

DISCUSSION

I

A Reply to Professor Rajendra Prasad :  
*Some Clarificatory Observations and Comments.*

I welcome Prof. Rajendra Prasad's critical discussion of my central thesis or theses regarding the nature of facts as propounded in my *Freedom, Creativity and Value*, if only because it affords me an opportunity to further clarify my position. Here the addition of the term 'theses' is deliberate as I believe that even the most innocent looking proposition in a philosophical work, and even in a debate with a limited scope and purpose, involves or implies, a number of subtheses or assumptions that have a tendency to escape the notice of even a careful exponent and critic of the position. This circumstance, indeed, is a major factor leading to dissatisfaction with many a doctrinal position built up by historical philosophers. What seems to happen is this : A philosopher adopts, as his starting-point, a proposition or statement that appears to him to be a truism, i.e., as a statement of the obvious, which presumably means the statement of a fact (whatever that elusive term means); he then proceeds to work out, to the best of his ability, its implications in a manner that would illuminate a large area of what he takes to be factual realities and offer a connected solution of a large number, if not all, of the problems agitating his mind and, presumably, some other minds troubled by the same or similar problems. And, considering the almost indefinite plurality of factual realities and the problems arising from their contemplation, it seems wellnigh

impossible for any thinker, however gifted, to devise a scheme of ideas capable of comprehending them all in a unified vision.

In order to keep the discussion within reasonable limits, I will adopt the following procedure. I shall first advert to some important, representative thinkers who have expressed views regarding facts akin to my own; that may predispose the readers to pay sympathetic attention to what I have to say in defence and elaboration of my position; secondly, I will briefly indicate the modest contribution that my position may claim to make to the 'philosophy of facts' and/or the 'philosophy of values.' Thirdly, while exposing some of the contradictions involved in Dr. Prasad's criticisms, I would like to make a few methodological remarks and observations which, however, will be interspersed here and there as and when called for during the course of the discussion.

## I

Professor Prasad has criticised my view of facts from such a naively realistic position that I feel genuinely perplexed as to where to begin my reply to him. In order to cut short the discussion, I would like to get off with some reminders—in a non-Wittgensteinian sense though. I would like to remind him of some landmarks in the history of philosophic thought, e.g. : Dīñnāga's characterization of *pratyakṣa* or purely perceptual experience as free from categorial determinations (*Kalpanāpodham*); Vasubandh's definition of *pratyakṣa* as cognition produced purely by the object (*tato'rthād vijñānam*); Kant's analysis of experience as consisting in sense—manifold cast in the moulds of space—time and the categories of the understanding; A. J. Ayer's admission that in describing a situation, 'one is not merely "registering" a sensecontent; one is classifying it in some way or the other, and this means going beyond what is immediately

given,'<sup>1</sup> and his final conclusion : ' That no synthetic proposition ... can be logically indubitable may be granted without much ado,' etc. Here reference may also be made to the solipsist implications of the application of the verification principle, as of the so-called observation statements in general. Each in his own way, W. V. O. Quine in his " Two Dogmas of Empiricism " and Carl Hempel in his " Problems and Changes in the Empiricist Criterion of Meaning ", has drawn attention to some of these and other troublesome implications of the neo-positivistic theory of meaning and verification.

But perhaps Dr. Prasad has directed his criticisms from the perspective of the linguistic philosophy as elaborated, and practised, by J. L. Austin—and by later Wittgenstein who objected to the sort of reductive analysis that had been indulged in by the logical positivists as well as by Russell and Wittgenstein in their logical-atomistic phase. From that perspective one might claim that the statement ' I see a bird sitting on the tree ' as also the statement, ' my pen writes smoothly ', is perfectly in order as it stands. Now I am no advocate of reductive analysis in any of its once fashionable forms—though Dr. Prasad himself, if I am not mistaken, is a believer in what is vaguely called " conceptual analysis ". My concern here is the clarification and defence consisting mainly in the laying bare of the implications of a theory of verbalised cognition or knowledge, so-called, that affirms the presence of an interpretive element in the apprehension and/or statement of facts. So far as I can see, even an advocate of the aforesaid variety of linguistic philosophy should find it difficult to deny the element of interpretation implied in the application of class-names to such entities as " tree ", " bird ", " pen " and The like—as also to activities characterized as " seeing ", " writing ", etc. But before I take up detailed examination of that issue, I would like to dispose of Professor

