considered, the principle of Matter upon which life stands as upon a pedestal or out of which it evolves like the form of a many-branching tree out of its encasing seed. The mind, life and body of man depend upon this physical principle, and if the out-flowering of Life is the result of consciousness emerging into Mind, expanding, elevating itself in search of its own truth in the largeness of the supramental existence, yet it seems also to be conditioned by this body and by this foundation of Matter.⁴¹

We have to confront matter in its grossness and inertia as being-in-itself. According to Sri Aurobindo matter is a creation of consciousness. Because it is existent being and every existent is “in its activity a Consciousness –Force which presents the workings of its force to its consciousness a forms of its own being. Since Force is only the action of one sole-existing Conscious-Being;” therefore “Substance or Matter then is only a form of spirit.”⁴² It is due to the functions of the dividing mind that we conceive the grossness of the matter. It is because of the separation of mind from its superior form, Supermind that it gives the appearance of the division in Life

³⁹ “if we say that the world exists only in our own minds, we express a non-fact and a confusion; for the material world existed before man was upon the earth and it will go on existing if man disappears from the earth or even if our individual mind abolishes itself in the infinite.”

Aurobindo, Sri., *The Life Divine*, Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 2006. pp. 248-49.

⁴⁰ Aurobindo, Sri. “Materialism”. *Collected Works*. Vol.16. The Supramental Manifestation And Other Writings, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry. 1972. p. 248.

⁴¹ Aurobindo, Sri. *The The Life Divine*. Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 2006, p. 245.

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 249.

and Matter. As he said, “Mind by its separation from its own higher reality in Supermind, gives Life the appearance of the division and, by its farther involution in its own Life-Force, becomes subconscious in Life and thus gives the outward appearance of an inconscient force in its material workings.”⁴³ Thus the inertia of matter has its source in Conscious – Being. It is the final stage of its involution, creation.⁴⁴ As the creation of Conscious-Being it is the basis of all other forms of existence of the Consciousness-Force. In *Upanisad* also it has been given its due recognition, matter in *Upanisad* called as *annam*, food. “Matter surely is here our basis, the one thing that is and persists, while life, mind, soul and all else appear in it as a secondary phenomenon, seem somehow to arise out of it, subsist by feeding upon it, - therefore the word used in the Upanishads for Matter is *annam*, food, - and collapse from our view when it disappears. Apparently the existence of Matter is necessary to them, their existence does not appear to be one which is necessary to Matter.”⁴⁵ Sri Aurobindo said, by referring to *Upanisads* that, it not only admits matter but also give it the status of Brahma. “Matter is the Brahma, from matter they exist, to matter they return”⁴⁶. As *Taittiriya Upanisad* says, “He arrived at the knowledge that Matter is Brahman.”⁴⁷ Sri Aurobindo had praised the austerity and rigour through which materialist physical sciences are carrying out their rational, empirical enquiry. By bringing the analogy from the *Upanisad* he said, "He having practised austerity discovered that Matter was the Brahman." (As the Upanishad says of *Brighu*, the son of *Varuna*, *sa tapas taptva annam brahmeti vyajanat*)⁴⁸.

⁴³ Ibid. p.250.

⁴⁴ “Matter is substance of the one conscious-being phenomenally divided within itself by the action of universal mind (including the operation of an Overmind power which is nearest to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and which is the first fountain of the creation of the Ignorance) – a division which the individual mind repeats and dwells in, but which does not abrogate or at all diminish the unity of Spirit or the unity of Energy or the real unity of Matter”. Ibid.

⁴⁵ Aurobindo, Sri “Materialism”. *Collected Works*. The Supramental Manifestation And Other Writings, Vol.16. Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo Ashram. 1972. p. 250.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.251.

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Aurobindo, Sri “Materialism”. *Collected Works*. Vol.16. The Supramental Manifestation And Other Writings. Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram. 1972. p. 250.

Section –B. Sri Aurobindo’s View on Philosophy.

Sri Aurobindo was always for the spiritualistic and vitalistic philosophy. He was a staunch critic of materialistic philosophy. As he said,

Philosophy is only a way of formulating to ourselves intellectually in their essential significance the psychological and physical facts of existence and their relation to any ultimate reality that may exist.⁴⁹

Philosophy is not mere factual study like science. It is a synthetic operation through which all facts gathered by various sciences are synthesized. It formulates the relation between these facts and the ultimate reality. It is a study of the ultimate reality also. Sri Aurobindo believed in harmonization of spiritual experiences. Spiritual realization to him the ultimate pathfinder for mankind. No amount of logical, semantical analysis can replace the actual experience of the Supreme Truth. As Haridas Choudhuri rightly pointed out,

According to Sri Aurobindo, a true harmonization of the totality of human experience is not possible through mere criticism of the categories of common sense and science, or through logico-empirical analysis of different types of human judgment, or through conceptual formulation of one-sided spiritual experience. Such harmonization can adequately be achieved only on the basis of integral spiritual realization, which means immediate experience of reality in its fullness of content and rich diversity of aspect.⁵⁰

Philosophy be it realism or idealism cannot give a complete picture of reality. Realism emphasizes on the objective factors, whereas idealism tries to do justice to the subjective. At the final analysis they are complementary. Reality in its inmost essence is the ineffable infinite and is beyond the scope of the subject-object differentiation. And philosophy still operates with these categories though they are

⁴⁹ Aurobindo, Sri. *Collected Works*. Vol. 13. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry. 1972. pp. 241-242.

⁵⁰ Chaudhuri, Haridas .”The Integralism of Sri Aurobindo”. *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (Jul., 1953), pp. 131-136.

critical of about their use. For this reason there are many conflicting philosophy each contain within itself partial truths. Reality viewed from the cosmic standpoint is infinite and the infinite is endless creativity which functions as the identity of such polar opposites as subject and object, ideal and real, and equally manifests itself in and through the apparently opposed factors. That is why “the philosophical systems are very obviously only feasible selective constructions of great reflective ideas. More often these are *possibilities of reason* much rather than assured certainties, or if founded on spiritual experience, they are still selective constructions, a sort of great architectural approach to some gate in to unknowable Divine or ineffable Infinite.”⁵¹ [Italics are mine].

Apart from philosophy, Sri Aurobindo also accused religion and science. According to him, all those are “construction” thus away from the ultimate truth. Though science emerged with the promise of “to rid us of mere intellectual constructions and put us face to face with truth”⁵². It claimed the right to rid man of the “fantastic encumbrance of religion and the nebulous futilities of metaphysical philosophy”⁵³ but itself fallen in to the same track because it is also works under the supervision of reason and divisive mind. It carries the “liability to the two universal difficulties of human reason”⁵⁴. This makes it yet another “feasible and fruitful construction of the reason and its knowledge is fatally bound by the limitation of its data and it’s out look”⁵⁵. Thus it creates only a partial knowledge of truth which can never get rid of

⁵¹ Aurobindo, Sri, *Collected Works*. Vol. 16, Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram. 1972. pp. 105-6.

⁵² “The modern scientific mind professed to rid us of mere intellectual constructions and put us face to face with truth and with assured truth only; it claimed the right to rid man of the fantastic encumbrance of religion and the nebulous futilities of metaphysical philosophy. But religion and philosophy have now turned upon science and convicted her, on her own statement of facts, of an equal liability to the two universal difficulties of human reason. The system of science seems to be itself another feasible and fruitful construction of the reason giving a serviceable account to itself of the physical world and our relations to it and it seems to be nothing more. And its knowledge is fatally bound by the limitation of its data and it’s out look. Science too creates only a partial image of Truth stamped with a character of much uncertainty and still more clearly imprinted with the perverse half-mark of insufficiency”. Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

uncertainties and insufficiency. The philosophic mind accepts its theories and hypothesizes with calm and harmony. It gives to our mentality largeness and openness. It facilitates our mind to ascent toward higher reason.⁵⁶ Philosophy 'purifies' reason influences it to reach to the Infinite. It acts as stabilizer by stabilizing the nature of reason and tranquilizer by creating a sage like state. Both of these enable reason to attain 'self-mastery' and 'purity'.⁵⁷

According to Sri Aurobindo philosophy studies "the first principles of the working of the gods"⁵⁸. It sounds very much like Aristotelian conception of philosophy/metaphysics as the study of the first principles. These principles are the key to all other enquiry. According to Sri Aurobindo, "all philosophy is concerned with the relation between two things, the fundamental truth of existence and the forms in which existence presents itself to our experience. ... for in philosophy metaphysical truth is the nucleus of the rest, it is the statement of the last and most general truths on which all the others depend or on which they are gathered up"⁵⁹. To Sri Aurobindo ancient western philosophy is the ideal. He despises modern western philosophy for its logico-semantic analysis and metaphysical niceties which has no

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Aurobindo, Sri, *Collected Works*. Vol. 20. Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram 1972. p. 495.

⁵⁸ "Philosophy sometimes spiritual or at least intuitive, sometimes abstract and intellectual, sometimes intellectualising spiritual experience or supporting with a logical apparatus the discoveries of the spirit, has claimed always to take the fixation of ultimate Truth as its provinces .but even when it did not separate itself on rarified metaphysical heights from the knowledge that belongs to the practical world and the pursuit of ephemeral objects, intellectual philosophy by its habit of abstraction has seldom been a power for life. It has been sometimes powerful for high speculation, pursuing mental Truth for its own sake without any ulterior utility or object, sometimes for subtle gymnastic of the mind in mistily bright cloud-land of words and ideas, but it has walked or acrobatised far from the more tangible realities of existence. Ancient philosophy in Europe was more dynamic, but only for the few; in India in its more spiritualised forms, it strongly influenced but without transforming the life of the race, Religion did not attempt, like philosophy to live alone on the heights; its aim was rather to take hold of man's parts of life even more than his parts of the mind and draw them God wards; if professed to build a bridge between spiritual Truth and the vital and material existence, it strove to subordinate and reconcile the lower to the higher, make life serviceable to God, Earth obedient to heaven". Ibid.

⁵⁹ Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Works*. Vol. 17. Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram.1972. pp. 400-1.

import on human condition⁶⁰. It cannot throw any light on existential problems, crisis man faces⁶¹. To him the real value of philosophy for man is “to give him light on the nature of his being, the principles of his psychology, his relations with the world and with God, the fixed lines or the great possibilities of his destiny. It is the weakness of most European philosophy.”⁶² Though Greek philosophers like Heraclites, Epicurus stressed on the general metaphysical to the fundamental truths of existence still their philosophizing is limited among a few. If metaphysics “seeks after pure metaphysical truth too exclusively for its own sake; therefore it has been a little barren because much too indirect in its bearing on life.”⁶³ Among the moderns only Nietzsche has tried to bring back the dynamic and practical force in philosophy. But Sri Aurobindo also criticised Nietzsche for his unduly neglect of “dialectical and metaphysical side of philosophy”⁶⁴. Sri Aurobindo is certainly not preaching the utilitarian search for truth preordained by prefixed practical needs. That would have harmed the disinterested out look towards the world and the self. We have to seek truth for its own sake, but after attainment of truth the practical import of the discovery becomes the most vital important query. For this reason Sri Aurobindo preferred Indian philosophy, because it had never lost sight of the practical side of the Truth. The burning issue to the Indian philosopher is “how man may live by the truth” rather than sheer pleasure of the discovery of truth. This is the reason why in India philosophy is the allied discipline of religion. For this recognition of the aspiration of common people philosophy in India has greater presence among the common folk of the country. Hence Indian philosophy has “its

⁶⁰ “But even when it did not separate itself on rarified metaphysical heights from the knowledge that belongs to the practical world and the pursuit of ephemeral objects, intellectual philosophy by its habit of abstraction has seldom been a power for life”. Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Works*. Vol. 20, 1972. p. 495.

⁶¹ “It [philosophy] has been sometimes powerful for high speculation, pursuing mental Truth for its own sake without any ulterior utility or object, sometimes for subtle gymnastic of the mind in mistily bright cloud-land of words and ideas, but it has walked or acrobatized far from the more tangible realities of existence”. Ibid.

⁶² Aurobindo, Sri. *Collected Works*. Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Vol. 16. 1972. pp. 105-6.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

intimate influence on the religion, the social ideas, the daily life of the people, its immense dynamic power on the mind and actions of Indian humanity. It strongly influenced but without transforming the life of the race. Religion did not attempt, like philosophy to live alone on the heights; its aim was rather to take hold of man's parts of life even more than his parts of the mind and draw them God wards; if professed to build a bridge between spiritual Truth and the vital and material existence, it strove to subordinate and reconcile the lower to the higher, make life serviceable to God, Earth obedient to heaven".⁶⁵ Early Greek philosophy had this practical approach. How to conduct a just and a good life was one of the central question in Plato's dialogues. When it had started losing its link with mysticism and popular religion, it also lost its vitality and power. Separation from **what** cost philosophy the 'spiritual passion' and 'effective power'. It became "unsubstantial, abstract and sterile"⁶⁶. Religion on the other hand was a saviour who could save it from "crudeness, ignorance and superstition"⁶⁷. Philosophy be it spiritual or intuitive, abstract intellectual, or even "intellectualising spiritual experience or supporting with a logical apparatus the discoveries of the spirit, has claimed always to take the fixation of ultimate Truth as its provinces"⁶⁸. Ancient philosophy in Europe was more dynamic, but only for the few; in India in its more spiritualised forms. Thus more close to the supreme Truth.

Section – C. Sri Aurobindo's view on Spiritualism.

According to Sri Aurobindo Spirit is the supreme and final stage of evolution. Like matter spirit also is an experience–concept. Through rational deliberation it cannot be attained. Spirit must be experienced. But this experience is not sensual or ordinary experience which is fragmented and momentary in nature; it is an integral vision, that is seeing reality in its entirety. Reason is required as we have already

⁶⁵ Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Works*. Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Vol. 16. 1972. pp. 105-6.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Works*. Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Vol. 20. 1972. p. 495.

discussed to organize the fleeting ordinary experiences. In case of Integral Reality or Supreme Being there is no role of reason. Reason organizes by compartmentalization, and at this level mind has already got above that stage. It is Sat-Chit-Ananda (Sachchidananda), the trinity of Absolute Existence – Consciousness – Bliss. It is the principle of creation, the stuff of the whole universe. It is the Infinite and every thing else is the manifestation of the Infinite. It is the source of all existent beings both animate and inanimate. Everything is a transformation of Sachchidananda Brahman. Thus essentially in it's in most being bound to be conscious. Though it is true that some life-forms are dormant. In case of these life-forms consciousness remain hidden or implicit such as, stones, bricks etc. there are animate life –forms like trees, plants, and insects. These creatures are at the minimum level of consciousness. There are other subhuman species whose consciousness though better than insects still determined by response to external and bodily stimulus. Consciousness in human takes its fuller growth. This is the process of cosmic and biological evolution, the process of evolution from brute matter to life and life to mind. But according Sri Aurobindo the process of evolution does not end here. The end of evolution is to reach the stage of the Supreme, the Absolute Being. This is the stage from which the spiritual evolution starts. The biological evolution is the gradual transformation of matter to life from life to mind. The spiritual evolution is a gradual transformation from human to Superman.

Matter cannot directly attain spiri,t there are several intermediary phases through which alone the ultimate stage can be reached. Biological evolution leads up to the stage of mind or in Sri Aurobindo's language an embodied mind/ surface mind/ physical mind which is still carrying the traits of both the material and the vital. It has a subconscious and an unconscious. Many of its actions are repetitive, unreflective or determined by reactions to external and bodily stimulus. At this level mind is still not wholly conscious. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, mind is considered as a transitional term which points beyond itself to a Supermind. It is an urge to realize the supramental states of Being. Mind works under the supervision of reason that is why it cannot come out of the categories of dualities. Its destination is prefixed in the realm of presentation of 'mental constructions' and representations

of these mental constructions 'in word and in ideas'. It first breaks the unity of the object of knowledge and then tries to synthesize it. As he said, "For Mind⁶⁹ as we know it is a power of the Ignorance seeking for Truth, groping with difficulty to find it, ... in mind formations, sense formations, - as if bright or shadowy photographs or films of a distant Reality were all that it could achieve."⁷⁰ Whereas Supermind works under the principle of "unities in pluralities". Here all kind of binary oppositions and dualities dissolve. As he said, "Supermind, on the contrary, is in actual and natural possession of the Truth and its formations are forms of the Reality, not constructions, representations or indicative figures."⁷¹ The difference between mind and Supermind consist in the difference between their manners of apprehending reality. While Supermind essentially gets the unitary picture of reality, mind, by its very nature, breaks and cuts asunder a whole into its parts. Mind essentially creates divisions not only between the knower and the known, but also in the objects that it apprehends. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy there are certain intermediary stages, or 'instrumentations of consciousnesses. These are the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuitive Mind, the Overmind, and then comes the decisive stage of the Supermind, "which fully realizes the form and the function of self-being and self-activity in knowledge, will, and feeling."⁷² The mind, on the other hand, is primarily dependent on the environment and the senses in its explorations and discoveries of knowledge and also for the realization of its desires and their satisfactions. "But between the mind and the Supermind there is a continuity of growth, as there is between the perceptual sensibility of the animal and the rational mind of man, and, therefore, it is possible to watch the quality of independent action progressively develop as we pass through these different forms

⁶⁹ "Mind is a subordinate power of Supermind which takes its stand in the standpoint of division, actually forgetful here of the oneness behind though able to return to it by reillumination from the supramental...". Aurobindo, Sri. *The Life Divine*. Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, , 2006. p. 277.

⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 286.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Sen, Indra, "Sri Aurobindo's Theory of the Mind", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 45-52 Published by: University of Hawai'i Press, 1952

of consciousness”⁷³. The main point of departure for Higher Mind from the Embodied Mind or the Sense Mind is that here there is “no trace of mental constructions, no labour of speculation or difficult discovery”⁷⁴. Here the knowledge is “spontaneous and automatic”⁷⁵ though the higher mind is still dependent on the instrumentality of ideas, but they become now vastly more universal and comprehensive⁷⁶. Moreover “it has a cosmic character, not stamp of individual thinking”. It is in the Intuitive Mind that the principle of direct knowledge (by identity) becomes a settled fact. The Illumined Mind between the two shows transcendence of ideas, but not yet the mastery of intuition⁷⁷. It is characterized by a general illumination, clarity, and certitude, which readily take form in ideas⁷⁸. The Over Mind marks a higher range of the use of intuitive powers. It sees large possibilities of all kinds, as co-operative principles. Contradictories tend to become real complementaries, and yet the plurality of phenomena and forces is the more

⁷³ Ibid. pp. 49 -50.

⁷⁴ Aurobindo, Sri. *The Life Divine*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry, 2006, p. 290.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “The ideas of the pure reason of Kant, the ideas of God, soul, and nature as summative ideas of three great totalities, could be an illustration of the objective content of the higher mind. The “Synthetic Reason” of Hegel, which comprehends the essential nature of the dialectical process, seeing a larger wholeness and unity beyond contradictories, also seems to be comparable to Sri Sri Aurobindo's Higher Mind”. As pointed out by Indra Sen, op. cit

⁷⁷ “Intuition occupies in the human as a means of knowledge, and Intuition in its very nature is a projection of the characteristic action of these higher grades (Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, and Over Mind) into the mind of the Ignorance. it is true that in human mind its action is largely hidden by the interventions of our normal intelligence; a pure intuition is a rare occurrence in our mental activity; for what we call by the name is usually a point of direct knowledge which is immediately caught and coated over with mental stuff, so that it serves only as an invisible or a very tiny nucleus of a crystallisation which is in its mass intellectual or otherwise mental in character; or else the flash of intuition is quickly replaced or intercepted, before it has a chance of manifesting itself, by a rapid imitative mental movement, insight or quick perception or some swift –leaping process of thought which owes its appearance to the stimulus of the coming intuition but obstructs its entry or covers it with a substituted mental suggestion true or erroneous but in either case not the authentic intuitive movement”. It is a “ supra –intellectual direct way of knowing”. Sri Aurobindo, *The The Life Divine*. 2006. p. 288.

⁷⁸ “... Beyond this Truth-Thought we can distinguish a greater illumination instinct with an increased power and intensity and driving force, a lumoniosity of the nature of Truth-Sight with thought formulation as a minor and dependent activity..... we may compare the action of the Higher Mind to composed and steady sunshine, the energy of the Illumined Mind beyond it to an out pouring of massive sun lightings of flaming sun-stuff. Still beyond can be met a yet greater power of Truth-Force, an inanimate and exact Truth-Vision, Truth-Thought, Truth-Sense, Truth-Feeling, Truth-Action, to which we can give in a special sense the name of Intuition...” . Ibid. p. 292.

prominent aspect. The Super mind sees the plurality and the unity in an essential integrality and is capable of the full power of independent self-being and self-action.

The realm of reality has been divided in to two hemispheres in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. The Triunine principle of *sachchidananda* represents the higher hemisphere, and Matter, Life, Psyche represents the lower hemisphere. Supermind is the principle which mediates between these two hemispheres. It is the integral, creative consciousness which functions as the intermediary between *Saccidananda* and the world. Together they form the Seven Fold Chord of Being⁷⁹. Supermind belongs to the higher hemisphere and yet it is the end and ideal of the mind. It is the culmination and fulfillment of the mind. There are two aspects of the Supermind. It is linked with the *sachchidananda*, and also with the Mind (Surface Mind/ Physical Mind). The mind which is embodied and works under the guidance of reason and produces separative knowledge. As connected to the *Sachchidananda* who has been called the World Creator, the Real-Idea the *Isvara* and the Supreme Truth-Consciousness. It is "the divine Gnosis which creates, governs and upholds the worlds: it is the secret Wisdom which upholds both our Knowledge and our Ignorance."⁸⁰ It has also been termed as the Creatrix. It has been considered to be the self-extension of the Absolute into space and time. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the Absolute includes within itself both a dynamic and static pole, and is regarded as *Brahman-Sakti*. *Brahman* is static Consciousness, where as the concept of *Sakti*, adopted from the Hindu Tantric philosophy, denotes vibrant creative vitality and joyous self-manifesting power. The Supermind represents this ecstatic *Sakti* dimension of *Brahman*, and may be regarded as Sachchidananda itself in its dynamic creative aspect. (Here is the point of departure from the traditional Vedantic philosophy). For this reason Supermind has been described as the Supreme Truth-Consciousness. Supermind has the consciousness of the non-dual reality and which can project this consciousness in creation. Supermind makes the creation

⁷⁹ Aurobindo further added another principle that is mind to emphasize the characteristic difference between Mind and Super Mind. Aurobindo, Sri. *The Life Divine*. Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 2006.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

possible by differentiation without division, because it is primarily comprehensive, can see things in their essential oneness. It has been called Real-Idea because as creative principle it is not characteristically different from the Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda is pure, static, and inactive beyond space and time; creation on the other hand, is a movement, an unfolding in spatio-temporal realm. As a Real-Idea only it can link these two seemingly opposite poles. It “develops the triunion principle of existence, consciousness and bliss, out of their indivisible unity. It differentiates them, but does not divide”⁸¹. By virtue of the power of Supermind, Saccidananda undergoes involution and evolution, or descent and ascent. Cosmologically, involution signifies world creation, the self-projection of Spirit into inconscient matter (*prakriti*), which is in fact “veiled Spirit” and “secret God”; whereas evolution is the reverse of creation, the return back to Spirit. Psychologically, involution denotes the descent of the soul into the various “vehicles” of increasing density, corporeality or inconscience, these being the physical, vital, mental and supramental stages of the psyche. “These stratified vehicles correspond basically to the “sheaths” (*kosas*) of traditional Vedanta, but unlike the later, the Neo-Vedantic theory does not regard them as “coverings” functioning only to eclipse the light of pure Consciousness but as “channels” or “instruments” in and through which universal Spirit creatively manifests itself or expresses its inner psychic radiance and bliss”⁸². Through the mechanism of involution, *Saccidananda* projects itself outward into ‘inconscient’ nature, whereas it subsequently undergoes a process of ‘spiritual self-development’ through the ‘emergent evolutionary’ phases of Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind, finally becoming reabsorbed into Sachchidananda in the consummate self-consciousness of *samadhi* or Yogic contemplation. All other knowledge is provisional apart from the Integral knowledge which can only be attained at this stage that is ‘Knowledge by Identity’. Supermind can only Know in the integral sense of the term both the Knowledge of

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Odin, Steve. “Sri Aurobindo and Hegel on the Involution-Evolution of Absolute Spirit.” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Apr., 1981), pp. 179-191 Published by: University of Hawai'i Press.

Reality and the Self-Knowledge in its Oneness. The integration is complete at this stage. The integral nature of Supermind consists in its pure unitary consciousness, because it is the timeless and spaceless concentration of Sachchidananda itself. The question of different phases of Supermind arise when creation and evolution comes in to being. These phases of Supermind have a definite role to play in dual process of Involution-Evolution. The beginning when the originary unity has been not disturbed is called the state of 'pure ideation'. Here, the stage has already been set for the play of creation to begin, but still have not started⁸³. Then comes the stage where the Supermind has already begun to play the game of creation by realizing the one in the many and many in the one. This is the stage of dynamism. Here the static nature of *Sachchidananda* gets transformed into dynamic creation. But still the unity in multiplicity has been perceived. Here onwards creation becomes full-fledged. The Supermind is now fully *involved* in the process of creation. Through these various stages Supermind unfolds itself, becomes many, multiple in varied shapes forms and character, but throughout all these stages the urge towards unity is always there, because consciousness of integral unity represents the basic character of Supermind.

Another important phase of the involution of the Absolute spirit and evolution of Matter is Over Mind. It is immediate subsequent phase of Supermind. It is "...the final consummating movement of the dynamic spiritual transformation, it is the highest possible status-dynamism of the spiritual-mind plane. It takes up all the three steps below [Intuitive Mind, Illumined Mind and Higher Mind] and raises their characteristic workings to their highest and largest power adding to them a universal wideness of consciousness and force, a harmonious concert of knowledge, a more manifold delight of being."⁸⁴ Overmind is the proper link between mind and

⁸³ It is like the situation when everything is ready the audience is also there and actor are ready in the backstage; all the announcements have already been made. But curtain is veiling the stage. The second stage is that when the curtain has been raised the play begins. The third stage is when the drama is at its peak and everybody is involved in it.

⁸⁴ Aurobindo, Sri. *The Life Divine*. Sri Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry. Seventh Edition. 2006. pp. 846.

Supermind. It is not limited by individual consciousness; its consciousness is cosmic in nature. It is capable of reflecting the universal light. But it lacks the integral vision and knowledge. Its cognition is global therefore can hold the differences and contradictions together. In spite of being global in cognition over mind cannot comprehend the Absolute. It only can view the powers of the Absolute in separation. It deals with separate possibilities, and so can make every possibility a separate existence complete in itself. It produces separative knowledge. It projects the consciousness and the materiality as two essentially opposite and irreconcilable principles of reality. Thus from the involutory perspective it is also the stage of emergence of Ignorance. From the evolutionary perspective it is the last phase of the lower hemisphere. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo says, "it is a power The highest power of the lower hemisphere; although its basis is a cosmic unity, its action is an action of division and interaction, an action taking its stand on the play of the multiplicity. Its play is, like that of all Mind, a play of possibilities; although it acts not in ignorance but with the knowledge of the truth of these possibilities, yet it works them out through their own independent evolution of their powers".⁸⁵ The separative knowledge is the veil which separates two hemispheres, which are originally one in essence. It is a "supraconscient cosmic Mind in the direct contact with the Supramental Truth-Consciousness, an original intensity determinant of all movements below it and all mental energies, - not Mind as we know it, but an Overmind that covers as with the wide wings of some Over soul this whole lower hemisphere of knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness while yet at the same time with a brilliant with its golden lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight..... at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality."⁸⁶ It is a power that simultaneously "connects and divides the supreme Knowledge and the supreme Ignorance."⁸⁷ Sri Aurobindo had criticised *Samkhya* philosophy for its fixation with

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid. pp. 292

⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 293.

duality between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. *Samkhyan* philosophy could not look beyond Overmind. They lacked the integral vision. It is also a *Maya* but a higher *Maya*, a *Maya* of knowledge. Here is the departure from the traditional Vedantic philosophy, which only considers lower *Maya*, the *Maya* of ignorance. *Maya* has decisive impact on human life as “living being by the very necessity of its ignorance enters into collision with others and tries to live and grow and fulfil itself by independent self-assertion, not by harmony with the rest of existence.”⁸⁸ The much sought after harmony can only be found at the stage of Supermind, through whose activity the Absolute transforms as the World.

The Absolute Spirit has three aspects. Pure existence, i.e., *Sat*, Consciousness-Force, i.e., *Chit* and Bliss i.e., *Ananda*. The Absolute spirit is beyond space and time. It is even out of reach of the categories of surface mind. It is truly boundless. It is universal and impersonal. Though in normal circumstances, we cannot have a proper knowledge of this supreme stage yet we can have glimpses of it in our universal knowledge, when we for the time being able to transcend ourselves from here and now. In this process science can also contribute through its theoretical knowledge, can indicate though very roughly the ascent toward the supreme Gnosis. The Absolute is beyond the dichotomy of self and other. It transcends all terms of intellection. It is Infinite, Indefinable. It cannot be summed up in any quantity or quality. It is unknowable through rational deliberations. It can only be experienced. “It is both static and dynamic Brahman.we say that pure existence is our Absolute and in itself unknowable by our thought although we can go back to it in a supreme Identity that transcends the term of knowledge. The movement, on the contrary is the field of the relative and yet by the very definition of the relative all things in the movement contain, are contained in and are the Absolute”.⁸⁹ According to Sri Aurobindo the Absolute is neither being nor becoming, because these terms are only the ‘mental representation’ of the Absolute. But the Absolute can also be experienced as boundless energy. From this perspective It is also a Force, a

⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 299.

⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 72.

Conscious-Force.⁹⁰ Force is inherent in Existence, it is not an accidental quality of Existence. They are inseparably related to each other. The Force of Existence by its very nature passes through the alternative modes of self-concentration (rest) and self-diffusion (motion). The Consciousness-Force is conceived as one comprehensive principle comprehending the material, the vital, the mental and also the supramental. That is why it is called Chit. Chit is the root principle of creation. This principle which is behind the world process has been called The Mother, The Divine Sakti; who creates and sustains the universe. The Absolute is also “infinite bliss, the infinite delight of the creative play of the force”⁹¹. This is the cause of creation. Brahman creates the world for sheer delight of creation. “It is *Ananda* [Delight] out of which it this world is born and it is *Ananda* that is its goal and consummation.”⁹² Creation is the ecstatic dance of *Siva*, the *Nataraj*. “Absolute of conscious Existence is illimitable bliss of conscious existence; the two are only different phrases for the same thing.”⁹³ This ineffable and pure joy of creation is not desire. Because desire comes from the lack, incompleteness. Since the Absolute is all perfect there is no lack in Him. Pain only comes where there is desire. Desire is caused by the Ignorance the separative knowledge of subject and object. In the Absolute thus there is no scope for pain only pure delight exists there.

The Absolute is a composite whole. Sri Aurobindo seems to derive this conception of composite whole from *Samkhya* theory of causality. According to which cause and effect are of same nature. The effect remains hidden or implicit in the cause. For example, a wooden sculpture was already there in the wood but in implicit form. The clay-pot remains clay even after it becomes a clay-pot. This theory is known as *sat-karya-vada*. According to *sat-karya-vada*, ‘the effect exists in cause’

⁹⁰ Consciousness by nature is Force and Force by nature is Conscious.

⁹¹ Aurobindo, Sri. *The Life Divine*. Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press. Seventh Edition. 2006. pp. 83.

⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 86.

⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 67.

(*Samkhya Karika. 9/ bs. 2.1.7*)⁹⁴. *Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta* are the schools of Indian philosophy who believes in this view. This theory is contrary to *asat-karya-vada* or *arambhavada*, according to which the effect is a new beginning (*arambha*). According to *asat-karya-vada*, “creation is the transformation (*parinama*) of a cause into its effect and does not, as the Nyaya-Vaisesika suggests, result in the production of a new entity”⁹⁵. Vedantins translate this causal theory to a metaphysical theory by making *Brahman* both the efficient and material cause of the world. The world is the transformation of *Brahman*. Because *Brahman* is the all-pervasive Being, nothing outside *Brahman* can exist. That is why everything is a manifestation of *Brahman*, instances of him, the Supreme Being. “The roots of this debate are ancient and go back to the earliest speculations in the vedic hymns as to whether the world emerged from a pre-creative condition of non-existence (*asat*) or existence (*sat*)”⁹⁶. The classical scriptural source for the *sat-karya* view that the effect pre-exists in its cause is found in Chandogya Upanisad.

