

## REVIEWS

*The Hindu Personality in Education : Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo:*  
Cenkner, William : Manohar Book Service, New Delhi.

Education is a practical activity, says William Cenkner. Indian education, he continues, besides being an activity is a process of National Progress. In his book, *The Hindu Personality in Education* Cenkner highlights the substantial contributions of Tagore, Gandhi and Aurobindo, to this process of progress.

Cenkner has systematically analysed the spiritual development, thought and educational theories of these three international figures. In his conclusion he gives a comprehensive and succinct study of the religious personality reflected in their educational systems.

The 'Relational Personality' of Tagore, says Cenkner, was moulded by the religious, socio-political and literary transformations which took place in the India of his days. Besides these Cenkner defines the strong influence exerted by the Brahmo Samaj and Raja Ram Mohan Roy on the Tagore's entire family. These factors nurtured the 'poet, philosopher and prophet', till he became 'a symbol and an institution'.

'Experimental Personality' is the term used by Cenkner to describe Gandhi. It signifies the process of experience and experimentation which shaped Gandhi's personality. The author speaks of Aurobindo's personality as being Psychic and rightly so as with Aurobindo we step into the sphere of the supra-intellectual, the supermind and the Divine conscious force. Cenkner describes the two psychic experiences that Aurobindo had as a boy, which greatly influenced his spiritual evolution.

Examining the principles underlying their educational theories, Cenkner talks of Tagore's *Ananda Yoga* — the aesthetic path which achieves growth in consciousness. He also speaks of the poet's religious consciousness which is the love relationship between the universal self and the individual self. Cenkner defines the Karma Yoga of Gandhi and the Integral Yoga of Aurobindo. Here he

unconsciously draws a contrast between Gandhi the practical humanist and Aurobindo the mystic who sought to integrate Man and God through purification and meditation.

Expatiating the educational theories of Tagore, the writer emphasises Tagore's dissatisfaction at the existing system of schools as 'it had not the completeness of the world'. Tagore's cardinal principle of education, says Cenkner, is the 'freedom of creative self-expression'. The author refers to it as a 'wholistic education' one which coordinates all cultural resources. He also speaks of Tagore's aspirations for a curriculum that is 'activity centred' and not 'subject centred'.

Coming to Gandhi, Cenkner emphasises the former's idea that the school is the extension of home, hence there should be a continuity in language and culture, between home and school. Besides character building is the fundamental enterprise of Gandhian school and through this the evolution of a non-violent personality.

On the other hand, Cenkner portrays Aurobindo, whose normative principles are, first that nothing can be taught; second that the mind has to be continually consulted; and third that one must work from the near to the far. Cenkner clearly delineates the practical realities in the ideals and systems of Tagore and Gandhi and the mystical vision of Aurobindo.

The chapter on 'Praxis and Significance' deals with the influence the educational systems of the three personalities had on contemporary and future life. He further highlights the success of the institutions set up by them. Besides Tagore's Shantiniketan and Shriniketan, the apex of his educational endeavours was the establishment of Visva Bharati. Gandhi's experiments were conducted within the ashrams. Cenkner talks of initial reluctance that people showed in accepting the Wardha Scheme. He feels that at no point did it become a national movement.

Cenkner depicts Auroville as a project established by Aurobindo, but which was sustained by the inspiring spirit of the Mother. Similarly, says Cenkner, the Mother played an important role in the conception and execution of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

The concluding chapter deals with the religious personality as teacher. Tagore, Gandhi and Aurobindo established a pattern

of living alike for the teacher and the taught. Yet says Cenkner, each had a different approach and fulfilment

Cenkner's work is comprehensive and analytical. It presents the development of the Man, the evolution of his thought and philosophy, the significance of his achievement and above all, the towering personality of the Man, superseding all his achievements.

The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute For  
Advanced Study in Philosophy  
University of Madras  
Madras

**T. S. Devadoss**



*Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics*, W. H. Walsh : Edinburgh University Press, 1975 : pp. x + 265, Price : \$ 11.95.

*Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* is somewhat like Everest in that it invites conquest simply because it is there. Walsh's attempt to meet this challenge is very much to be commended. His analysis is thorough ; it is plain talk, honest and straightforward and conveys the impression that the author is fully conversant with Kant's writings. In reducing Kant's epistemology to the modern idiom he has given not only a strong but at the same time a most informative presentation of his chosen subject.

Categories for Kant are pure intellectual concepts and we are given no higher principle beyond the logical forms of judgement from which they are derived. But fairly early in his book Walsh goes to some lengths to criticize Kant's contention that categories of the understanding should be formal in their origin, although to be meaningful they must apply to an objective world. Walsh at this juncture shows not a little conviction as well as courage in his forthright assertion that the supposed link between the forms of judgement and categories as put forward by Kant is only a hollow pretence. The implication is that the categories that declare for the whole of experience should be able to claim for themselves more than a purely logical relationship in their derivation. If categories are designed to be applicable to the phenomenal world, the time factor, for example, should in some way have been with them from the start, and one apparent reason is that if the entry of time is delayed it must have been delayed from some previous time.

In the Transcendental Deduction the problem Kant set for himself was to formally demonstrate how the categories which he had listed are indispensable to any kind of experience in the phenomenal world. Kant's proof simply takes the form of the contrapositive; he is saying that from experience we are led to categories, so that to negate these categories would be to render experience impossible. What seems to have been overlooked is that in any deduction that pretends to be formal the matching of concepts to experienced phenomena is not permissible and constitutes no less than a form of the naturalistic fallacy. And to say that we

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are talking about experience in general will scarcely help matters because abstract experience is not the kind of experience with which Kant at this point is concerned.