Prasad's truly serious objection implied in the judgment that 'Devaraja is not a reasoning or arguing type of thinker' but 'a synoptic or holistic thinker.' While not insensitive to the generous concession made in the qualifying statement, I would like to add that Prasad's objection stems from a misapprehension or an incomplete understanding of the nature of "argument," in general and "philosophical argument" in particular. For, while a conclusive argument in any form depends on one or other implicit assumption—a presupposition or a postulate—a philosophical position justifies itself by offering a comprehensive and self-consistent account of the data regarded by it as relevant and so worthy of attention. If one chooses to call this procedure synoptic, one should understand that this is the only way open to a philosopher seeking to justify or validate the central postulates—more or less comprable to the scientist's hypotheses—of his system. This view of philosophical reasoning and argumentation will be found, on examination, to be applicable as much to the conceptual framework of Spinoza's *Ethics* as to that of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Neither of these thinkers, so far as I can see, starts with (shall I say?) a logical justification of their central postulates, viz., the definition of substance in one case and the conception or characterization of the world as 'everything that is the case', i.e., as a collection of facts, not of things, in the other case. Incidentally, thesis proposed by the present writer is exactly the opposite of the one upheld and elaborated in the *Tractatus*. It will be seen that the following statement of Carl Hempel, in his paper referred to above, suggests some such view of philosophical reasoning :

...the empiricist criterion of meaning...represents a linguistic proposal which itself is neither true nor false, but for which adequacy is claimed in two respects : First, in the sense that the explication provides a reasonably close

*analysis* of the commonly accepted meaning of the explicandum—and this claim implies an empirical assertion; and secondly, the sense that the explication achieves a “*rational reconstruction*” of the explicandum, i. e., that it provides... a general *conceptual framework which permits a consistent and precise restatement and theoretical systematization of the contexts in which the explicandum is used. . . .*”<sup>3</sup> (last emphasis added).

The explicandum in the above context, of course, is “meaning” or “significance”. It is well known, as Hempel points out, that one major objection to the “criterion” as formulated by some of its leading advocates, was that it could not do justice, by inclusion in the realm of cognitive significance, to ‘various types of sentences which might occur in advanced scientific theories, or which have to be admitted simply for the sake of systematic simplicity and uniformity’.<sup>4</sup>

We are not interested here in enumerating many other troubles beleaguering the criterion indicated, among others, by Quine in the article alluded to above. For our purposes, it would suffice to observe that the criterion provided no room for judgments of value in any form whatever, e.g. the sorts of judgments that fortunately for me, find expression in some of the statements, offered as examples of a certain class of assertions, by Prof. Prasad, e.g. : Hamlet is a great work of art; Russell is a mathematical logician whose contributions deserve being “extolled”, and the like. The positivist criterion, if it ever aspired for universal acceptance, would have to accommodate value-judgments alongside of the statements making up scientific theories. And if Dr. Prasad ever aspired to frame an adequate conception of ‘facts’ he would have to find ways to accord factual status to

our perceptions of preferability (and its opposite) such as the following: Shakespeare is a greater playwright than say, Victor Hugo; Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* is a greater literary work than, say, the *Bhāminī Vilāsa* of Panditarāja Jagannātha; and, with comparable financial assets, the person who clears the debt owed by a neighbour in distress is morally superior to one who, as a dependable person, pays up the debt incurred by himself.<sup>4</sup> Analogously, the judgment that one scheme of ideas is more comprehensive, or more adequate to the data under review than another, must be shown to have some basis in facts—facts which may not be visible to the physical eye or to persons lacking in requisite training. This disposes of the claim that all genuine facts must be facts for all and sundry, and that there can be no degrees or gradations in the objectivity of facts

So far in my discussion of the problem, I have made no reference to some post-Kantian and recent thinkers in the German tradition in philosophy and other disciplines, e.g. the powerful movements of thought known as "hermeneutics" and "sociology of knowledge". Nietzsche's emphatic assertion that there are no facts but only interpretations is well known. In contradistinction from Kant, who stressed the universal and necessary character of the categories responsible for the emergence of the phenomenal order of things, Hans Georg Gadamer—to mention one of the more prominent names in German thought representing a new trend in hermeneutics or the theory of interpretation—underscores the historical dimension of the interpretive activity as practised by the subject of cognition, stationed in and moulded by a particular cultural—historical milieu. The trend marks a continuation of and a new, near-sceptical historicist—relativist phase in the development of a line of thought that gathered momentum in the thought and writings of Vilhelm Dilthey and others. According to this illustrious thinker and, among others,

the great sociologist Max Weber, understanding in the human studies, embracing both the human or social sciences and humanities, is interpretive. Summing up Gadamer's position as expounded by him in his celebrated *Truth and Method*, Georgia Varenke states: 'The claim is that we are always involved in interpretation and that we can have no access to anything like "the truth" about justice, the self, reality or the "moral law"'. Our notions of these "truths" are rather conditioned by the cultures to which we belong and the historical circumstance in which we find ourselves. According to Gadamer, we are further informed, natural science is no less hermeneutic than the human sciences, the implication being that *all understanding is hermeneutic*.<sup>7</sup> This view, as we know, has striking affinity with the analysis and interpretation of the historical development of physical science presented by Thomas S. Kuhn in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and in later, clarificatory essays.