It is like this, son. By means of just one lump of clay one would perceive everything made of clay – the transformation is a verbal handle, a name – while the reality is just this: ‘It is clay’.⁹⁷

Creation is a transformation or change (*parinama*) in the state of what is already there. For the Samkhya School, the primordial materiality (*prakrti*) literally becomes the world. Which in that sense can be said to exist in potential, within the unmanifested *prakrti* (*pradhana*) before creation. Therefore, for *Samkhya* as for Sri Aurobindo “creation is the making manifest of what is there but in an unmanifested state.”⁹⁸ According to *Sat-karya-vada*, “no account of effort could bring a non-existent effect into existence. Milk cannot produce oil and, as the saying goes, you cannot get blood out of stone. Moreover, there must be some kind of invariable

⁹⁴ King, Richard. *Indian Philosophy: an Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999. pp.208-214

⁹⁵ *ibid*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Chandogya Upanisad. 6.1.4. trans. 1996: 148.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

relation (*samavaya*) between a cause and its effect. For such a relationship to exist, however implies that the effect already exists in some sense within the cause, otherwise what the relationship is between?”⁹⁹ (See Samkhya karika v.9 **what is v**). Isvarakrishna in Samkhya Karika states that, “the elemental or gross material creation (*bhautik sarga*) of *prakrti* results in fourteen levels of embodiment. Eight of these are divine realms, one is the human realm and other five realms are below the human”¹⁰⁰, predominated by three *gunas*: *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

The achievement of Sri Aurobindo lies in the fact that, “At the philosophical level Sri Aurobindo claimed to have reconciled the divergent trends of Indian ascetic cosmic transcendental idealism and Western secularistic materialism.”¹⁰¹ He gave a new dynamism to the traditional Indian philosophy. In his philosophy the engagement with both the indigenous knowledge system and western philosophies is evident. Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy is a philosophy of integration. He has given a hosynthetic, holistic system which is rare in 20th century. As Haridas Chaudhuri says while evaluating Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy. “I characterize Sri Aurobindo's philosophy as integralism insofar as it is a self-coherent articulation of the integral experience of reality. His philosophy is not exclusively based upon any particular province of human experience, such as moral experience or artistic experience or religious experience or experience connected either with natural science in general or with any particular field of scientific investigation. Sri Aurobindo maintains that a sound and adequate philosophy should be based upon an integrated vision of the nature of existence. Such an integrated vision can be attained, not through mere critical reflection upon the plurality of fragmentary human experiences, but by

⁹⁹ King , Richard. *Indian Philosophy: an Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999. pp.208-214

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

¹⁰¹ Varma, Vishwanath Prasad. ‘East and West in Sri Aurobindo's Political Philosophy’, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Oct., 1955), pp. 235-244, University of Hawai'i Press

outgrowing all partial experiences through a total mobilization of all the resources of human personality.”¹⁰²

¹⁰²Chaudhuri, Haridas. ‘The Integralism of Sri Aurobindo’ *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Jul., 1953), pp. 131-136, University of Hawai'i Press

Chapter – 3

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya on Science Philosophy and Spiritualism

By common consent, he [Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya] is the most original and creative among the academic philosophers of India, situating Indian thought in the perspective of the world-philosophy of his time and, what is most important in a philosophic context, creatively reacting to Western thought and thus making *additions to the corpus* of philosophy.... The much-needed creative reaction to Western thought was possible on the part of Professor Bhattacharyya because, while he did react with a traditional mind (if we may say so), he did not continue *traditionalism*. As a true philosopher who does not ignore his historical milieu but on the contrary makes history contemporary, Professor Bhattacharya exploited the big jolt that Indian mind received through the West by trying to formulate, *initially* in Western terms, the logic of the notions or concepts of Indian thought and then bring out the *differentia* of that logic. Only thus is one's mentality restored to oneself, only thus is any *originality* in thought possible.¹

It was 1974, when preparing a lecture for Max Muller Bhawan, Madras... I [Herbert Herring] realized that here I come across an original thinker, one of those rare specimens among the vast number of mere historians of philosophy occupying most of the university philosophy chairs in the East and West.²

In this chapter we are looking in to the view of eminent academic philosopher of modern India Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's (KCB) view on science, philosophy and spiritualism or philosophy of spirit. According to KCB's theorization there is no continuity among science, philosophy and spiritualism. Science and philosophy have their own destination and their own peculiar destiny. Spiritualism falls under philosophy or what he calls philosophy of spirit thus have the same fate.

¹ Bagchi, K, "Towards A Metaphysic of Self: Perspectives on Professor Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's unpublished essay on 'Mind and Matter'", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* Vol. 9, 1981. p. 19,

² Herring, Herbert, "Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's Concept of Philosophy." *Journal of Indian Philosophical Research* Vol.X, No.1 Special Issue on The Philosophy of K.C. Bhattacharyya, 1992. p.1,

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's (henceforth KCB) in his seminal essay "Concept of Philosophy" (which is the primary source of our discussion)³ is drawing our attention to the radical departure between science and philosophy. We are going to discuss his view on science, philosophy and spiritualism/philosophy of spirit respectively.

Section – A: Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's view on Science.

According to KCB both science and philosophy are the expression of theoretic consciousness. Which is at least an "understanding of a speakable?"⁴ And "to speak is to formulate a belief".⁵ It is the case not only for the declarative sentences through which we state something, but also for the exclamatory sentences. The content of our speech is always believed (except the case of a lie where the speaker is not conveying what he is speaking). As a form of theoretic understanding science is also a 'thought' but in the literal sense. According to KCB scientific thoughts are the proper thoughts, and all other forms of thought are 'symbolic'. He has talked about four grades of thought; such as, empirical, pure objective, spiritual and transcendental. Among these four grades of thought science is concerned only with empirical thought. "Empirical thought is the theoretic consciousness of a content involving reference to an object that is perceived or imagined to be perceived, such reference being part of the meaning of the content."⁶ Reference here means an empirical fact out there in the external world. Consider the following:

- 1) It is raining.

The meaning of the above sentence is dependent upon the external fact of raining. The sentence will be true iff it is really raining outside. To verify the truth-value of the sentence we have to refer to the external world. Here we have to depend on sense-perception to verify the sentence. In science object means an empirical object. Science is concerned with fact; it is the content of scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge

³ The rationale for choosing this particular essay is that, here KCB is demarcating the boundary between science and philosophy much more clearly and categorically than his other works.

⁴ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra. *Studies in Philosophy*. Vol.1&2. Edited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya. Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, p.463, 2008.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. pp. 464.

is informative thus knowledge in the true sense of the term. As he said, “Fact in science is spoken of as information and understood without any reference to the spoken form. It is what needs not to be spoken to be believed. Speakability is a contingent character of the content of the empirical thought, but it is a necessary character of the content of pure philosophical thought.”⁷ The content of empirical thought has the independency from the mode through which it is spoken. The relation between language/speaking and natural/empirical facts are contingent. We do need language to talk about scientific facts but its being does not depend on how it has been spoken. In this sense empirical facts are language independent. Natural and physical events are not linguistic in nature. The relation between language and natural events is purely accidental. We can talk about them using language by referring to them, describing them but they are separate and clearly distinguishable entities from the way they are talked about. Like by the sentence 1) we are describing the fact of raining, but raining as states of affair is separate from the linguistic expression through which we are describing it. As Jaegwon Kim rightly said,

Events presumably are not linguistic entities; like trees and molecules, events can be talked about, referred to and described but they are not themselves statements, sentences, descriptions or any kind of other linguistic units....Events and relations between events could exist even if there were no human humans, or collision of particles, and expressions of metals caused by rising temperature.⁸

Facts are intelligible without the necessary reference to the spoken form. Fact is expressible in a proper judgment form. “A is thus related to B”. Through this judgment-form we express literal thought. Facts are related to each other. In case of judgment proper the predicate amplify, explicate the subject. It is synthetic in nature. Consider the following:

2) All bodies are heavy.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kim, Jaegwon. ‘Events and their Descriptions: Some Considerations’, in N.Rescher edited *The Logic of Decision and Action:Essays in Honour of Carl G. Hempel*, Pittsburg. University of Pittsburgh Press. 1967. p. 198.

Here the predicate 'heavy' is amplifying, adding something more to the subject concept. Hence, giving new information. Both subject term and predicate term are literally understood. The judgments in science are not only literally speakable but also literally knowable. We can quite literally without involving any added symbolism the content of sentence 1) and 2). Science is the body of literally thinkable judgments, thus provides actual knowledge. According to KCB,

Beliefs in science alone are formulable as judgments and literally thinkable. If content is literally thinkable in a judgment, the belief in it as known is actual knowledge.⁹

Actual knowledge is not mere belief. Though it is undeniable, that without belief there is no knowledge. Knowledge is the awareness of the difference between the object believed and the belief itself, in case of belief there is no such awareness. As he said,

It is in introspection into knowledge...that we realise that we believed before we know - and that there was then no awareness of the distinct from mere belief involves the awareness of distinction¹⁰.

Knowledge is a kind of awareness, an awareness of difference. Moreover it is awareness in the objective attitude as compared to subjective attitude. In objective attitude there is a further awareness between object of awareness and subject of awareness. This awareness in objective attitude is the knowledge in the proper sense. Scientific knowledge is the knowledge in the proper sense. But scientific knowledge does not exhaust the whole of objective attitude. It is one kind of objective attitude, "though it [scientific knowledge] is chiefly awareness in the objective attitude, it is not co-extensive with objective awareness".¹¹ Thought, feeling, memory are the other sorts of objective awareness. The distinguishing element of objective knowledge is intuition.¹² KCB is here using the term 'intuition' in Kantian sense. As Gopinath

⁹ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra, *Studies in Philosophy*. Vol.1& Vol.2 (bound in one), Delhi, Motilal Bnarsidass Publisher Private Limited p. 468, 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. Editor's Introduction, p. xxix.

¹² According to Kant, "intuition is that through which it [knowledge] is in immediate relation to them[objects], and to which all thought as a means is directed. But intuition takes place only in so far as the object is given to them". (*Critique of Pure Reason*, translated to English by Norman Kemp Smith. MacMillan, p.65, 1968.)

Bhattacharyya informs us in his introduction to *Studies in Philosophy*, “The author here appears to accept the Kantian convention that intuition and thought are the two necessary elements of what properly should be termed ‘knowledge’.”¹³ Scientific knowledge, the awareness in objective attitude, is certain and valid.

Description of the term ‘knowledge’ in KCB’s philosophy creates ambiguity. There is one trend in his thinking which suggests that knowledge is a ‘state’; there is another trend which advocates knowledge as a ‘function’.¹⁴ This ambiguity arises because the term has been used in various senses by KCB. But he is not the only one who uses the term in such a manner. Both in day to day discourse and in the community of the scholars this term is used in different senses. Awareness of oneself has also been termed as ‘knowledge’ by KCB. This is the root of confusion. The term ‘knowledge’ cannot be applied in the same sense in both the cases. But if we consider the use of the term ‘knowledge’ in the light of his concept of philosophy then we can resolve the ambiguity regarding the term ‘knowledge’. KCB is very explicit while talking about the nature of knowing. He does not conceive knowledge as a passive state. Knowing in his philosophy is an activity. “To know is to do something”¹⁵. But knowing as an activity differs from physical and volitional activity. It is not like moving hands, or making choices. It is a symbolic activity, *sui generis* in nature.¹⁶ Knowing activity as he said is a “free reference of the subject to the object.... A positive mode of freedom of the subject to relate to the object without getting related to it.”¹⁷ It sounds paradoxical at the first glance. Because in any relation both relates are related to each other, this follows from the very definition of relation. But to KCB this is not

¹³ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra. *Studies in Philosophy*. Vol.1& Vol.2 (bound in one), Delhi, Motilal Bnarasidass Publisher Private Limited Edited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya, Editor’s Introduction. pp. xxix, 2008.

¹⁴ “if knowledge were to be regarded as a ‘state’, it would have to be regarded as a sort of precipitate of the ‘knowing’-function. If, however, it were to be described as a ‘function’, it would be just the function ‘knowing’ itself. There is not surely a knowing –function over and above the knowing-function. Certain trends in the author’s mode of thinking would seem to favour the assumption that, according to him, knowledge and knowing function are one and the same thing.” Ibid. p. xxx.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “But it is activity neither in a physical or volitional way..... activity only in symbolical sense.” Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. cited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya in his Editor’s Introduction. p.xxx

paradoxical at all because it is a free functioning of the subject where the subject “has an immediate feeling of relating itself to the object without getting related to it”¹⁸.

In scientific knowledge there is always a reference to a fact. Fact could be physical as well as psychic. Physical sciences study physical facts, facts in nature in external world, Psychology on the other hand concerned with psychic facts. According to KCB,

Facts means what is believed; what a person believes is a fact to him. The characterization of fact as what stands in a constant system of relations or as what is given and not constructed by the mind or as what conditions and constitutes successful willing is no definition, as itself assumes some fact. Fact does not admit of an impersonal definition.¹⁹

Facts could be both existents and non-existents. A rope is a fact which is an existent; a golden mountain could also be a fact though it is non-existent. As he said, “The non-existence of that about which there can be an actual question of existence is also a fact that one believes and asks others to believe”²⁰. There are believed contents such as, moral ‘ought’ which neither existent nor non-existent but it is also an eligible to be called fact. But the false and the unreal are not facts. For example the rope is a fact but the illusionary experience of snake in rope is no fact, because it is false. Likewise ‘square-circle’ cannot be considered as a fact because neither we can accept its existence nor deny it. Its denial is also equally nonsensical as its acceptance. As he said, “What is taken as false or unreal is no fact and one cannot speak of its non-existence also as fact, there being, as will appear presently, no question of its existence.”²¹

Belief plays an important role in KCB’s philosophy. Without belief there is no knowledge of fact. Thus there is no definition of fact apart from the person who believes. We cannot talk about belief in abstraction, in an impersonal manner. Though belief is the necessary condition of fact, it is not solely dependent upon it. Facts are not mere creation of individual minds. They are also objective. There could be false beliefs which would not generate any fact. In case of illusion there is no fact. KCB

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 531.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

here is hinting at the double nature of fact. On the one hand, it is objective that is why it is not a mere fancy or imagination, on the other hand it is closely linked with the person who believes it cannot be understood without the reference to the person. As rightly pointed out by Ramesh Kumar Sharma. As he said,

So when in the above [referring to KCB's definition of fact, see quote above. {20}] KCB says, what a person believes is a fact to him, he seems to be saying no more, though also no less, than that there is a side to fact which cannot be understood except as category of reflective (and not merely conscious) thinking.²²

Theorizing facts in this manner tempt us to flirt with the Kantian influence on KCB. Kant also as we all know, emphasized the role of the knower in the process of cognition. He also not said that the knowledge is the product of the 'epistemic attitude'²³ of the knower. Similarly, KCB is also talking about the role of the epistemic attitude especially belief in what we consider as facts. But by sheer belief we cannot generate facts. Belief is a necessary for fact but not sufficient. Consider the following:

3) I believe that P.

4) It is the fact that P

Here 4) is not derivable from 3) though without 3), 4) will not be there. Further consider:

5) I believe that P but P is not a fact. 6) P is a fact, but I do not believe that P²⁴.

Here 5) and 6) cannot be asserted simultaneously. One can believe in something which is not fact. But one cannot consider a fact without believing it. "To be asserted as fact it needs to be the object of belief."²⁵ Not only actual but possible facts are also taken in to consideration by KCB.

²² Sharma, Ramesh Kumar. 'Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya on Factuality, Falsity, and Contradiction'. *Journal of Indian Philosophical Research*, Vol. X, No.1 (Special Issue on The Philosophy of K.C.Bhattacharyya), p. 112, 1992.

²³ Ibid. p.113.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Along side physical facts there are also psychic facts which are the concern of psychology. Scientific knowledge is concerned with definite objects. There are also indefinite objects, such as, aesthetic objects, but those are outside the domain of science. Scientific knowledge is to be attained only in objective attitude. Here we are concerned with conception of objective facts as expounded by KCB. Generally psychic facts have been considered as purely mental. Psychic facts are any things that happen in the mind. We can grasp it only through introspection. KCB's conception of psychic facts is a deviation from the generally accepted paradigm. In his philosophy psychic facts are never considered as purely mental. This is because psychic facts are not devoid of objective/non-mental element neither are they 'behaviours' as the Behaviourists would like to call (here he is going against the theorization of James Ward). Psychic facts are not like 'experience-unity of subject and object'.²⁶ Psychic facts have an independent reality like physical facts. It can exist apart from introspection. It has certain 'modes of relatedness' to the subject such as knownness, feltness. "This relatedness viewed as a character of the object is,.... The so-called psychic fact".²⁷ Psychic fact is both related to the subject and the object. What does not involve 'knowledge of the object and what introspection does not reveal is not a psychic fact'.²⁸ Psychic fact is not awareness of the imagery, illusory, objectless feeling, it is also different from the process of introspection.