A near-desperate view of the situation with reference particularly to the context of the social sciences is taken by Werner Pelz in his *The Scope of Understanding in Sociology*. The following passages occur in the opening two pages of the book:

We dare no longer ask with jesting Pilate, 'What is truth?' since we are not sure whether there is truth, whether truth is a thing, whether truth is .. At one time the final truth and its guarantor was God, at another, it was facts... Today God does not function as guarantor, and in ever widening areas we are beginning to wonder whether we are altogether sure as to what constitutes a fact. In sociology in particular and in the social and humanistic disciplines in general 'facts' are becoming increasingly problematical constructs. Not only is there little agreement on how to establish facts, there is as little on the nature of facts.<sup>8</sup>

The subject-matter of the social sciences, one and all, has a historical dimension; they, therefore, suffer from the limitations of the discipline called history.<sup>9</sup> The following extracts from the work of an eminent historian-thinker may shed light on the status of historical *facts*, so-called, that lend themselves to multiplicity of formulations or interpretations. This is what Prof. E. H. Carr has to say about historical facts in his notable work, *What is History?*

It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls upon them : it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context... The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one it is very hard to eradicate.<sup>10</sup>

How interpretation infects and alters or shapes the facts is brought out by Prof. Carr in another passage :

We know a lot about what fifth-century Greece looked like to an Athenian citizen; but hardly anything about what it looked like to a Spartan, a Corinthian, not to mention a Persian, or a slave or other noncitizen residents in Athens. Our picture has been preselected and predetermined for us...<sup>11</sup>

Passages from quite a few eminent modern historians could be cited in support of Prof Carr's views. Carr himself quotes from Professor Baraclough who says : 'The history we read, though based on facts, is, strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of accepted judgements'<sup>11</sup>

The judgements, of course, arise out of interpretations put on facts or (supposedly) factual relations, so called These state-



ments by eminent historians seem to lend support to Gadamer's thesis of the historicist character of our knowledge of the past. The recent trends in the interpretation of physics are also supportive of his judgment of natural science. Let me quote from a few representative scientist-thinkers who have reflected on the investigative experimental procedures in physics. Having stated that 'every law of physics is provisional and relative because it is approximate',<sup>13</sup> Pierre Duhem proceeds to explain why the law should be approximate. Says he :

the degree of approximation is not something fixed; it increases gradually as instruments are perfected... The astronomers of the next century will have telescopes with greater optic power, more perfectly divided circles, more minute and precise methods of observation... This provisional character of the laws of physics is made plain every time we read the history of the science.

When Regnault had improved the apparatus and experimental method, this law (i.e. Mariotte's or Boyle's law of the compressibility of gases) had to be rejected.

The laws of physics are, therefore, provisional in that the symbols they relate are too simple to represent reality completely.<sup>14</sup>

Needless to say the use of symbols in question involves the processes of selective attention and interpretation with respect to the entities (things or relations) symbolised. Having stated that in experimental recording of perceived relationships 'a single reading is not accepted unless it is impossible to take more', Prof. C. F. Presley goes on to say that the readings have meaning within a system of measurement or with reference to a theory.... To quote Mr. Mackie, "Observation includes thinking and relies on background knowledge"<sup>15</sup> Further on Mr. Presley observes :

' One of the consequences of saying that an empirical law is true if it is supported by all the available evidence, is that we might have to say of a law that it *was* true, but that it *is* false.' <sup>16</sup> The same, I submit, notwithstanding Prof. Prasad's contrary opinion, may have to be truly asserted of a fact (that it *was* a fact but it *is* no more a fact.) All statements of facts, so-called, relate to facts as they appear to us to-day; it scarcely makes sense to say, particularly in an account of a scientific study, that something is a fact once for all

As noted by Duhem and other critical positivists measurements leading to the establishment of quantitative relationships among variables are themselves dependent on optical theories on whose basis the readings from instruments are interpreted. In this connection I may be permitted to cite a passage from my forthcoming work, *The Limits of Disagreement* :

Another noteworthy fact (whatever that elusive word means) about physical theories is that there ever remains some disagreement or difference between readings recorded by instruments and the deductions made from the theory. This being so, the investigators are satisfied if there exists what is called "reasonable agreement" between tables drawn on the basis of experimental observations on the one side and those embodying deductions from the theory on the other side. However, the notion of "reasonable agreement" undergoes alternations depending on, as noted by Duhem and others, the level of refinement reached by the instruments available at a particular point in time.