"Psychical facts are essentially 'presentation' as embodying belief"²⁹. 'Presentation' is the distinction between the belief and the object believed. Thus presentation is a psychic fact as compared to the object which is non-psychic. This distinction is not given but only available in introspection. This distinction is a characteristic of non-perceptual knowledge only. In case of perceptual knowledge this distinction is not there, "but it is believed and symbolised as what should be distinct."³⁰ There non-perceptual presentations apart from perceptual such as, "(i) feeling of the body from

²⁶ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra, 2008. op cit. p.xxxi

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, p. xxxii.

within, ii) immediate apprehension of absence, iii) memory of an object as past, iv) imagination of the object, v) inference of the perceptible object as the character of necessity”³¹. Perceptual knowledge is the actual standard of knowledge that can be known substantively. Others forms of knowledge would aspire to be such, but can never reach the substantive status of perceptual knowledge. Perception plays a dual role towards other mode of presentation. It lends ‘cognitive character’ on them and simultaneously prevents them to reach their ideal completion.³²

Actual or scientific knowledge is based on illusion that is, the identification of self and body.

As he said,

All empirical knowledge then is rooted in illusion. The body is illusorily identified with the self and the self is illusorily identified with the body; and all knowledge of phenomena has reference to this identity³³. [‘Mind and Matter’. By K.C.Bhattacharyya].

Self and body then are two separate kind of entity substantially different from each other. The illusion further amplified such locution as, ‘I am the body’³⁴. But they are falsely reconciled to one whole. Empirical knowledge presupposes this whole which is illusory. Thus knowledge depends on this fundamental illusion. The illusion of supposing the self as the body/ body as the self.

Science as organized body of judgment is also materialistic in nature. It is not mere creation of mind.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ K.C. Bhattacharyya in Mind and Matter, cited in K. Bagchi, ‘Towards A Metaphysic of Self: Perspectives on Professor Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya’s unpublished essay on “Mind and Matter”’ *Journal of Indian Philosophy* Vol. 9, , 1981 p. 28

³⁴ “I cannot gain a removed knowledge of it. In so far as I guess what it may be, it is by abandoning the as an object, *partes extra partes*, and by going back to the body which I experience at this moment, in the manner, for example, in which my hand moves round the object it touches, anticipating the stimuli and itself tracing out the form which I am about to perceive. I cannot understand the function of the living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far I am a body which rises towards the world.”

Merleau-Ponty, M, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated to English by Colin Smith, Delhi, Motilal Benarasidass Publishers, Preface, p.75,1996.

Science is the organisation of knowledge as distinct from mere thought or fancy; and this science is frankly materialistic. It may not be committed to a denial of the independence of mind but it confesses that it knows nothing of this independent mind. Yet it admits the fact of error, illusion etc. within its knowledge of matter.³⁵

According to KCB illusion and illusion of the illusion serve the purpose of counterexamples to show the fragility of the commonsense notion of the identity of the self and body/mind and matter. Though these examples however do not shake the belief in reality of matter and mind in common parlance still “the fact that something believed to be material has been found to be mental (and vice versa) shows at least that the terms are psychologically convertible and makes conceivable the hypothesis that all material are mental in substance”³⁶. Scientific knowledge even in its theory is always oriented towards serving practical purposes. Scientific knowledge is never meant for pure contemplation. Thus it is according to KCB utilitarian in nature.

Section – B. Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya’s View on Philosophy.

An explication of the concept of philosophy appears to me more important than the discussion of any specific problem of philosophy. The possibility of philosophy as a body of knowledge distinct from science is now a days called in question.³⁷

One of the perennial problems in philosophy is the nature and definition of philosophy itself. This is the unique feature of its being. Philosophy is a self questioning discipline. What is science is not a question within science, it is a philosophical question. But philosophy is always haunted by the question ‘what is philosophy?’ This is the distinguishing mark of philosophy, that it always questions its own foundation, its very being is always in anguish, an anguish to define itself, to find a sound and ever lasting foundation upon which it can build itself once and for all. But alas! There is no such hope for finding such finality in philosophy. It is always torn apart, an ongoing battle. It is battleground of the opponent forces. It is like Hamlet, a relentless questioning spirit. A critique who criticizes itself without holding anything. It is like the vagabond, the mad man in the city of language. It is a

³⁵ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra, 2008, op cit p. xxvii..

³⁶ Ibid, p. 25.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 462.

Socrates always giving reminder and making us aware about the conceptual maladies, it is a cure against the plague of apparent security. It is reflexive, turns back to itself time and again. In this context philosophy is always a Metaphilosophy. As Merleau Ponty says,

The philosopher, as the unpublished works declare, is a perpetual beginner, which means that he takes for granted nothing that men, learned or otherwise, believe they know. It means also that philosophy itself must not take itself for granted, in so far as it may have managed to say something true; that it is an ever-renewed experiment in making its own beginning; that it consist wholly in the description of this beginning, and finally, that radical reflection amounts to a consciousness of its own dependence on an unreflective life which is its initial situation, unchanging, given once and for all.³⁸

There several are responses to counter or to further problematize the question of philosophy. The dominant trend in academic philosophy is to understand philosophy as a discipline which analyzes the presupposition of both scientific and commonsensical knowledge. A query becomes philosophical when it analyzes the presuppositions of our knowledge and experience. As John Lange puts it,

*Q is a philosophical question if and only if it is a question of analyzing presuppositions*³⁹.

According to KCB philosophy is not a discipline which organizes the presuppositions of scientific knowledge. To understand KCB's conception of philosophy we have to look into his theory of knowledge.

Philosophy like science is also an expression of theoretic understanding that can be communicated systematically. But unlike science it is not concerned with facts. As a species of theoretic consciousness it involves a believed content, because "to speak is to formulate a belief".⁴⁰ Among the four grades of theoretic consciousness, apart from empirical thought all other forms of thought belong to philosophy which are thought only in a 'symbolic' sense. Contemplated in objective attitude philosophy deals with

³⁸ Merleau-Ponty, M, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Preface. pp. xiv, Delhi, Motilal Banarasidss Publishers Private Limited, translated by Colin Smith 1996.

³⁹ Lange, John. *The Cognitivity Paradox: An Inquiry Concerning the Claims of Philosophy*. p. 31, Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 1970.

⁴⁰Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra, 2008, op cit p. 463.

self-subsistence. Reality becomes the content of philosophical thought only in subjective or 'enjoying' attitude. It captured truth in transcendental attitude. In science its content is 'spoken of' but in philosophy the contents are only 'spoken'. In philosophy there is no information to convey. While doing philosophy we are not supposed to compile data in a systematic manner, where as in science our job is precisely that, that is why the facts are always 'spoken of'. The relation between speaking/ language and fact is contingent. Language is needed for dissemination of facts/information but their very being does not depend upon language/speaking. On the other hand, in case of philosophy the very intelligibility of its contents is necessarily dependent on the speech form. Thus Language and philosophy is intrinsically related. Philosophy is concerned with pure thought and the contents of the pure thought are indistinguishable from language. We cannot speak about pure thought as we do in case of facts. This peculiarity of pure thought renders it the alleged fictitious tag. Philosophy has often been disqualified as "disease of speech". Because the language we speak is not always equipped to talk about pure thought. That is why we feel *disease* while entering the domain of philosophy. The awareness that the tools we are using are going to *mislead* us should always be there. In philosophy speech becomes symbolic. In philosophy there is no difference between what is being spoken and how are they spoken.

Thoughts have generally been expressed through judgments. As literal thought, facts are being expressed through proper judgment. Consider the following sentence:

7) Grass is green.

Here, we are attributing a quality, greenness to an empirical substance grass. It is of subject-predicate form. The predicate is amplifying the subject by giving new information about the subject. In Kantian term it is a synthetic judgment, in KCB's language it is a judgment *proper*. The form of the judgment is 'A is thus related to B' or 'A is B' and it literally expresses a relational assertion. Through this judgment we are expressing a relation of identity between two distinct relatas. Here both the subject and the predicate and their relation are understood literally. All scientific assertion is of this form which is rational. But in case of philosophical judgments we have only

apparent judgments which have similar judgment form but are not judgment proper, providing no information. Consider the following:

8) The object is.

And,

9) I am.⁴¹

Here in both the judgments no fact has been expressed. The predicates here are not explicating the subject. Moreover, the subject here is presupposing the predicate. This is an apparent judgment of the form “the relation of A and B is”. In case of judgment proper the copula ‘is’ “expresses only the object attitude of the subject”⁴², that is an identity (between an empirical substance and its quality), but in case of apparent judgment the copula “means an objective content which is self-subsistent but not fact”⁴³. In case of 8) we are still retaining the objective attitude though we are not concerned here with facts. In case of 9) this attitude has been radically altered. Here we are not concerned with object, neither in terms of attitude nor in terms of content the subject ‘I’ is “subjectively enjoyed”⁴⁴. Here in case of 8) both the terms are literally understood as in case of 7), but the difference is that the combination of the subject and the predicate is not understood literally at all. This is because the subject can be intelligible only through the predicate (‘is’). In case of 9) only the subject term is literally understood. Here ‘am’ is the objective symbolization of the ‘I’ and the combination is also symbolic. Judgment 8) ‘expresses’ in symbolic sense the self-subsistence and the judgment 9) the reality. These two judgments are tautologous in nature. In Kantian term they are analytic. In 9) the subject ‘I’ is understood as positive. There is another type of judgment which all the components are understood as symbolic. Consider the following:

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 465.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 466.

10) The absolute self is⁴⁵.

Here, the above judgment is not understood literally. Though it contains a believed content, that is truth. All these contents of philosophical judgments are self-evident. They enjoy the status of being independent from the 'spoken belief' of an individual mind. That differentiates it from other forms of speech. The 'object', the 'I' and 'the absolute self' are self-evident. Philosophy is an elaboration of these self-evident contents. The way philosophy elaborates these contents is also self-evident, that is, the beliefs of the individual does not play any determinant role here. Both the subject and the predicate are self-evident. As he said,

Philosophy is such self-evident elaboration of the self-evident and not the body of judgments.⁴⁶

According to KCB there are three types of philosophy based on the three types of contents. Philosophy of objects deals with the self-subsistent, philosophy of the spirit which is concerned with reality contemplated in enjoying attitude, and the philosophy of truth which is neither objective nor subjective. We are going to discuss them accordingly.

Philosophy of object and science both deal with object. In science objects are seen only as facts which can be perceived at least in principle. Whereas in philosophy of object it has been contemplated as self-subsistent. In science the content is actually known and in case of philosophy it is *believed* to be known. In philosophy the object has been approached from the point of view of the subject, the knowing consciousness. Without the reference to the subject the contents of philosophy are not intelligible. In contrast, the knower, the subject in science is a passive spectator. As Rasbihari Das said, "The subject of scientific knowledge is a ghostly spectator, who is not visible at all,...Whereas the subject in philosophy is the dominant partner in the game. And so, while science is the same for all, philosophy is different for different

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 465. [the subject is here; 8), 9), 10) believed as a self-evident elaboration of the predicate that is already believed to be self-evident]

individuals and no one is any the worse for it.”⁴⁷ Here by ‘subject’, KCB meant a ‘speaking function’ which indulges itself in symbolification. As he said,

Philosophy deals with the object that is intelligible only in reference to the subject. By ‘subject’ is meant the individual subject or *I* which is understood in the theoretic consciousness as the speaking function that is symbolized by itself as spoken⁴⁸.

The commonality it shares with science is ‘objectivity’. Objectivity by itself is not a fact. It is the form of how we speak about the fact and the self-subsistent. Thus it has only contingent relation with the fact. It is the circumstances of understanding of the object. Science deals with empirical objects that can be perceived, or be imagined to be perceived. There are objects which are non empirical, formal in nature. There are disciplines like Logic and Metaphysics which deals with pure, formal objects. Logic studies the form of the spoken fact as *form*. In Metaphysics this form has been studied as a pure object. The concept of object as logical form or self-subsistence can not be reached through empirical generalization. It has been understood in contrast with the subject. The object is that which the subject is not. It is the symbol of the subject. The ‘am’ of 9) symbolizes the ‘I’ (see above). Object depends on the subject for meaning; it has no meaning for itself. The awareness of object as self-subsistence is prior to the understanding of fact as object of scientific enquiry. In this sense self-subsistence precedes fact. In philosophy of object the object is intuited simply as object with its necessary connection with ‘speaking function’ which is the ‘final form of subjectivity’. As he said, “the speaking function is the final form of individual subjectivity and even the pure form of spiritual thought implies it.”⁴⁹ KCB in his monograph “Subject as Freedom” has spoken about three grades of subjectivity such as, bodily subjectivity, psychic subjectivity, and spiritual subjectivity. Spiritual subjectivity is the highest kind of subjectivity. Bodily subjectivity is the awareness of the self as *embodied*. The body as felt acquires subjectivity. The objectivity of other objects is determined by the spatial position of the body, they are relative to it. To the percipient his/her body appears as non-spatial. To him his body is not an object among objects. But one cannot totally nullify the thing-ness of his body. “To the

⁴⁷ Das, Rasbihari, ‘What is Philosophy?’, in S.P. Dubey edited *Facets of Recent Indian Philosophy*. Vol.2. (General Editor, R. Balasubramanian), Indian Council of Philosophical Research, pp.6, 1996.

⁴⁸ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra, 2008, p. 472.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 468.

percipient, his body is an object, an object situated in space relatively to some other percipient's body as imagined."⁵⁰ One cannot perceive one's own body as object; it is only through other's perception or the gaze that we become aware of our body as object. This is why the presence of other person limits my subjectivity. Through his/her gaze I am thingified. (That is why Sartre considers others as hell). On the one hand as the body the percipient is outside the world, distinct from it on the other hand as an object of perception of other percipient he is in the world. He/she is as an embodied self included in the world as 'privileged object'. As he said,

The percipient as in his body or as his body is, in his sense, dissociated from the external world, being what his perceived world is distinct from. At the same time he cannot help imagining himself as included in the world though it may be as a privileged object⁵¹.

This awareness of uniqueness and singularity of one's body cannot be known or believed to be known wholly through objectivistic mode. This subjectivity is not mere fact. In spite of being sensuous the awareness of the body as subject is out the reach of the sense-perception. Body as felt cannot be distinguished from the body as perceived but the vice-versa is untrue. The relation between these two conceptions of body is asymmetrical. *Felt* body is detached from the world this feeling of detachment from the objective world is the feeling of freedom "and the first hint of this freedom is reached in the feeling of the body"⁵². This first feeling of freedom is the base of higher grades of freedom. That is why in KCB's philosophy the conception of the subject has been formulated as freedom.

Psychic subjectivity is the higher grade of subjectivity. When an object is known, felt or perceived, there is also an awareness of feltness, knownness. This awareness is called psychic subjectivity. In the psychic subjectivity there are four stages such as; i) image, ii) idea-image, iii) pictorial idea, iv) non-pictorial idea. i) The image appears as something substantially different from object. Psychic facts includes as we have discussed already images and thoughts, but KCB says that this cannot be subjectivity proper. First, because the psychic facts somehow retain their relation with the object and secondly, it is absurd to identify the subject as expressed in the spoken word 'I'

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.412.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid, p. 373.

with thoughts and images. Subjectivity therefore involves an awareness of the distinction of the subject from psychic facts. The image neither has space position nor time –position. Sometimes it appears as ghostly objects. Its awareness is bound up with perception. ii) here the idea is not distinguished from image. iii) Here the idea is able to disassociate itself from the image. At this stage it is called pictorial thought. iv) Here thoughts become non-pictorial. It has no image. “These grades of image and thought are the grades of presentation which is explicitly felt to be disassociated from the object”⁵³. But these stages are still not the proper/ pure subjectivity. The next stage is feeling. Feeling has an advantage over images and thoughts. It is completely free from the meaning content. That is it has no connection to the object referred. But according to KCB subjectivity must transcend this feeling-awareness also. This at its face value may look strange because here consciousness had already transcended from all the connections to object. According to KCB the awareness of ‘unmeaning’, still retains. We have to transcend it also.

The philosophy of the object as a study of the object as, self-subsistence is the assertion of the insufficiency of the sciences as human endeavor. Philosophy does not study the objects as facts of the nature; it emphasizes the subjective experiences of the things in the world in objective attitude. It presupposes “that the concepts of matter, life, and mind must have their counterparts in certain subjective experiences and derive all their meanings from those experiences.”⁵⁴ The philosophical judgments do not have meaning in the sense scientific judgments have. Philosophical sentences are non-referential. They signify something about which we do not have literal information. Errors of philosophy arise when a distinction is not made between ‘objectivity’ and ‘existence’ or between ‘self-subsistence’ and ‘factual’. Science and philosophy are distinct pursuits. Science, even in theory is always oriented toward usability. Science presupposes the usability of objects. Philosophy questions this utilitarian attitude of science by contemplating it as such. It is a mistake to assume that by piecing together the specific laws of science and by adapting its methods and tools we can construct a world view. This is the task of philosophy not science and philosophy can perform the task without even taking in cognizance the scientific

⁵³ Ibid, p. xxxix.