In this connection T. S. Kuhn takes note of another relevant factor. "Reasonable agreement", he observes, 'varies from one part of science to another', and, of course 'within any part of

science it varies with time.<sup>17</sup> As usual, Kuhn illustrates these remarks with instances drawn from several fields of science.

## II

I have, I think, said enough to bring home to the reader the enormous complexity of the problem concerning the being and nature of facts both in socio-cultural and in the natural sciences. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon with his troops a series of physical movements occurred; but these movements *per se* did not constitute historical facts. They qualified for that description by producing ripples and eddies in the stream of meaningful phenomena called Roman history—and probably the history of the ancient world having relations of friendship, hostility etc. with the kingdom of Rome. It must have affected the personal histories of many individuals including not only the military and political rivals and friends of Caesar but also ordinary citizens and soldiers who counted for little; however, the factual records of the latter have been by and large lost to posterity—irrevocably, as it seems.

If facts did not involve or depend on interpretation there would be no differences of approach and opinion in the human sciences and no revolutions in physics and other natural sciences. The well-known phenomenon of even the eye-witnesses giving different accounts of an occurrence proves the same point. It is only when relatively grosser purposes are involved that people seem to achieve unanimity of reports about what has been or is being seen or witnessed—quite unaware of the fact that the use of language as such implies interpretation. In any case, there are degrees of accuracy in the attempted reportings even of the obvious.

It is against the background of the aforementioned problems and perceptions that the present writer has had to formulate his views regarding the nature and kinds of facts, being motivated, on the one hand, to combat the more extreme forms of relativism bordering on scepticism; and on the other, to explore the ground for agreement regarding moral and other sorts of value perceptions and judgments. For these purposes it has been found to be both necessary and appropriate to conceive facts and their understanding as involving the element of interpretation. However, the more perniciously extreme forms of relativism, historical and cultural, could on our view, be avoided by drawing out the implications of human creativity.<sup>18</sup>

Coming to Prasad's criticisms, I would first draw the reader's attention to a central fallacy infecting several of his observations and objections in regard to my position: his uncritical belief that a word like "contemplate" or "reconstruct" means, and should mean, the same thing in all contexts. He forgets that a word may convey one or other sense or shade of meaning according to the context in which it is used—as pointed out, among others, by the upholders of the thesis of *anvitābhidhāna*. Thus, in the light of the definition or description of 'fact' given by me, the reconstruction or recovery of a fact would amount to disclosing the meaningful, purpose-governed relationships that possibly obtained between actions and happenings and their consequences, partly intended and partly unintended, the disclosure depending on or involving weighing of diversity of reports and interpretations made available by contemporary researches into the surviving documents. Where no such documents exist, it is meaningless to make one or other assertion about, say, the circumstances of the death of an unknown soldier, elephant or horse or on the countless citizens of one or other kingdom or empire in the ancient world.

I may now pass on to some other, more important critical points sought to be made by Dr. Prasad. For one thing, he puts a very rigid interpretation on the thesis that, in the last analysis, our interests may be taken to be rooted in our human constitution. The view does not entail the denial either of the patent fact of the plurality of human interests or the multiplicity of ways in which a particular interest may express or realize itself. To these may be added the perception that some interests, such as that in sex, vary in intensity at different periods in life; and such derivative interests as those in wealth, power and influence may become strong in some persons to the point when they deliberately seek to suppress even relatively more natural impulses—e.g. that to counter-insult the boss or an otherwise influential person. These are, as pointed out in the book, some of the ways in which man realizes his creative freedom. That freedom is one of the more important postulates of creative Humanism as conceived and expounded in the work under scrutiny. Nor need it be supposed that the postulate of creativity which latter phenomenon is made possible by the malleability of human nature on one side and the capacity for the exercise of conscious choice, growing and developing with awareness of options for the selection of ends and objectives as well as of means available for their attainment on the other side, is inconsistent with belief in a universal human nature. For, in the case of man that nature, consisting in plurality of impulses, is, partly for that very reason, seen to be, along with its malleability, ever in a sort of mobile equilibrium. Furthermore, the unequal distribution, cultivation and expressive development of diverse interests makes for varied responses to similar situations and conditions of existence by different persons as individuals and as members of various communities and cultures. This accounts for the phenomenon that, while in principle everybody may be taken to have the capacity to understand, and appreciate, poetry

and other forms of art and literature, logic and philosophy, and the like—which means that the rudiments of the capabilities or powers of aesthetic, moral and logical perception appear in man as innate endowments *at certain stages in his evolutionary development*, the interests stemming from them show unequal strength in different persons and even societies, depending on various factors, physical—geographical and, in later stages, cultural. Denial of this would entail, among other things, uncertain authority of canons of logical reasoning and of ratiocination in general.

An object for man is anything that has relatively enduring existence or being for him, with *the power to engage one or other of his interests*. Besides physical objects there are what may be called symbolic or conceptual objects constituted exclusively of meanings, e. g. works of art and thought, arguments, theories etc. Thus the works of Kālidāsa and Vālmīki, Hegel and Marx have being with the power to evoke strong feelings, for persons with requisite knowledge or training. All sorts of objects—in-relation give rise to facts. This explains how there arise grades of objectivity. Even the world of physical objects *as known* through Kantian categories has objective being and existence only for man. For aught we know the world of the colour-blind frog, for one, is very different from that of man. And there is a sense in which every individual lives in a world of his own—a World within World, as the title of Stephen Spender's autobiography suggests. The degree of commonality of one or other class of objects for men is correlated with that of shareability of their corresponding interests. My perception that the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa is superior poetry than the *Bhāminīvilāsa* has no meaning for a person ignorant of Sanskrit or lacking or deficient in the ability to appreciate and judge literature. *The being of this perceived fact of difference, a type*

or sort of relation, owes its incidence in man's world to being perceived. It is likely, nay certain, to disappear with the extinction of Sanskrit-knowing humanity or even with the destruction all the copies, including the printed as well as the remembered reproductions, of the two texts. And this would happen to everything that belongs, or has meaning, exclusively to and for man, if that particular creature were to disappear from the face of the planet called the earth. *A fact has a being only, and exclusively, in a particular meaning-space*, as repeatedly explained and illustrated in my book. "Once a fact, always a fact" may be logically true, but it is factually meaningless—to use those terms in their ordinary sense. And, pray, nothing can have existence or being in the purely analytical atmosphere of logic. The expression "always" in the above sentence has no temporal connotation—and here is another fact or factor of capital importance—but only logical force of a sort. Not only the verb-term "is" may express such diverse meanings as existence, predication, or class-inclusion, but even terms like knowing, understanding, conditioning, determining are thoroughly ambiguous. Each of these terms, e. g., may convey one meaning in the context of a natural science, and another in that of a humanistic discipline. Did not the Italian savant Giambattista Vico say: man can understand only what he has made or created and that we have true understanding only of the world of history (and not the world of nature); and another thinker, Johann Gustav Droysen, stated that 'understanding is the most perfect knowledge that is attainable for us humans.'<sup>20</sup> This means, in the context of the present writer's thought, *understanding for us is possible only of what has been invested with meaning relevant in terms of one or other of our interests* (shareably fundamental or derived there from). Such meanings alone (*and this is one important argument advanced in support of the thesis about facts*) can be comprehended and communicated by language. The illusion that we

*know* objects in the familiar day-to-day world is due to our intimate association or relationship with utility-centred or pragmatic meanings, involved in the identifying recognition and use of objects in that world. And what natural science *actually* succeeds in ascertaining are connections among symbolized pointer-readings, as explained by Sir Arthur Eddington.<sup>21</sup> The so-called facts unearthed and attended to by the scientist all owe their special character and being as expressive revealers of (supposedly) actual connections among things and forces (hypostatized through conceptualization) to the various systems of co-ordinates or reference-points, devised and used by the scientist. The raw material of sensations, as the Kantian analysis implied, could be neither expressed or shaped into connected units of experience without resort to meaning-bearing or meaning-indicating symbols.

Professor Prasad might not have felt quite as perplexed or puzzled, about the emergence and/or disappearance of facts had he attended to the following perception or argument recorded in my book : '... an entire set of facts about the table disappears the moment it is moved by a few inches to one or other side, or lifted up to a height of a few thousand feet on a mountain' (p. 25). The set will include literally trillions of facts : think of the spatial distance of the table or any point in it from any of the thousands or millions or trillions of points on the ceiling of the room, the surface of the earth or the sun, or a star in one or other galaxy, which may be indicated or asserted by a proposition. Substitute my finger-tip for the table and you will have to attribute to me the power to give rise to literally trillions of facts about distance between it and the points in question—as also the power to make them disappear—by just moving it up or down or sideways by a fraction of an inch ! If the bird seen by



Dr. Prasad as sitting on a tree disappears into space, no device will be available to him to resurrect (is the expression that obscure ?) the fact of having seen it for public verification. This is all that is ment by the Berkeleyan assertion that its being is consisted in its being perceived. Possibly I cannot make my finger occupy the same spatial point twice to resurrect the earlier set of trillions of facts—if only because, in the meanwhile, the earth itself has changed its position relative to the sun and the star(s) in another galaxy. It follows, inescapably, on my view, that a fact has being in a particular meaning—space and not in *rerum natura*, which may be preserved for some purpose by the all too fallible human memory in one or other form. While stemming from interests the purposes we entertain are relatively more transient and variable, compared to our constitutional demands giving rise to more enduring interests. Even some of these latter demands and interests—like those bound up with the sex instinct—differ in their intensity and functioning at different stages in our life.