⁵⁴ Malkani, G.R. “Some Points in K.C. Bhattacharya’s Concept of Philosophy”. *Philosophical Quarterly*. July 1950. pp. 50.

methodology. In this case science has been confused with science. There is another trend of thought which propagate that the task of philosophy to organize the postulates of science. It is the task of science itself not the task of philosophy. In both the cases the confusion arises because the important difference between fact and self-subsistence has been forgotten.

According to KCB metaphysics is the philosophy of object, and there is no metaphysics of self. This is because metaphysics “elaborates the concept of the object in reference to the subject”⁵⁵. Subject itself never comes under its purview. Subject /spirit lies beyond the scope of metaphysics. Metaphysics through its symbolic language symbolizes the ‘spiritual experience’ of the subject. These experiences derive their value from those experiences. Beliefs in metaphysics are not fruits of inference. The deductive systems that have been employed in metaphysics are termed as ‘make-belief’ by KCB. There is a definite role of reasoning in metaphysics. It is only the “the systematic exposition of symbolic concepts, concepts that are implicitly taken as symbol of contents that are enjoyingly believed.”⁵⁶

Facts and self-subsistence both are spoken literally, but, where as facts have been understood literally the self-subsistence is not. The common thread between fact and self-subsistence is the ‘speech-created form’. There arises a dualism when this form has been applied to communicate facts. In *fact*, there is a double element, meant and believed. The believed is beyond the perception. So fact has both a meant content and a believed content which is beyond the meant. But in case of self-subsistence the dualism collapses. Here the meant and the believed are coincidental. These “unavoidable forms of speech are constitutive of its meaning”. Metaphysics deals with this self-subsistence and it defines itself in logic. Logic presupposes metaphysics because logical disputes are metaphysical. Each metaphysical system has its own distinctive logic. According to KCB,

Logic presents a system of speech-created forms of meaning. There may be alternative systems, for logic presupposes metaphysics which presents alternative theories. The fundamental disputes in logic are unavowed metaphysical disputes. Apart from the question of accidental consistency within a logical system, whether one logical system is better than another is

⁵⁵ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra, 2008, op cit p.469.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 474.

settled not by logic but by metaphysic. Metaphysical disputes are however, is not settled by logic, for apparently every metaphysical system has its distinctive logic⁵⁷.

KCB was doing his philosophy in the backdrop of Kantian idealism. According to Kant the self is thinkable but not knowable. KCB's position is diametrically opposite of Kant. He says the self is knowable though not thinkable. In Kant's philosophy thinking is the wider term than knowing. Whereas in KCB's philosophy it is knowing that has wider scope than thinking. As he said at the very beginning of his essay "Concept of Philosophy",

Kant holds that that the self is a necessity of thought and is the object of moral faith, but it is not itself knowable. My position [KCB's], on the one hand, is that the self is unthinkable and on the other that while actually it is not known and is only object of faith, though not necessarily of moral faith, we have to admit the possibility of knowing it without *thinking*, there being a demand , alternative with other spiritual demands, to realize such knowledge.⁵⁸

In KCB's philosophy thinking is limited to the sphere of empirical world. To him empirical thought is the thinking in the proper sense. In philosophy thinking becomes symbolic or no thinking at all. But he never denied the epistemic status of philosophical content. According to him we can know the self-subsistence, the self and the truth, though we cannot think them like we think about facts. KCB has used the term 'knowledge' both in case of scientific as well as philosophical enterprise. In KCB's philosophy 'knowing' and 'speaking' are two co-extensive terms. KCB has used the term 'knowledge' both in narrow and wide sense. If we opt for the first one then there is no contradiction between him and Kant. But he is certainly not using the term in the narrow sense alone. He has begun his essay by directly criticizing Kant. So from this it has become evident that to KCB knowledge has a wider scope, it is not limited to the sphere of scientific enquiry alone. Thinking is only a kind of knowing, it cannot exhaust the knowing. Contemplation is another form of knowledge in the sphere of philosophy. But he is also saying that scientific knowledge is the actual knowledge. Here he is clearly privileging scientific knowledge over other forms of knowledge. As he "What applies to the self with necessary alterations to other metaphysical entities. Metaphysics, or more generally, philosophy including logic

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 464.

and epistemology, is not only not actual knowledge, but it is not even literal thought; and yet its contents are contemplated as true in the faith that it is only by such contemplation that the absolute can be known.”⁵⁹ To understand KCB’s position and his critique of Kant it is indispensable to look at his concept of knowledge. In science and in philosophy of object the content of knowledge has been approached from objective attitude. But in KCB it is not the whole story. He also talked about the ‘cultivation’ of subjective attitude and the ‘interpretation of objects from the subjective attitude’⁶⁰. He did not stop here; according to him knowledge attained through the subjective attitude is more authentic.

According to Kant, knowledge is an objective perception. Knowledge has two aspects, such as, intuition and concept. Concepts refer to object through the mediation of common features. Concepts are of two kinds pure and empirical. The pure concepts having their origin in understanding alone is called notion. The pure concept that transcends the possibility of the experience is called idea.⁶¹ These are the arsenal of cognitive enterprise, through this means alone knowledge could proceed. There is no other way of knowing. Remaining within this framework there is no scope for knowledge of the self. There is neither empirical nor pure concept could possibly formed about the self. Because “to *know* an object I must be able to prove its possibility, either from its actuality as attested by experience, or *a priori* by means of reason, but I can *think* whatever I please, provided only that I do not contradict myself, that is, provided my concept is a possible thought.”⁶² From this theoretical position Kant is saying that self is only thinkable but not knowable. He restricts knowledge to the empirical world and to Hume called ‘relation of ideas’ or pure concepts that understanding generated from itself. Self does not fall in any category. For Kant,

Thought is the wider and more comprehensive concept. For him
knowledge is the result of the relating our a priori, subject immanent

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. xxix.

⁶¹ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith. New York. Macmillan. 1968. p.314

⁶² Ibid, p. 27.

forms of sensuous intuition plus the equally a priori forms of thinking, i.e, the categories, to a given thing which, subsumed under these *a priori* forms takes the ontological status of an object. This means that the so-called thing as such, thought of as unrelated to a knowing subject, is a mere thought without content, thinkable but not knowable; thinkable it is in analogy to the interrelation of objects as appearances within the mind, and in this sense even the transcendent becomes symbolically close. That is to say, knowing without thinking makes no sense is nonsense...⁶³

Philosophy as a theoretic consciousness involves believe in something as known. Philosophy of object believes in self-subsistence, philosophy of spirit believes in reality or self, philosophy truth believes in truth as known. In philosophy though there is no actual/factual knowledge still there is always a possibility of knowing its contents. That is why to KCB the self is knowable though it is not always the case that it is known, but knowledge of the self is a permanent possibility. We can only know it through contemplation in enjoying, subjective attitude. Thus we know them without thinking, because thinking is the awareness of the difference of the knower and the known. It involves 'presentation' in objective attitude. Thinking is always literal. Literal thoughts are always expressed in literal judgments. In literal judgments the predicate exemplifies the subjects by attributing some quality to it. That is why it is not possible to know self through literal thought. It is also not possible while keeping the objective attitude, because here there is nothing to know other than ourselves. Language here has been used in symbolic sense as the indication to the unspeakable or as simple 'spoken' and not 'spoken of'. KCB consider self-knowledge as the higher grade of thought. Here he is departing from agnosticism of Kant.

Section - C: Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's view on Philosophy of Spirit/Spiritualism.

No metaphysical concept is intelligible without reference to the subject or spirit which itself goes beyond metaphysics. The characteristic abstractions of metaphysics which are supposed on the one hand to be an 'extra high grade' and on the other to be only diseases of speech are really symbolic meanings which

⁶³ Herring, Herbert, 'Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's Concept of Philosophy', *Journal of Indian Philosophical Research*. Vol. X, No.1, p.3, 1992.

derive their whole value for belief from the spiritual experiences that they symbolizes⁶⁴.

Metaphysics always refers to the subject, the enjoying spirit while contemplating the self-subsistence; but metaphysics cannot capture the subject. Study of the subject is outside its scope. Metaphysics is incapable to distinguish between self-subsistence and real. This distinction is verified in the philosophy of spirit. The content of philosophy of spirit has not been understood as fact or self-subsistence; it is understood as 'speaking subjectivity', as 'I'. In case of philosophy of object we are still retaining the objective attitude, here we are dropping the objective attitude and entering in the realm of the subject, to which the self-subsistence always refers. In case of judgment 9) though the subject term is literally understood the predicate 'am' is only symbolizing the subject 'I' not explicating it. As he said, "in 'I am', *am* meaning self-subsistence being as understood in the objective attitude is the symbol of *I* as understood in the subjective attitude, as symbolised by an objectively contemplated meaning. Without such a symbolism, the subject would be enjoyed by not enjoyingly understood."⁶⁵ At this stage the subject is understood by itself *enjoyingly*. Here the influence of traditional Indian philosophy is evident. Enjoyment here has not been taken in ordinary sense, it is the delightful stage, and the kind of feeling one can have in *susupti* (deep dreamless sleep). The content of philosophy of spirit is reality which can only be *felt*. We cannot *think* it. By feeling KCB understands an awareness which is 'explicitly unobjective'. It is introspective in nature and distinct from the image. "The image as substantive some thing from which the object is distinct."⁶⁶ It is the first stage of spiritual subjectivity where the object and also what is known as object is further distanced. It is purely subjective because there is no reference to object "even in the way of dissociation from it"⁶⁷. The distinction between feeling and the content of feeling is only felt or symbolized but not known in the way we know the fact or even the self-subsistence. There is a detachment at this stage from the objective reference and meaning. This

⁶⁴ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra. 2008, p. 474.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 475.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. xxxviii.

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. xxxix.

consciousness of detachment is a positive consciousness. “It is the awareness of content as *unmeant*”⁶⁸. Here there is no will to persist with objectification. Because of this indifference to objectification, the understanding takes the form of not only unmeant but also unmeanable. Thus the content is ‘indescribable’. There are two stages of feeling. In first stage the freedom is attained from actual thought, in higher stage the freedom has been achieved from possible thought as well. There are also two ways through which the subject is aware of the unmeanable. The first stage we have feeling of feeling which is also a kind of meaning, at the latter stage we have mere knowledge without any attachment to the ‘felt being’.

The next stage of spiritual subjectivity is introspection. At this stage the enjoying consciousness looks back to itself. Feeling is the content of its reflection. Here a further detachment has been accomplished from the ‘felt being’. Here the self is identified with introspection and detached even from thinking. That is why self it is not thinkable in KCB’s philosophy. It is beyond meaning. The binary between meanable and unmeanable has been transcended. Self is here endowed with ‘meaning – function’ rather than meaning. As he said, “The word ‘I’ has a meaning – function but not a meaning. It is the expression of introspection or the I-function.”⁶⁹ To the speaker the I–function is an actual introspection but to the hearer it takes more subtle form of introspection. A form of ‘possible awareness’. Here KCB talks about ‘spiritual’ introspection which is different from ‘psychological’ introspection. Psychological introspection operates in the objective attitude whereas spiritual introspection is purely subjective. The content of introspection, feeling is a psychic fact which is distinct from mental fact. We can only introspect non-perceptuals. We do not have direct access in introspection to perceptual knowledge. The knowledge of perceptual knowledge can only be acquired through non-perceptual presentations. Spiritual introspection is “a process of abstracting from the object of knowledge its character of ‘relatedness to the subject’”⁷⁰. It is an enjoying understanding of the subject ‘I’. KCB says that the subject can best be expressed by the word ‘I’. ‘You’

⁶⁸ Ibid. P.475

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. xl.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. xxxiv.

and 'he' also denotes subjects but they are not unique as 'I'. The word 'he' can be used for the same person by a number of speakers. Likewise, when I address somebody as 'you', I become aware of him through his physical presence. If I am not aware of a body before me, I cannot address him as 'you'. In case of first person, 'I' the physical presence of other is not required as it is required in case of 'you'. The anonymity of 'he' is not there in case of the utterance of 'I'. Whenever one utters 'I' it uniquely denotes the speaker of the utterance. This is the unique feature of the indexical 'I'. It is both reflexive as well as referential. It designates by the very utterance of 'I', the speaker of the utterance. Here lies the uniqueness of KCB's theory of meaning. In his theory, "meanings are understood not merely as linguistic meaning, but also as correlates of appropriate modes of subjectivity"⁷¹. There are four theses in KCB's philosophy of language. 1. In KCB object is understood as meant content. 2. Meaning is public in nature; they must be shareable and communicable. It pervades a shared space between the speaker and the hearer. 3. "Meanings as entities emerge from images through ideas and finally in pure thought."⁷² 4. In this context the indexical I does not have any meaning, it only has a meaning-function. KCB's formulation that the expression 'I' has no meaning seems unusual at its face. Here by saying that 'I' has no meaning he is saying that in subject attitude the 'I' has not been contemplated as the object of the enjoying consciousness; it not only believing in 'I' but it is the 'I'. It is simply the speaking-function. It is not a meant-content. As Mohanty amplifies,

The function of speaking is the meaning function which the use of 'I' expresses, although it does not refer to an object (the alleged self) through a meaning. If it did so refer, then the self would be an object in accordance with thesis 1. (Object=meant content), being a meant content. However the self incarnated in 'I' is a functioning (speaking, introspecting) subject⁷³.

Indexical 'I' does not have a meaning like a proper name. When we understand the meaning of say, 'morning star'/'evening star', we grasp its meaning by referring to the planet Venus. In case of indexical we do not 'grasp' in similar fashion. Context

⁷¹ Mohanty, J.N., 'Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's Theory of Meaning', *Journal of Indian Philosophical Research*. Vol.X, No.1 (Special Issue on The Philosophy of K.C.Bhattacharyya), p.105, 1992.

⁷² Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra. *Studies in Philosophy*, 2008, p. xxxiv.

⁷³ Mohanty, J.N. 1992. Op cit, pp. 106.

plays a significant role in case of indexical. John Perry has handled this issue in his seminal essay “Indexicals and Demonstratives”⁷⁴. According to Perry indexicals like definite descriptions denotes, and like proper name they refer. Perry uses token-reflexive theory as propagated by Reichenbach (*Elements of Symbolic Logic*: 1947). According to this theory the meaning of ‘I’ is the same as ‘the person who utters this token’. As Perry formulates it,

If *u* is an utterance of “I”, the condition for designation of *u* is *being the speaker of u*.

Or,

u designates *x* iff *x* is the speaker of *u*⁷⁵.

KCB will not entertain this theorization. According to Perry indexicals refers to the person who is uttering the expression ‘I’ in a specific context. Perry is indicating to an embodied person limited by space and time. On the contrary KCB is indicating not to a merely embodied person, but to a pure subjectivity which cannot be referred to in usual sense because here the speaking of ‘I’ (rather speaking-I) and the speaker of ‘I’ is one and the same. According KCB to the subject contemplated in ‘enjoying consciousness’ is a speaking activity in first person; it could be in actuality or in an ideal situation. It “involves the explicit consciousness of *being* what is spoken.”⁷⁶ In “Knowledge and Truth” KCB also talks about epistemological introspection of Kantian type which is a type of spiritual introspection rather than a mere psychological one.

According to KCB this is yet not the subjectivity in proper sense. Even in this case the subject is expressed literally. We need to go beyond spiritual introspection to *grasp* the subject in its purest form. Subjectivity is inwardness as such. Any attempt to determine would lead to generalization, whereas, for KCB *Subject is singular*, a complete uniqueness. Introspection is inadequate to contemplate the subject as such. Complete disassociation has not been achieved as yet; it is only half-disassociated.

⁷⁴ Perry, John, ‘Indexical and Demonstratives’, In Robert Hale and Crispin Wright (eds.) *Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., pp. 586-612, 1997.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 597-8.

⁷⁶ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra, 2008, p. xxxiv.

For this reason KCB called introspection 'imaginary' not actual. "Actual introspection is unrealised knowledge because it is actually only self-evidencing to another and not self-evident to itself"⁷⁷. In introspection when the subject is expressed as 'I' even though symbolically, relation with the other as possible introspector "whose intuition of the latter is a possible intuition to the latter."⁷⁸ The awareness of another self as introspector indicate toward the necessity of "a spiritual discipline of realization of the self already implied by introspection".⁷⁹ Introspection is the awareness of subjective fact, this is called appropriative introspection. Beyond this appropriative stage of introspection there is another kind of introspection which unappropriative. It is not negation of the former stage; it builds upon the subjective experiences of the former stage. At this stage intelligibility of a silent self-enjoying 'I' is possible because "we are aware of certain subjective modes previously appropriated as utterly unappropriative and as appearing only as though they are distinct".⁸⁰

Through all these kinds of subjectivity there is a gradual progression toward freedom. KCB demonstrates this progression by analyzing the nature and grades of subjectivity itself. It is progressive because by superseding each step of subjectivity we reach the stage of subject as freedom. Human being is a living subject amidst the world of objects from which he always feels a distance and the journey to his pure subjectivity is a continuous differentiation from object. The first step is to assert one's bodily subjectivity. Body is not conceived as *perceived* but as *felt*. Subject on its way to the realization of freedom, negates the object and identifies itself to body as felt. Body can also be known as absent which is the capacity to acquire 'knowledge of absence'. Knowledge of absence can be acquired through imaginative perception or through conscious non-perception. We perceive the absence of an object which was there. The felt body is not totally distinguished from the perceived body. Through Knowledge of absence and non-perception we rise above the felt body. When we become conscious about the object which was there, this consciousness is not perceptual. In this case we

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. xl.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 380.

have become aware of something that is akin to image or thought, that is, akin to our psychic life. It is a transitional phase between felt body and the psychic facts. Psychic facts include image and thought. Image is a form of presentation, but it is not known as having spatio-temporal dimension. It is not completely distinct from object. Thought is completely distinct from the object and image; it dwells in the realm of universals and abstractions. After completely distinguished itself from the body it identifies itself with the psyche. But this is also not its final destination, it has to travel further. Image has a close connection with body, and thought maintains the distinction between 'content' and 'consciousness', and true subjectivity consists precisely in going beyond this binary. It is 'the content of its consciousness' and 'the consciousness of its content' at the same time. Thus, negating the psychic stage becomes necessary. The succeeding stage is the stage of spiritual subjectivity. Feeling is the first expression of spiritual subjectivity. In feeling the process of detachment from meaning/meant-content becomes complete. Here the distinction between awareness and its content get dissolved. There are two levels of feeling; at the first level the subject detaches itself from thought both actual and possible. This stage also has to be surpassed, because the detachment from the feeling itself has to be attained. This detachment is called feeling of feeling. At this stage the subject comes to know itself as feeling-self. At the stage of spiritual introspection the subject transcends even this state of feeling-self. Here the consciousness is aware of itself not as a content distinct from object but as the 'enjoying understanding of the subject as "I"'. It is not what is meant by the word 'I' not even believing in 'I', it is the 'I'. The "I-awareness" is the realization of the subjectivity proper. Here subject knows itself in enjoying attitude, it is pure knowledge. The introspective awareness is free from meaning-content and from felt content still it is not complete freedom because it still has the awareness of itself. For realization of complete freedom even this introspective subjectivity has to be surpassed. Self-transcendence is not an impossible task, in case of social awareness of other selves and in case of religious awareness of super/over-self, the individual does go beyond itself. For this reason KCB has talked about going beyond introspection. In introspection subject realizes itself as *free*. But for complete freedom this *subject as free* also has to be negated. This is the final stage of negation. After surpassing we reach the ultimate stage of subjectivity, the *subject as freedom*. This stage has no definite content. Here nothing remains to be negated. This is the realm of the indefinite, the absolute, the ultimate shelter (*ashray*) of the

subject. This is complete freedom and is transcendental. We neither have exact ideas nor can adopt any definite attitude of this stage. Even an enjoying consciousness is not possible. It is the absolute.

Beyond the stage of philosophy of the spirit lies the domain of the philosophy of truth. In this stage the 'I' is theoretically negated. This denial is possible because the absolute has already been believed. This theoretical negation is different from the negation of self that has been exercised in religion. The difference lies in the mode of denial. In religion the self has been negated in as enjoyed being, whereas here the mode of negation is theoretical. There is the theoretical consciousness of 'I am naught'. Though the belief in absolute is positive, the understanding of it is negative. We can speak it only symbolically. In religion the self though negated but spoken literally. "The positive character of absolute is expressible only by the negation of *I* (or more accurately 'what I am not'), and as such is not literally expressible at all."⁸¹ Through the judgment no. 10) what we are expressing is not reality but truth. Truth cannot be contemplated either in objective attitude or in subjective attitude. Thus it is transcendental. It cannot be enjoyed. It is extra-religious because in religion we abnegate self in enjoying consciousness. "Truth is believed and revealed as independent of it (speaking) as self-revealing, what is true being spoken as what the speaking *I* is not". Truth (as absolute) can only be distinguished from itself. Truth is not a necessity for absolute. Truth is not its essential characteristics. For this reason the self-distinction of absolute is not the self-identity. It is not the identity-in-difference of religious formulation. Absolute could be freedom or truth or value⁸². It is not necessary to form a trinity of these three features of absolute. In KCB's philosophy there is no unitary absolute, the trinity of these three aspects has been denied by KCB. As he said, "There is no sense in speaking of the absolute as the unity of the truth, freedom and value. It is each of them, these being only *spoken* separately but not *meant* either separate or as one."⁸³ Truth, freedom and value can co-habit as indeterminate togetherness. They are "mere distinction without any unity in

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 478.

⁸² "What truth is not and is yet positive is the absolute freedom beyond being (the absolute freedom of will) and what freedom is indeterminately either truth or freedom is absolute value." Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

the background”⁸⁴. The absolute transcends the enjoyed reality of religion. It is as truth is positive being, as freedom positive non-being and as value positive indetermination separately. KCB explicates the concept of Avaita Vedanta, Buddhism and Hegel. He says that, Avaita Vedanta has conceived absolute rigorously as truth, Buddhism has focused on the aspect of freedom, and Hegel has represented indetermination or identity. The self distinction of absolute remains unrecognized by spiritual consciousness, because spiritual consciousness is “simple and integral”. The three fold absolute is the prototype of the three subjective functions, knowing, willing and feeling. It is in transcendental consciousness this self-differentiation is known. These are not ‘pure acts of the subject. They can only be understood as unique subjective experiences, and derive their meaning from the ‘self-revealed absolutes’. As he said, “The absolutes reveal themselves and the *I* appears trinal only as their shadow or symbolism. As absolutes are not related into a unity, neither can their subjective shadows be said to be related. The simple *I* has no enjoyed elements or aspects to be related. Nor are the so-called functions intelligible as pure acts or interests *of the I*. they cannot be defined in subjective terms as they be taken as unique subjective experiences, being not presented as distinct to introspection at all. Their whole meaning is derived from the self-revealed absolutes.”⁸⁵ Though the three absolutes are not related to each into a unity still KCB says that the theory of truth “is the theory of the other two absolutes also”⁸⁶. At the same breath he is saying that each absolute is eligible to formulate primary theory of its own. This is possible because it has already been achieved at the lower grades. At the end KCB is saying that though there is no relation between these absolutes still there can be some kind of interrelation is possible among them. “The theory of truth is the theory of the other two absolutes also. At the same time it recognises the possibility of elaborating a primary theory of each of them in reference to the other absolutes. We have shadows of these primary theories in the lower grades of philosophy.”⁸⁷

KCB’s theory of alternative absolutes is an original contribution to philosophy. Generally absolute has been taken as almost synonymous with singularity both in

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

philosophical discussions and in folk belief. The consequences of this theorization of multiple absolutes are yet to be explored.

Conclusion

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. *Sapere Aude!* [dare to know] "Have courage to use your own understanding!"--that is the motto of enlightenment.¹

Modern philosophy is the philosophy that is attempting to answer the question raised so imprudently two centuries ago: *Was ist Aufklärung?*²

Modern Indian Philosophy is an Indian response to pre-modern (or pre-colonial) Indian philosophical schools and Western philosophical traditions. Modern Indian Philosophy not only marks the adoption and assimilation of European philosophical concepts, doctrines, and ways of thinking, but also means the reinterpretation of the indigenous concepts and ways of thinking in the light of what is assimilated. The term 'Modern Indian Philosophy' thus stands for the two way hermeneutical exercise of understanding the other (western philosophy) and of self-understanding (classical Indian philosophy). It is the strong presence of the other that reinforces the self-understanding. Unlike Europe modernity in India/East is colonial in nature. In Europe it is the succeeding stage of 'The Age of Enlightenment'/'The Age of Reason' both in terms of attitude and ethos. In case of India the relationship between the *darsana* and philosophy is not merely one of semantic equivalence. On the one hand the concept of *darsana* serves as a device for an appropriation of the western concept of philosophy as opposed to the concept of *avisksiki*; and on the other hand it is used for asserting the uniqueness of the Indian way of philosophizing in terms of an intuitive realization of the highest reality as opposed to the discursive spirit of western philosophy. Daya Krishna strongly argues against this dominant trend of translating 'philosophy' as '*darsana*'. As he said, "it is true that "the word 'philosophy' is not a

¹<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html> . What Is Enlightenment? Kant. (1784).

² Paul, Rabinow (Ed.). "What Is Enlightenment?". *The Foucault Reader*. New York. Pantheon Books. 1984. pp.32.

Sanskrit word”, but there is no reason to suppose there is no Sanskrit analogue of it in the Indian tradition. Surely, the term *aviksiki* comes as close to it as one may want it to be.”³ Generally Indian philosophy has been posed as other worldly and irrational, for emphasizing the experiential aspect of human cognition rather than rational deliberation. This picture of Indian philosophy is nurtured by colonialism and orientalism. Within the discourse of colonialism and orientalism the critical/ rational aspect of Indian philosophy has been systematically *overlooked*. Modern Indian philosophers were doing philosophy within this new context of colonialism and orientalism. By modern Indian Philosopher here we mean both the English educated professional Indian philosophers working as teachers of philosophy in western educational establishments and thinkers who are non-professionals but have greater presence in public/political sphere and in the text books on modern Indian philosophy; they were doing philosophy in their own peculiar way during late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Apart from these two genres of philosophers there are also others who were doing philosophy in the traditional fold without engaging themselves to the western scholarship. We are not concerned with them in this project). The common thread between them is the hermeneutical exercise to understand tradition and modernity for tracing their own professional and ideological identity. Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya belong to the former whereas Sri Aurobindo to the latter. Both of them from their respective vantage point responding to the need of the hour. Our task here to see the difference in their responses and how far it is relevant in today’s context.

Sri Aurobindo accepts the prevalent conception of science. He sees science in relation with other related concepts such as reason, matter and world views such as rationalism and materialism. It uncovers the forces of nature. To science everything is process and thus has certain procedural operating system. The task of science is to study the operations, the mechanism behind natural, physical phenomena. Scientific studies are unbiased. Science does not allow the emotions to take over reason. It is value neutral. The only value scientific judgments have is the truth value. Its stance is dispassionate, austere and positive as opposed to normative which enables it to keep the secure distance between the knower and the known. Without presupposing this

³ Krishna. Daya. *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective*. Delhi. Oxford University Press. 1991. pp. 42.

duality science cannot work. Doubting every pre-given statement is the hallmark of scientific endeavor. It is this skeptical method that distinguishes it from theology and metaphysics. There is nothing called sacred or profane to science, all are under the scrutiny of critical gaze. Science does not approach its subject matter in its entirety. It breaks the object of study for detailed analysis. This leads to compartmentalization which in turn produces fragmentation. This is the reason of its success in the realm of the physical and the natural. Reason is the guide of science. This faculty of human mind in its pure as well as practical form has given the tool to mankind to establish a positive relation with nature, society and truth. In science the motive behind knowing is always to master the natural forces. Science takes nothing for granted except perhaps the very possibility of scientific knowledge. Reason has displaced the previous centers of meaning and authority such as god , church, thus has made the space open for the individuals to become his/her own authority, this is precisely what Kant meant by proposing to be mature and enlightened. The base of everything is matter. Reason maneuvers the passion to reasonable direction. It settles the tension between the hedonistic pleasures and the ethical, moral conduct. It also regulates its own movements by fixing certain rules on itself. It keeps vigil on the workings of mind. It is reflexive. It keeps an eye on itself. It evaluates the past findings and the mistakes have been made earlier. It can transcend beyond senses. It can envisage possibilities that enables it to go beyond from here and now. This is why it has superiority over the lesser faculties like senses.

Science, reason is a dispassionate enquiry that is search for truth for its own sake without any 'ulterior motive,' that is without explicit orientation toward practice and immediate gain, the pure science. Here it seems that Aurobindo is hinting at theoretical part of science, may be he was thinking of mathematics but nowhere there is any clear indication that he is also considering mathematics and allied disciplines as his point of reference. In his writing on science he is majorly concerned with physical and life sciences, physics and biology in particular. However science (reason) is also practical i.e., practice oriented with the desire to utilize the natural and physical resources to utilitarian. There is no disjunction between the pure and applied aspect of science, they are interlinked. Sri Aurobindo on the one hand praises sciences for its exploration of the natural world, simultaneously on the other despises it for its orientation toward practice. Reason also plays its role in philosophy. It has been used

by various philosophers and philosophical schools against each other as also in case of politics and aesthetics. It can only make 'synthetic harmony' not the real harmony which will settle the quarrel once and for all. Everybody supposes that his/her reason is the best. This where the strength and weakness of reason lies. Science has not been considered totally worthless pursuit. Through the use of reason only humankind can move forward to the final truth. He emphasizes the contemplative, pure, formal aspect of reason and science. Scientists and philosophers should follow the Poets and the artists whose enterprise is entirely formal. While applying itself science loses its purity of forms and impartiality, it becomes handmaiden to something other than itself, in most cases political motivation and commercial impulses. Reason does not have the power to protect itself against such kind of motivations. It is an imperfect light, a makeshift governor of human life. That is why it cannot bring peace and harmony. Thus a harmonious society cannot be built solely on rational basis. We have to look beyond the rational to its source that is spiritual and suprarational. The movement is essential for human progress which is both 'self-harmonising' and 'self-illuminating'. As he said,

To get at this as a spiritual presence is the aim of religion, to grow into harmony with its eternal nature of right, love, strength and purity is the aim of ethics, to enjoy and mould ourselves into the harmony of its eternal beauty and delight is the aim and consummation of our aesthetic need and nature, to know and to be according to its eternal principles of truth is the end of science and philosophy and of all our insistent drive towards knowledge⁴.

Materialism is the world view of science. Sri Aurobindo never rejected science like many idealists. Materialism enabled science to its adventures in discovering nature. Physical sciences have to be materialist at least to start with, because it studied the matter. But the discrepancy happens when the same mechanistic approach has been adopted while studying human mind. For this reason Aurobindo has criticized western psychology. It modeled on physiology which studies the external features of human behavior. The mechanistic view which is the pathfinder in the realm of the matter is misleading while it has been applied to the study human psyche. As he said,

⁴ Ibid. pp. 353.

MODERN Science, obsessed with the greatness of its physical discoveries and the idea of the sole existence of Matter, has long attempted to base upon physical data even its study of Soul and Mind and of those workings of Nature in man and animal in which a knowledge of psychology is as important as any of the physical sciences. Its very psychology founded itself upon physiology and the scrutiny of the brain and nervous system⁵.

Sri Aurobindo acknowledges the role materialism has played in human progress. It is aggressive in its thinking. No way the period of materialism in human history could be tagged as a degenerated phase of human civilization. It is the era of creativity. Materialistic science has been praised for its patience of research and accuracy of methods. According to Aurobindo this methodology has its own ontological status it is not necessarily materialistic. It can be applied while studying human reality [difference with KCB], but we need to strip it off from materialistic moorings. Materialism cannot be overthrown in science because many scientists are still adherers of it. For Aurobindo the material world is the base of spirit [difference with samkara]. Spirit is the universal truth from which materialism emerges. Science is justifiably ignored the other faculties of mind such as imagination and intuition at the beginning. Aurobindo holds that the objective world is not dependent on individual mind though it is true to know the external reality human mind is necessary. The materialistic world view enables us to the external reality. Matter is the inert consciousness, unconscious and gross. We perceive it as matter, as inert because of the dualistic, dividing nature of human reason. It is the founding stage of world creation. Evolution starts from it. That is why in upanisad it has been called annam, the seed of creation, the food to subsist the whole edifice of cosmic involution. It is the Brahman.

Despite such merits of materialism it cannot help us to attain the ultimate truth. Its overemphasis on matter which not the ultimate truth. It is blind in seeing the ultimate truth. That is why as an idealist he prefers spiritualism as a true philosophy, because matter is also the function of consciousness, from which everything germinates.