In conclusion, I would like to put a couple of questions to Dr. Prasad, or ask for the clarification of some of his statements. What exactly does he mean by the assertion that facts are sorts of things that *make* factual *propositions* (are there any non-factual *propositions* as well ?) true or false ? Do facts in any way effect, generate, shape, constitute, enact propositions ? What sort of activity, if any, can be attributed to facts ? In the second place, how can a fact authorise one, or furnish reasons to somebody, to use certain words and expressions in one linguistic or grammatical idiom or other ? What is there in a fact, so-called, that would guarantee *sameness* of meaning to sentences spoken in different languages and in different contexts ? What *facts* would justify attributing one or other motive to Brutus or Godse who

assassinated (or killed?) Caesar or Gandhi? On reflection, Professor Prasad will find that there is hardly a way out of the mixing or involvement of the interpretive element in the assertion of facts.

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#### NOTES

- \* *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XVI, No. 4, pp. 479-91.
- 1. A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Victor Gallanz Ltd., 1948), p. 91.
- 2. *Loc. Cit.*
- 3. (Ed.) Robert R. Ammerman, *Classics in Analytical Philosophy* (Bombay, New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Ltd., 1965), Carl Hempel, "Problems and Changes in the Empiricist Criterion of Meaning", p. 229.
- 4. *Loc. Cit.*
- 5. The comparative judgments given or mentioned here constitute sorts of perceptions (or inspections) relating to the critical and moral spheres. They are *prior* to any theoretical formulations of evaluative criteria applicable to works of poetry (or literature) and actions claiming moral merit. In a related context in the author's forthcoming work, *The Limits of Disagreement*, the perceptions of the above kind have been described as constituting the pre-theoretic (but not pre-linguistic) consciousness. For all theoretical purposes they have to be looked upon as facts in the spheres in question. Comparable instances of such facts are given by G. J. Warnock in his *Contemporary Moral Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1969). Thus, he avers: 'That it is a bad thing to be tortured or starved, humiliated or hurt is not an opinion: it is a fact.' (p. 60.) Of course, the expressions "tortured", "starved" etc., involve interpretation—but that sort of interpretation precedes theoretical explanation in a humanistic discipline.
- 6. Georgia Varenke, *Gadamer Hermeneutics: Tradition and Reason* (Cambridge, U. K.: Polity Press, 1987), p. 1.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
8. *The Scope of Understanding in Sociology* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974)
9. Cf. Anthony Giddens : 'There simply are no logical or even methodological distinctions between social sciences and history—appropriately conceived.' Quoted by Alex Callinicos in *Making History* (Polity Press and Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 1
10. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* ( Penguin, reprinted, 1974 ), pp. 11–12.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 13
12. *Ibid.*, p. 14
13. ( Eds ) Arthur Danto and Sidney Morgenbesser ( New York : Meridian Books, 1962 ), Pierre Duhem's article " Physical Law ", p. 180
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 191, 194.
15. *Ibid.*, C. F. Presley's article " Laws and Theories in the Physical Sciences ", p. 207.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 209
17. *The Essential Tension* ( Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1977 ). " The Function of Measurement in Modern Physical Science ", p. 185.
18. See, *Freedom, Creativity and Value*, pp. 211 ff.
19. See, (ed.) Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, *The Hermeneutic Reader* ( Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1986 ), p. 19. Also see, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, volume 9, ( ed ) Roseann Runte ( Wisconsin : The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979 ), article by Sandra Rudnick Luft, " Creative Activity in Vico and the Secularization of Providence ", p. 337.
20. *The Hermeneutic Reader*, p. 17.
21. Arthur Eddington, *The Philosophy of Physical Science* ( Cambridge : The University Press, 1949 ), pp. 99–101.