⁵ Aurobindo, Sri. "The Cycle of Society". *Social And Political Thought*. Vol 15. Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry . 1972. pp 1.

According to Sri Aurobindo philosophy is a synthetic investigation. It synthesizes the various sciences. It establishes relation between facts and the ultimate reality. Philosophy is not to him a logico-semantic analysis. It realizes the spiritual experiences. He criticizes both realism and idealism for their one-sidedness; he also things that at the final analysis both are complementary. Reality in its essence is beyond subject-object dichotomy. Like religion and science it is also a construction. As far it is governed by reason it and the divide mind it cannot lead us to the right path. But the true philosophy always preaches harmony. It is purifier of reason. He accepts the Aristotelian direction that metaphysics is the study of the first principles of human existence. That is why he praises the ancient Greek philosophy among the modern thinkers he only prefers Nietzsche. Nietzsche according him brought back the dynamicity in western philosophy; though criticizes Nietzsche for his denial of dialectical and metaphysical aspect of philosophy. He privileges Indian philosophy for its emphasis on the practical and existential crisis of human life rather than the metaphysical and logical niceties of modern western type. This is also the reason why in India religion and philosophy is so close to each other. Thus have stronger presence among the people of the land. Without religion philosophy is mere cold thinking, lifeless and ineffective. Religion also needs philosophy's support to keep itself away from the superstition. In India philosophy is more spiritualist than its western counterpart. Thus closer to the Truth.

Spirit is the highest reality in Aurobindo's philosophy. It can only be experienced there is no other means of knowing it. It is not reachable through reason, science or the dualistic philosophies. It is an integral experience of Sacchidananda, the trinity of Absolute Existence – Consciousness – Bliss. It is infinite and every thing else is his transformation (*parinam*). It is the creative principle of the entire universe. Both animate and inanimate things are manifestation of Sacchidananda Brahman. It is the Absolute and the Supreme Being. In animate objects consciousness remains dormant; human being is the greatest manifestation of Brahman. He is Dasein. Thus have access to know the supreme. Aurobindo believe in evolution. The evolution from ameba to human being is the biological evolution which the essential part of greater , cosmic evolution; from human spiritual evolution begins till it attains the Absolute. It is process from becoming human to superman. The transformation takes place from matter to life , from life to mind, these three forms the lower hemisphere of the cycle

of evolution. Evolution from mind to the spirit forms the higher hemisphere. Mind cannot directly attain the supreme it has to pass through several intermediary stages because it operates with reason. The preceding stages are Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuitive Mind; the Over mind is stage which creates the veil of maya.” Overmind is the proper link between mind and Supermind. It is not limited by individual consciousness; its consciousness is cosmic in nature. It is capable of reflecting the universal light. But it lacks the integral vision and knowledge. Its cognition is global therefore can hold the differences and contradictions together. In spite of being global in cognition Over mind cannot comprehend the Absolute. It only can view the powers of the Absolute in separation. It deals with separate possibilities, and so can make every possibility a separate existence complete in itself. It produces separative knowledge. It projects the consciousness and the materiality as two essentially opposite and irreconcilable principles of reality. Thus from the involutionary perspective it is also the stage of emergence of Ignorance and the Supermind. It is intermediary between the Absolute and the world. It is the Isvara, Creator, and the Real-Idea. Super mind is the final stage it is the Brahman in activity. It is the dynamic pole of Brahman, Brahman- Sakti. The influence of saiva –sakta cult is evident in this formulation of dynamic brahman as *isvara (mahesvara)*. The supermind also has the similarity with *citi-sakti* and the *sakshin* of *avaita* and *tantra*. There is a difference between these two concepts of *sakshin*, the witness consciousness. In *avaita Vedanta sakshin*⁶ has been visualized in purely in terms of cognitive illumination, on the other hand in *tantra* it is the power, the *citi/ svatantra*. Aurobindo combines both the feature in his concept of supermind. In its static state it is like the *purusa* of *samkhya*. The reverse process of evolution is involution, the process through which the Divine, the Absolute descend through supermind in the world of mind, matter and life. Manoranjan Basu in his essay “Sri Aurobindo on Integral Consciousness” has compared this movement of the supreme with the *tirdhona sakti* of saiva-sakta philosophy. Further he is in the essay drawing our attention to the resonances with the five powers of creation, maintenance, dissolution, self-concealment, grace. The supermind has been compared with *tantric sad-vidya* and *mind with avidya*. It is immediate preceding stage of life and matter. In matter in

⁶. Basu, Manoranjan. “Sri Aurobindo on Integral Consciousness”. In *Freedom, Transcendence And Reality Essays in memory of Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya*. Edited by, Pradip Kumar Dutta. Indian Council of Philosophical Research in collaboration with Matilal Benerasidass. Delhi. 1988..

involution is complete. It is totally discrete compartmentalized in innumerable parts. The whole circle is also called the 'Seven Fold Chord of Being'. Aurobindo's theory of evolution has strong resonance with samkhya theory of evolution. Metaphysically, Samkhya maintains a radical duality between spirit/consciousness (Purusha) and matter (Prakrti).

Aurobindo has criticized samkara's conception of static Brahma for this lack of dynamism. He has reframed the Vedantic non-dual ontology in terms of living spirit, a dynamic triune process of "self-diffusion" and "self-absorption," in his terminology, "involution-evolution" of Existence- Consciousness Force-Bliss Absolute. This dynamic involutinal-evolutional structure of Spirit is philosophically grounded upon the category of "Supermind," or the Creatrix, the Real-Idea (a Hegelian term) or Isvara, the World Creator. The Supermind represents this ecstatic Sakti dimension of Brahman, and it is the Saccidananda itself in its dynamic creative aspect. In the formulation of absolute as living spirit is a Hegelian influence on Aurobindo. According to Hegel Spirit is the dynamic Absolute and universal consciousness which goes through a three fold process of self-realization. This journey of the spirit is cyclical, a cycle of "separation and return" or "self-differentiation and self-reconciliation". From theological point of view he has characterized the spirit as God. God, Hegel writes: "God as living Spirit distinguishes Himself from Himself... and in this Other remains identical with Himself."⁷ Like Aurobindo Hegel also criticized the conceptualization of Jewish philosopher Benedict Spinoza for positing Absolute as static. As living spirit the absolute is always active. It proceeds through the triadic process of passing over to the otherness. There are three moments of the absolute, as Hegel said, "These moments are: eternal Being in and with itself, the form of Universality; the form of manifestation or appearance, that of particularization, Being for another; the form of the return from appearance"⁸. the first moment is the Idea, this is state prior to creation, then this self-thinking pure thought projects itself outward and creates the universe of unconscious intelligence that is the nature, the third moment is the moment return of the voyage of creation which called by spirit. The Absolute projects itself outward to itself by itself. Thus in

⁷ Hegel, G. W. F. , *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. by E. B. Speirs and J. Sanderson (New York: Humanities Press) Vol. 3, p. 69

⁸ *Ibid.* pp.2

Hegelian scheme creation is not arbitrary. The process of the self-realization of the absolute is real and concrete. The difference is that in Hegel this process of self-realization is a rational intellection a logical-historical movement, in Aurobindo it is the ecstatic dance of *Siva*, and Blissful delight.

The Absolute Spirit has three aspects. Pure existence Sat, Consciousness-Force Chit, Bliss Ananda. The Absolute spirit is beyond space and time. It is even out of reach of the categories of surface mind. It is truly boundless. It is universal and impersonal. Though in normal circumstances we cannot have a proper knowledge of this supreme stage yet we can have glimpses of it in our universal knowledge, when we for the time being able to transcend ourselves from here and now. In this vain science can also contribute through its theoretical knowledge, can indicate though very roughly the ascent toward the supreme Gnosis. The Absolute is beyond the dichotomy of self and other. It transcends all terms of intellection. It is Infinite, Indefinable. It cannot be summed up in any quantity or quality. It is unknowable through rational deliberation. It can only be experienced. "It is both static and dynamic Brahman.we says that the pure existence is our Absolute and in itself unknowable by our thought although we can go back to it in a supreme Identity that transcends the term of knowledge. The movement, on the contrary is the field of the relative and yet by the very definition of the relative all things in the movement contain, are contained in and are the Absolute". According to Sri Aurobindo the Absolute is neither being nor becoming, because these terms are only the 'mental representation' of the Absolute. But the Absolute can also be experienced as boundless energy. From this perspective It is also a Force, a Conscious-Force.⁹ Force is inherent in Existence, it is not an accidental quality of Existence. They are inseparably related to each other. The Force of Existence by its very nature passes through the alternative modes of self-concentration (rest) and self-diffusion (motion). The Consciousness-Force is conceived as one comprehensive principle comprehending the material, the vital, the mental and also the supramental. That is why it is called Chit. Chit is the root principle of creation. This principle which is behind the world process has been called The Mother, The Divine Sakti; who creates and sustains the universe. The Absolute is also "infinite bliss, the infinite delight of

⁹ Consciousness by nature is Force and Force by nature is Conscious.

the creative play of the force". This is the cause of creation. Brahman creates the world for sheer delight of creation. "It is Ananda [Delight] out of which this world is born and it is Ananda that is its goal and consummation." Creation is the ecstatic dance of Siva, the Nataraj. "Absolute of conscious Existence is illimitable bliss of conscious existence; the two are only different phrases for the same thing." This ineffable and pure joy of creation is not desire. Because desire comes from the lack, incompleteness. Since the Absolute is all perfect there is no lack in Him. Pain only comes where there is desire. Desire is caused by the Ignorance the separative knowledge of subject and object. In the Absolute thus there is no scope for pain only pure delight exists there.

The Absolute is a composite whole. Sri Aurobindo seems to derive this conception of composite whole from Samkhya theory of causality. According to which cause and effect are of same nature. The effect remains hidden or implicit in the cause. For example, a wooden sculpture was already there in the wood but in implicit form. The clay-pot remains clay even after it becomes a clay-pot. This theory is known as *sat-karya-vada*. Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta are the schools of Indian philosophy who believe in this view. This theory is contrary to *asat-karya-vada* or *arambhavada*, according to which the effect is a new beginning (*arambha*).

The achievement of Sri Aurobindo "At the philosophical level Sri Aurobindo claimed to have reconciled the divergent trends of Indian ascetic cosmic transcendental idealism and Western secularistic materialism." He gave a new dynamism to the traditional Indian philosophy. In his philosophy the engagement with both the indigenous knowledge system and western philosophies is evident. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is a philosophy of integration. As Haridas Chaudhuri says while evaluating Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

I characterize Sri Aurobindo's philosophy as integralism insofar as it is a self-coherent articulation of the integral experience of reality. His philosophy is not exclusively based upon any particular province of human experience, such as moral experience or artistic experience or religious experience or experience connected either with natural science in general or with any particular field of scientific investigation. Sri Aurobindo maintains that a sound and adequate philosophy should be based upon an integrated vision of the nature of existence. Such an integrated vision can be attained, not through mere critical reflection upon the plurality of fragmentary human

experiences, but by outgrowing all partial experiences through a total mobilization of all the resources of human personality.

According to KCB science is an expression of theoretic consciousness which is a formulation of belief. Without belief there is no knowledge. However, it is also true that mere belief is not knowledge. In other words is an “understanding of a speakable.” We cannot convey anything without believing in it. (Telling a lie is an exception. Even in this case the expression “believe me” always has been adjuncted with the proposition). Science is literal and empirical thought. Scientific thought is expressed in proper judgments which have the form “A is thus related to B”. In case of literal judgments the subject, the predicate and the relation between these two terms is also literally understood. Scientific judgment has only contingent relation to its spoken form. According to KCB science is actual knowledge that is an awareness of difference between the subject and the object of awareness. Facts are the content of scientific thought ventured in objective attitude. Facts are of two types physical and psychic. Psychic facts have independent existence from introspection. Facts could be existents and non-existents, like moral imperatives. Facts are objective though they have to be understood in connection with the believer. KCB here is denying the possibility of an impersonal analysis of facts; this is the peculiar nature of them. He is also saying that facts are not dependent on the whim of individual mind. Psychic facts are not pure mental entity in KCB’s philosophy. Through known ness it is related to introspection. It is intuitive. Scientific knowledge is certain, valid and informative thus actual knowledge. Here KCB is clearly privileging science over other forms of knowledge. Knowledge is a symbolic activity. It is a free and positive activity of the knowing subject who is keeping distance with object of knowledge though ultimately he has kept the self-knowledge and the knowledge of truth at the higher shelf. Scientific knowledge is an organized body of judgment as he said,

Science is the organisation of knowledge as distinct from mere thought or fancy; and this science is frankly materialistic. It may not to committed to a denial of the independence of mind but it confesses that it knows nothing of this independent mind. Yet it admits the fact of error, illusion etc. within its knowledge of matter¹⁰.

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 31

There are perceptual and non-perceptual knowledge. Scientific knowledge even in its theory is always oriented towards serving practical purposes. Scientific knowledge is always practice oriented thus cannot avoid utilitarian outlook. It is based on the illusion of identifying the body with the self and vice versa¹¹. In this sense all scientific knowledge is illusory. This seems paradoxical. On the one hand KCB is privileging scientific knowledge by saying that it is the actual knowledge, knowledge in the true sense; on the other he is suggesting that it is based upon fundamental illusion of body-self identity. In his philosophy self has been detached from the body. Self can only be contemplated in the 'enjoying attitude'. Illusion and illusion of the illusion are the counterexamples to the commonsense notion of the identity of the self and body/mind and matter. The merit of these counterexamples is that they demonstrate the psychological convertibility of mind and matter. KCB at the initial stage is granting subjectivity to body itself, and also says that it is the preliminary step toward absolute freedom. As he differentiate between *body as perceived* and *body as felt*. In sciences like human physiology, neurology and even in psychology we deal with the former conception of body. But human body is not merely an object among other objects. We as conscious human being strongly feel the difference between our body and other objects. It is not only a being –in-itself, inert and non-receptive. I cannot perceive all organs of my body; I only know them through radiology, through physiology. For this it becomes evident that like *avaita vedantins* of classical India he is not disqualifying the empirical world altogether on the contrary giving it the status of actuality though it is also true that he is talking about going beyond the factual world to attain the reality and the truth. In his philosophy this actuality is provisional (*vyabharik sat*).

To KCB philosophy is in ultimate analysis a spiritual discipline. The function of philosophy is to formulate an idea about the nature of Ultimate Reality. Reflective understanding is the chief tool of philosophical thinking. "Philosophy starts in reflective consciousness. Reflection is the awareness of a content *as to* a mode of

¹¹ Bagchi, K. "Towards A Metaphysic of Self". Perspectives on Professor Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya 's unpublished essay on 'Mind and Matter'. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 9 .1981. 19-37. pp. 19.

consciousness.”¹² According to KCB philosophy is not a discipline which organizes the presuppositions of scientific knowledge. It is an understanding of a speakable in symbolic sense. As an expression of theoretic understanding that can be communicated systematically and also it involves a believed content. Philosophy is not factual thus is not knowledge in proper sense. It is a self-evident elaboration of the self-evident. There are three grades of philosophy, viz, philosophy of object, philosophy of spirit and philosophy of truth. Self-subsistence is the content of philosophy of object which is contemplated in objective attitude. Reality is the content of philosophy of spirit contemplated in ‘enjoying attitude’. Truth is contemplated in transcendental attitude neither subjective nor objective. Speaking in case of philosophy plays a constitutive role. Philosophy is concerned with pure thought where the content and the thought are identical, indistinguishable. For this reason we can only speak symbolically about pure thought. This is why Philosophy has often been tagged as “disease of speech”. That is why we feel *disease* while entering the domain of philosophy. in philosophy we can get only apparent judgment not the judgment proper. In case of proper judgment of the form ‘A is thus related to B’ the predicate amplifies the subject and they are and their relation both are understood literally. In case of apparent judgments subject is presupposed in the predicate. In judgment of philosophy of object both the subject and the predicate have been understood literally though their combination can only be symbolically understood. In case of judgments of philosophy of spirit only the subject (*I*) is literally understood. The judgments expressing absolute there is no scope for literal understanding. In philosophy of object the self-subsistence which is not reachable through empirical generalization has been contemplated in objective attitude this much similarity it shares with science. But it is not bothered about facts. Metaphysics and logic falls under the philosophy of object. Logic studies the form of the spoken fact as *form*. In Metaphysics this form becomes content of pure thought. the content of philosophical thought can only be believed to be known. In philosophy the content has been approached from the point of view of the subject. In philosophy contents are understood only in reference to the subject. Objects do not have any meaning for their own. Philosophical awareness precedes scientific content. In KCB’s

¹² Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra. *Studies in Philosophy*. Vol.1& Vol.2 (bound in one). Edited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya. Matilal Benarasidass Publishers Private Limited. Delhi. India. Revised Edition. 2008. Pp. 487.

philosophy subject is 'speaking function' in its pure form. He accepts various grades subjectivity. Bodily subjectivity is the first grade of human subjectivity, which is the awareness of the self as *embodied*. The objectivity of other objects is determined by the spatial position of the body, they are relative to it. To the percipient his/her body appears as non-spatial. To him his body is not an object among objects. But one cannot totally nullify the thing-ness of his body. Still to X his/her body is not an object. X's body falls within the field of perception of Y. To Y, X's body is object, and vice-versa. The gaze of X and Y limits each other subjectivity. To X, Y their body is outside their respective field world through which they have constituted their world. X is in the world as the object of perception of Y. X's body exists as the privileged object. Though an X could not perceive his/her body as thing among things, he/she can feel it. From this KCB formulates the conception of *body as felt* not attainable through objective attitude. It is the first feeling of freedom. Psychic subjectivity is the next stage of subjectivity. The awareness of feltness, knownness. This awareness is called psychic subjectivity. It is deindirectly dependent upon external world, because the awareness of knownness is attached to the known, the perceived. In this stage there are four stages such as; i) image, ii) idea-image, iii) pictorial idea, iv) non-pictorial idea. There are also psychic facts as there are physical facts. They retained the relation with the objective world. Thus is not proper subjectivity. The next stage is feeling which is completely free from the meaning content. This stage also has to be transcended. Subject in proper sense is the freedom devoid of any connection with the material world.

KCB developed a unique conception of absolute. According to him the absolute is neither objective nor subjective. It is pure indefinite, that is why it transcends both the subjective It resists ascription of any kind of epithet. In strict sense it is not even thinkable. It cannot be described even as reality because the reality has been contemplated in 'enjoying attitude'. According to KCB the classical Advaitins, Hegel and Buddhist all have failed to represent the absolute truly. They all have placed the Indefinite either in the subjective realm or in the objective realm. We cannot think about absolute in literal sense. The 'absolute' has been defined by KCB as "what is free from the implicational dualism of content and consciousness"¹³. In every

¹³ Ibid. pp. xli.

reflection there is an awareness of a content which has a relation with consciousness. Reflective consciousness and its content mutually imply each other. This is what KCB mean by 'implicational dualism'. Here we are aware of the distinction between the content consciousness and their necessary relation. The implicational relation is an indefinite relation of content and consciousness. In case of ordinary implication, such as 'A implies B', the relation between A and B is definite but the relation between content and consciousness is indefinite. The indefinite character of the implicational dualism is not final stage of reflection. Here a 'demand' generates for the definition of this indefinite distinction. That would only be possible only through a consciousness which is supra-reflective from the vantage point this distinction could be visualized. This supra-reflective being is free from implicational dualism, it is absolute. According to KCB consciousness is of three kinds, knowing, feeling and willing and there are three absolutes as contemplated through these three kind of consciousness truth, freedom and value respectively. Truth is not the content of knowing, it is unrelated to knowing. It is a "known no-content". Freedom has been understood as negation of being the absolute freedom is contentless, 'a negation of the emergent'. Value is the indifference of both being and non-being. "All the three – unrelatedness, negation of the emergent and the indifference of being and non-being – are unmeaning modes of negation to reflection. But to admit the absolute in any form is to a negation that is unintelligible to the logic of the understanding."¹⁴ The absolute is positively believed entity but only negatively understood and only symbolically speakable. The absolute transcends the enjoyed/ecstatic reality of religion, it is positive being/ truth as understood by classical advaita, positive non-being/ freedom as understood by buddhism, positive indetermination/value as understood by Hegel. KCB's proposal is to understand absolute in triple way. "Each is absolutes, but what are here understood as three are only their verbal symbols; they themselves are understood together but not *as* together"¹⁵. They are yet mutually related by 'alteration'.

The main point of similarity between Sri Aurobindo and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya is that they have never rejected material/ empirical world of experience

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. xlii.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. xliii.

and science as totally illusory. On the contrary both of them were appreciative of the positive nature of scientific knowledge, its rigorous procedure and explanatory power. The main point of similarity between Sri Aurobindo and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya regarding science is that, both of them never rejected science. They were appreciative about the explanatory power of science and rebellious role it has performed in the history of Europe and its broader application in other parts of the globe. They were very much impressed with dynamicity of western life and thought, the progress made by scientific rationalism in eradicating spurious religious dogmatism and prejudices. Its exploration in the realm of physical universe through rigorous process of experimentation and argumentation. It has unearthed many mysteries of nature hitherto remain unknown to mankind. But they were well aware about the limitation of science, and danger of establishing the whole society solely on scientific rationality. Because reason is not the ultimate 'governor', it is only a makeshift arrangement. It by itself cannot enlighten human souls, cannot fulfill its aspirations. Human being has other higher possibilities. He is not limited only to scientific achievements, which are even in theory oriented toward practical uses that are often utilitarian in nature. For this reason Sri Aurobindo gave the call for establishing a suprarational society where reason would work under the supervision of spirit. To achieve this state is the goal of all forms of human inquiry. It works as therapy as compared to the arrogant attitude of science. According to KCB there is no metaphysics of the self. This proclamation is itself very unique. Like Hegel he was also feeling discomfort with Kantian agnosticism. As a neo-vedantin he cannot accept this position. He shows that remaining within Kantian framework one cannot overcome the epistemological agnosticism that is why I think that he denied the possibility of any metaphysics of self. In his philosophy realms are very clear and distinct. Another important point that has to be noted is that, the conception of absolute. Sri Aurobindo accepts the classical Vedanta conception of absolute as sat-chit-ananda. But KCB proposes the theory of alternative absolute. There are three interrelated but independent absolutes, there is no one absolute. This is the unique formulation of KCB. Here he departed sharply from other *Vedantins* and Hegel. This is original contribution he made to philosophy.

They were cautioning against the instrumentality and predatory nature of use of scientific knowledge. They were writing around the time of First World War, when

the maladies of western industrial civilization and its economism were becoming evident. Both western and Indian thinkers were reacting to the situation. The name of Rabindranath Tagore immediately would come to one's mind. [religion of man, dialogue with Eienstien]. According to Aurobindo the scientific age is only a preliminary though necessary stage of human evolution. Its journey of becoming divine. Matter is the first stage of spiritual evolution. Science which studies matter is also a indispensable part in Aurobindo's scheme. Here is the difference lie between the two philosophers. In KCB philosophy there is a clear disjunction between the realm of scientific enquiry and spiritual self-realization. It is true that he accepts science as only means to explore the factual world but it is not integral part of reaching toward the higher realm of existence. Moreover, self-knowledge could only achieved by the negation of the objective / factual world because the subject/self is understood as what the object is not. Thus without negating the object we can cannot attain the self-knowledge and the truth. There is a paradigm shift, a break between the realm of science on the one hand and spiritualism on the other. Philosophy in the sense of philosophy of object is also not science, the content of philosophy of object is self-subsistent, which is not only the content of science even could be denied by it though both share the same objective attitude. So, there is a clear hostility between these two spheres of human enquiry.

Aurobindo Ghosh had tried to synthesize science and spiritualism but he also gave a staunch critique of science pointing toward shortcomings of science he said, "Science has missed something essential; it has seen and scrutinized what has happened and in a way how it has happened , but it has shut its eyes to something that made this impossible possible, something it is there to express"¹⁶ According to Aurobindo matter and spirit are complimentary. As educated in west he was not blind to marvels of science. He never rejected science on the contrary; he adopted a positive attitude toward the explanatory power of science. As he said, "Materialistic science has the courage to look at this universal truth with level eyes, to accept it calmly as a starting point and to inquire whether it was not after all the whole formula of universal being".¹⁷ He was also aware of the reductionism of science. He opposed the idea of

¹⁶ Aurobindo, Sri. *Collected Works Of Sri Aurobindo*. Vol.22.1972. Pondicherry.Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry. 197.1972.

¹⁷Aurobindo, Sri. *Op.cit.* vol.16. p 252. 1972..

reducing everything to the realm of the physical. Western theory of evolution, which had overwhelming presence in science and philosophy, society and politics, was not a theory that can explain the process of evolution. He was not only critiquing science but also traditional Indian worldview for its occultism of knowledge. The path of liberation in Indian traditional worldview is confined to Brahmins only. As he said, "A few may follow the path of the yogi and rise above their surroundings, but the mass of men cannot ever take the first step towards spiritual salvation. We do not believe that the path of salvation lies in selfishness".¹⁸ He was for the democratization of knowledge if the access to the divine life for humankind as a whole. Another criticism of Indian traditional worldview by Sri Aurobindo is that it marginalizes the importance of the outward world and the physical. As he said, "...the inward too is not complete if the outward is left out of account".¹⁹ Aurobindo admits, "All human energy has physical basis."²⁰ After admitting this, he said, "The mistake made by European materialism is to suppose the basis to be everything and confuse it with the source."²¹ According to him, "The source of life and energy is not material but spiritual, but the basis, the foundation on which life and energy stand and work is physical".²² To emphasize the complementarity of the mental and physical he says, "...the mental and the vital and physical stress of Europe and the spiritual and psychic impulse of India, are needed for the completeness of the human movement".²³ Thus, he is for an amalgamation of matter and spirit; science and spiritualism. According to Aurobindo matter and mind/ spirit are not very radically different entities. As he state, "for there seems to be no reason why life should evolve out of material elements or mind out living form, unless we accept the vedantic solution that life is already involved in matter an mind in life because in essence matter is a form of veiled life, life a form of veiled consciousness".²⁴ Therefore, mind remains implicit in matter, and

¹⁸ Ibid. 'Swaraj', Vol.1, 1972.700.

¹⁹ Ibid..248.

²⁰ Ibid. 'The Brain of India'. Vol.3.1972.249.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.'The Human Aspiration'. Vol.18.1972. 3.

matter in its primordial form is not very different from mind/ consciousness. This metaphysical framework enabled aurobindo to synthesize mind and matter. A continuous development from matter to mind animal to human and from human to divine.

As a sharp contrast to Aurobindo's framework Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya was continuously emphasizing the difference between matter and mind or science and philosophy. According to him, philosophy is not a science of science. The task of philosophy is not to organize the postulates and primitive concepts of science; science itself is sufficient to perform the role of organizing postulates and primitive concepts. As he said, "There is a problem, viz the formulation of the postulates or structural concepts of science which used to be regarded as philosophical problem....the so called formulation of which is the work of science itself" he again says, "the postulates of science neither lead to nor are deducible from any metaphysical conception of object".²⁵ He is repeatedly cautioning us against a categorical mistake, mistaking science with philosophy and visa versa. According to him science belongs to the realm of the literal and philosophy to realm of the symbolic. Philosophy according to KCB's formulation is not about giving information; it is integrally related to the act of speaking. Science is only contingently related with speaking; on the contrary, the meaning of a philosophical statement (which not proper judgment. A proper judgment form is, A is related to B) is not even conceivable without taking cognizance of the speaking of that very statement. Here he is hinting at the crucial relation between language and philosophy.

Like science, philosophy "is an expression of the theoretic consciousness"²⁶ and "Theoretic consciousness at its minimum is the understanding of the speakable".²⁷ According to KCB there are four grades of thought, they are - empirical thought, pure objective thought, spiritual thought, and transcendental thought. Scientific thought is empirical thought, concerned with facts. Other three grades of thought belong to

²⁵ Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chandra. *Studies in Philosophy*. Vol.1 & Vol.2 (bound in one). Edited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya. Matilal Benarasidass Publishers Private Limited. Delhi. India. Revised Edition. 2008. Pp. 487..

²⁶ Ibid..

²⁷ Ibid.

philosophy. Self-subsistence, reality, and truth are the contents of philosophy. These contents are self-evident, independent of any individual mind. Moreover, in philosophy *thought and the content of the thought are inseparable*. Philosophical thought can only be symbolically expressed through speech. The antagonism between science and philosophy is to the extent that the former positively *deny* the latter. As he said about the self-subsistence object that it is “a concept of philosophy, and it is not only a concept of science but may be even denied by science.....the self-subsistence of the object implies that the object may be in its very nature inaccessible to the mind. To contemplate the object as what would be if there were no objects to know it is to believe that it may be unknowable, that in any case it is not known as of right. Science would not only take this suggestion to be gratuitous but would *positively deny it*”.²⁸ After this passage, he was also cautioning us about the arrogance of science. As he said, “it is the arrogant exploiting attitude of science toward the object that provokes a self-healing reaction of the spirit in the form of philosophy or some cognate discipline”.²⁹ Here clearly he is privileging philosophy over science. Though it is true that in his essay he talked about the positive denial of philosophy by science, but the passage immediately after he is talking about the importance of philosophy. Therefore, it is wrong to say that he was privileging science over philosophy. The essay is too rich for such kind of reading. Here I want to review A. Raghuramraju’s claim that KCB is privileging science over philosophy. It is an over reading on the part of Raghuramraju. This debate was happening within the discourse of modernity and not between the modern and the pre-modern. The language, representation of both the philosopher is carrying strong essence of modernity. Thus, it is wrong to assume any one of them as pre-modern or the representative of the pre-modern. I also want to contest this view of A. Raghuramraju. I think Aurobindo is as modern as KCB or anybody else. Positing Aurobindo as a pre-modern thinker is an illegitimate claim. However I share his concern for lack of debate in contemporary Indian philosophy.

As far as the materialism is concerned Sri Aurobindo and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya are very much aware about the severe limitation of materialism as a world view. As vedantins they could not accept materialism. They were critical about

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

the mechanization of materialism and its reduction of human subjectivity. But none the less materialism has been cited by Aurobindo as one of the significant epoch of human civilization. The base of life mind psyche is material, from matter the process of evolution starts. Like Sri Aurobindo KCB also prefers a brute and frank materialism as opposed to lofty idealism. As he said, "Ordinary idealism or spiritualism is a poor weakling in comparison to this solid –built figure of materialism. It is a choice between subtle hypocrisy and brutal frankness."³⁰ He has criticized idealism and materislism: According to him idealism is hypocritical because it poses "the *thought* of self transcends the given identity of body and mind, in the presence of which the identity is thought of illusory. Idealism or dualism is wrong in so far as it takes this thought to be as good knowledge as, and sometimes truer knowledge than, our assurance as to the reality of matter. Materialism is wrong in that while admitting the *given* identity, it ignores the distinction between subject and object which is necessarily presupposed in all knowledge."³¹

The views that are discussed above are the canonical Hindu view. There were other views as well. B.R.Ambedkar's view on science gives us a Dalit perspective. From a Deweyan-Buddhist point of view (which teaches to bridge the gap between fact and value) Ambedkar was challenging the Hindu quest for ultimate truth. He took a positive attitude toward science. Tagore is another thinker who would like to go with KCB. He also believed in distinctive features of science and philosophy. As he said, "science urges us to occupy by our mind the immensity of the knowable world our religious teachers enjoins us to comprehend by our soul"³²

In Aurobindo's philosophy there is progression from science to spiritualism and philosophy. This project tells the story of linear progression. Historically mainly British and German Orientalism have depicted India as the exotic land of snakes prejudices and spiritualism thus otherworldly. East/ India have been projected as the Other of west. Europe is materialist modern and this worldly. This geopolitics enabled

³⁰ Bagchi, k.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The Religion Of Man. Rabindranath Tagore. Visva Bharati University Press. Shantiniketan.1990.154.

colonialism to validate its claim to colonize, to give itself a philosophical ground and ethical justification (white man's burden). Aurobindo type philosophizing goes very well with Orientalist discourse. This kind of philosophizing gives a monolithic version of time and simultaneously suppresses other pasts by journeying back to a overwhelmingly spiritual past which is also a Hindu past that too mostly *advaita vedantin*. KCB's philosophy resist this kind of project though he was doing philosophy within the canonical Hindu paradigm. He was also critiquing logical positivism. Logical positivists were proposing to modify philosophy by applying methodology of science. KCB was also reacting against them. One of the major things in this whole discourse is that the debate is not a direct contestation; KCB was not commenting on Aurobindo by naming him, but there is the possibility of initiating a relevant debate in the writings of both the philosopher. The debate is still relevant because the issues it had raised are not yet resolved. Moreover, as a nation India is entering gradually into a new era of science and technology. In India the pre-modern and the modern exist simultaneously, that is why it is very important to argue about what is modern, what is traditional, what is spiritual, and what would lead us to a more humane and shared space. Therefore, it is important to look back and rethink the relation between science spiritualism and philosophy; for the sake of philosophy (as an academic discipline) and society as a whole.

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