## THE LATE MRS. GERTRUDE SACHS MEMORIAL ESSAY COMPETITION

Essays are invited for the Late Mrs. Gertrude Sachs Memorial Essay Competition in English from students below the age of 25 years studying in any Indian educational institution on the theme "Cultural Integration of India : Prospects and Obstacles " for the First and Second prizes to be awarded respectively of Rs. 300/- and 200/- to the essays adjudicted to be so by a panel of referees appointed for the purpose. The prize-winning essays would be published, in course of time, in the Students' Supplement of the **Indian Philosophical Quarterly**, a quarterly journal of the Department. The conditions governing submission of essays for the competition are as follows :

1. The essay typed in double space on one side of the paper must be submitted in duplicate.
2. The essay must not be longer than 2500 words.
3. The essay must be accompanied by a certificate signed by the Head of the Institution/Department where the student is studying to the effect that
  - (a) the student is studying in that institution and is below the age of 25 years, and
  - (b) the essay is written by him/her.
4. The essays should reach Dr. Mangala R. Chinchore, Philosophy Department, Poona University, Ganeshkhind, Pune 411 007 not later than 31-5-1991.
5. The decision of the panel of referees shall be binding on all the competitors and no correspondence of any kind would be entertained on that count.

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## II

*A Response To Professor Devaraja's Reply*

I appreciate Prof. Devaraja's offering his 'Clarificatory observations and Comments'<sup>1</sup> as a reply to my discussion note on his book *Freedom, Creativity and Value*.<sup>2</sup> But more than that, I enjoy his eagerness to say the kind of things he wants to say. I welcome his essay, and it is really an essay, as a discussant of his book, but more as an editor of this journal. When the authors, whose books it discusses, respond to the discussions and do not ignore them, a healthy and desirable climate for philosophical activity is very likely to be created or promoted.

It is a good editorial protocol to see that the last word is the word of the author and not of his discussant, but I am violating it a little by writing this short note. I hope it is pardonable because it is written primarily with the intention to record a welcome to Professor Devaraja's gracious gesture and to avoid the impression that the latter has been ignored by an unmannerly discussant-editor.

What I am going to do here is not to write a rejoinder because his essay is not a piece to which a rejoinder can be written. I shall, therefore, follow in his foot-steps by venturing to make only a few 'clarificatory observations and comments'. In fact, discussing his essay, even with such a limited objective in mind, is not less difficult than it was, for me, to discuss his book. That is why I shall be making some remarks on only a few of the things his essay contains in a staccato but disjointed manner.

Professor Devaraja's keenness to say what he wants to is so great that he does not consider it necessary to discuss point-

wise the issues raised in my discussion. When he refers to any, and that is generally casual, he does not care to look at the reasoning behind it as well as at the 'reasoning' of the book against which it was directed. Ignoring the context of my point-wise discussion is a natural corollary to this style of writing. What I did was the following : I located some of the issues or themes he talks about, stated their rationale as I could discover in, or reconstruct from, the very many things he says in the book with regard to them and then examined the rationale. I had perforce to adopt this approach because he does not proceed in a reasoning-oriented manner, i.e., by clearly giving his reasoning for holding the views he holds. His likely reply would be that he is not a logician. That he does not have to be, but this does not mean that he does not have to be logical. Even the present essay of his is written in the same style.

He mentions, in the present reply, some landmarks in the history of philosophic thought in support of his conception of facts. He mentions such names as Dīnāga Vasubandhu, Kant, Ayer, Quine, Hempel, and many others, apparently intending to say that their conception of facts is similar to his. This seems to be not completely correct, but I do not want to make an issue of it. Mine is a very different point. I commented on *his* conception, assuming that it is *his*, and if now he says it is the same as, or similar to, that of some great masters, then it no longer remains *his own* distinctive or original contribution to philosophy. Secondly, his being in a company of these masters does not prove that his is a valid conception, because it is *possible* that a position held by so many philosophers is untenable. History of philosophy has shown that this is not a *mere* possibility but has actually happened more than once. Thirdly, it is *also possible* that his companions' position is tenable while

his is not because their reasoning is valid while his is not. What matters in philosophy is not merely one's telling the truth but his reasoning to show that it is true. Fourthly, if he says that *his* reasoning also, along with the conclusion, is the same as, or similar to, theirs then he would himself be, in effect, denying all claims to originality. Moreover, he does not bother to mention their reasoning, and it is really hazardous to say that all of them have given the same kind of reasoning.

There are certain things in his essay which bother me and which are likely to bother anyone who reads it after reading my discussion note. He disowns to be an advocate of reductive analysis, but I never said he was. He says I have adopted perhaps J. L. Austin's and later Wittgenstein's perspective. But on what basis? And, even if I have, how does that show that my *criticism of his position* is incorrect? He also makes some remarks about the empiricist or verificationist theory of meaning purportedly to show that it is untenable. But I did not say or imply that this theory of meaning is tenable, nor used it in my criticism. And, its untenability or tenability cannot prove, or disprove, anyone of his theses.

He thinks that a judgement of preferability (i.e., value) e.g., Shakespeare is a greater playwright than Victor Hugo, is a perception of preferability and, therefore, has a factual status, i.e., states a fact, because the latter has a factual status. Saying all this is objectionable for more than one reason. First, we do not speak of *perceiving a preferability*. To do so would amount to torturing conceptual grammar, or grammar. Prefix 'A has perceived that' to 'Shakespeare is a greater playwright than Victor Hugo' and you will easily feel the torture. Secondly, even if we did not mind Devaraja's speaking of perceiving preferability, this would prove his point only if he proves that 'perceiving'

in perceiving preferability has the same meaning as it has in perceiving something factual, e.g. in perceiving that Shakespeare is taller than Victor Hugo. But this he has not done and should not do because then he cannot make a distinction between a factual statement and an evaluative judgement, a distinction he does not want to give up.

He has accused me of assuming that contemplating and reconstructing have the same meaning in all contexts. Nothing that I have said means or implies that I do. But even if I do, if the meaning which I have claimed to be their meaning is relevant to the *context in which Devaraja uses* them, my point against him remains firmly established. He should have tried to show that (a) the sense in which I take them is not relevant to his universe of discourse, (b) there is a bonafide sense of the terms which is, and (c) that sense is not Pickwickian. But he does not even see the need of such a logical exercise.

He also accuses me to have taken in a rigid sense his conception of interests rooted in human nature. I did assume that he meant by it something precise and perhaps therefore took it in a rigid sense. Suppose we decide to take it in a liberal sense. But then one would like to ask: What is the limit of this liberalism? It is the boundary drawn around the use of a word which makes it usable, and unless Devaraja indicates the boundary or limit of this liberalism, his advice to take it in a liberal sense would be of no logical gain. But no demarcation of boundary is given by him for any of his basic concepts or terms.

He concludes his essay with a set of questions to me. They look like examination questions which are not asked to seek any information the examiner does not already possess. His first



question is : Are there any non-factual propositions ? The answer is obviously affirmative : there are logical propositions which are non-factual. But his eagerness to ask such a naive question is not naive, as it has sprung from a confusion in his mind between the logical and the factual. He has said earlier that ' Once a fact, always a fact ' may be logically true but factually meaningless. He does not realise that what is true cannot be meaningless because the meaningless can be neither true nor false. Even the denial of a meaningless expression is meaningless, while that of a true one false, and therefore meaningful.

His all the other questions, except the last one, are ill-formed and therefore unanswerable. That the questions ' Do facts in any way, effect, generate, shape, constitute, enact propositions ? ' ' What sort of activity, if any, can be attributed to facts ? ' ' How can a fact authorise the use of certain words in one linguistic form or other ? ' , ' What is there in a fact which accounts for sameness of meaning to different sentences ? ' are for this reason unanswerable would be obvious to anyone who is acquainted with the contemporary style of philosophy. Devaraja's glossing over, or not recognizing, the categorial difference between facts and propositions is responsible for his asking these questions and considering them to be very profound. I do not understand his reason for including the last question : What facts would justify attributing a certain motive to a person for having done something ? Obviously facts pertaining to the action which could go far back in the past, or be limited to the immediate presence.

I end the discussion, or debate, here, and leave to the readers of the *IPQ* to form their own opinion after having read Devaraja's

book, my earlier discussion note, his present essay and my reaction to it contained in this note.

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RAJENDRA PRASAD

#### NOTES

1. The preceding Discussion, this issue.
2. This journal, Vol. XVI, No. 4, October 1989, pp 479-91.

## PROF. G. R. MALKANI ESSAY COMPETITION

Essays are invited for the Prof. G. R. Malkani Essay Competition either in English or Hindi from undergraduate or post-graduate students below the age of 25 years studying in any Indian educational institution on the theme "Dr. Ambedkar's Contribution to Buddhism" for the First and Second prizes to be awarded respectively of Rs. 200/- and Rs. 100/- to the essays adjudicated to be so by a panel of referees appointed for the purpose. The prize-winning essays would be published in course of time either in Students' Supplement of the **Indian Philosophical Quarterly** or **Paramasa (Hindi)**, quarterly journals published by the Department. The conditions governing submission of essays for the competition are as follows :

1. The essay typed in double space on one side of the paper must be submitted in duplicate.
2. The essay must not be longer than 2500 words.
3. The essay must be accompanied by a certificate signed by the Head of the Institution/Department where the student is studying to the effect that
  - (a) the student is studying in that institution and is below the age of 25 years, and
  - (b) the essay is written by him/her.
4. The essays should reach Dr. Mangala R. Chinchore, Philosophy Department, Poona University, Ganeshkhind, Pune 411 007 not later than 31-5-1991.
5. The decision of the panel of referees shall be binding on all the competitors and no correspondence of any kind would be entertained on that count.

*The Head,*  
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