If, according to Kant's general position, the objects of experience are phenomena, knowledge cannot apply to such phenomena in strictest certainty; the relationship can only be one of contingency if the known objects are in some way contingent. It follows that we cannot be certain of Kant's *Transcendental Deduction* itself because we can never be thoroughly convinced that the knowledge which relates to the sensible world is true knowledge. In any case, categories in a priori knowledge should already be well comprehended by the mind, and it is not altogether clear why they should require experience to support them in demonstrating their validity. Unless for Kant a priori cognition in the form of categories is an hypothesis, which it is not, proof is hardly called for because no proof beyond the established a priori status of the categories should be required. Walsh himself goes so far as to suggest that Kant often writes as if he were doing little more than describing for us the course of human cognition, and if this is so we are given only a poor substitute for what purports to be a proof of cognition in terms of categories designed to be universal for all knowledge. In the intense concern to show that pure concepts of our minds are essential for sensible intuition, it is as if nature herself could not be trusted to make or remake the things and events that are already there for us to experience.

In readily admitting that talk in the *First Analogy* about a substratum which allegedly represents time in general is at best unsatisfactory, Walsh is not alone in trying to make sense of this part of Kant's epistemology. The salient point about the *First Analogy* should be that if in experience we are able to know only appearances, we can never hope to obtain categorical certainty that the substance of experience is unchanging. Walsh attempts to sidestep the issue by speaking of a substance that is permanent, but which nevertheless exists in unending transformations. This in spite of Kant's phrase 'unchanging in its existence' at B 225, with direct reference to substance. And similarly for the *Second Analogy*, if we know events only as phenomena rather than absolutely, we should not be able to say that one event necessarily determines another event as a part of our experience. Walsh makes

the assertion that 'in Kant's phenomenal world necessary connection holds,' but its ambiguity apparently escapes him, for this very statement yields a deterministic assessment of events of which we are nevertheless permitted only apparent rather than certain knowledge. Kant must know that even nature herself never is in a completely finished state, that nature never keeps up, as it were, with all contingencies of the creative process and that causation must always leave a residue that is open for further determination. Nature's freedom, in some respect at least, is surely free apart from man's understanding of it, whereas Kant posits in mankind an understanding that is able to fully determine natural phenomena. But if nature does not legislate even for herself in the absolute sense, it can hardly be the case that man legislates absolutely for nature, even though we do try to select an environment that we believe will be to our greatest benefit. That the human understanding should declare for a strict determinism for happenings in the natural world is simply inconsistent and wrong, not only for Kant's philosophy, but for any philosophy.

Walsh assumes the role of apologist or severe critic at various crucial points as circumstances seem to warrant. In his thorough discussion leading up to and including the Third Antinomy, the objection is quite well made that intelligible causation for Kant occupies a position that can only be said to be gratuitous. When human reason is given free rein, as the story goes according to Kant, we are driven to contradictory conclusions concerning the conditions of experience. The solution, as Walsh reminds us, is to accept Kant's transcendental idealism where the ideas of reason are said to be only regulative, designating not objects, but ideals. Indeed, for his solution to the Third Antinomy, Kant has moved into the moral realm, which Walsh considers to be hardly fair. At best it is irrelevant to the issue. What the solution amounts to, in effect, is to say that moral precepts may justifiably be drawn into an epistemology which set out primarily to deal with the natural world. It leads us to believe that, in spite of the deterministic conclusions reached in the Second Analogy, an intelligible cause arrived at through an evaluation of man's own freedom is not incompatible with the laws of nature herself.

From a consideration of man's freedom we are led to the moral proof for God's existence. Consistent with the distinctly humani-

stic approach taken in the Dialectic, Kant has it that God is real only for the man who can claim to be moral. As Walsh is probably right in emphasizing, this bit of practical deliberation constitutes no actual proof at all, for it is only a comforting personal belief. So he is inclined to write off the moral proof. But it follows as a corollary to this 'proof' for the existence of God that the force of moral obligation as felt by the individual consciousness may be inductively generalized into a universal moral law as we proceed from the instances of man's moral awareness up to God's creativity. A universal law of autonomy, therefore, taken as an extension of our own sense of obligation, reaches to the assumption of a law embracing all activity, natural as well as human. We are able to say this simply because of the fact that it is an autonomous law. The moral proof establishes the existence of a lawmaking God eternally fashioning a universal and objective law that encompasses all classes of activity.

There should be little need, however, to underplay the predicament in which Kant finds himself, namely, that an autonomous law for all activity must mean that no other law under it can be strictly determinate for action. If the pure practical reason is subject to universal law and on that account has invoked God's moral law, then a *fortiori* pure reason should also have known of this universal autonomy. But it is too late; Kant in the *Analytic* has already declared for an exact determinism under the category of causality. If the universal law covers all natural phenomena, the events of nature should come under the regulative rule of reason rather than within the bounds of the understanding which allegedly allows no freedom. Walsh suggests that Kant saw the difficulty involved and tried to rectify matters somewhat in the *Second Critique* where he talks of 'extending' the categories of pure reason, provided that they do not become cognitions for speculative knowledge. The problem of how it is possible to extend a priori categories beyond their original fixed status is not dealt with.

The issue resolves itself into a paradox, where practical reason, as one special kind of reason, breaks out, as it were, into a freedom of its own making; in the case of human consciousness the only recourse is to accept the intervention of the human will. The fact that we have arrived at the point of free will in consciousness neverthe-



less does not entitle us to establish a domain of reason which is entirely separated from the natural realm. Much less can freedom in consciousness be legitimately extended to give us knowledge of freedom in the noumenal world, a world about which we lack knowledge entirely. While Walsh charitably grants that Kant's theory about the regulative role of the ideas of reason somehow concerns a 'notion of system', he is ready to concede that Kant at least must have come to realize that in this general area there is still a problem to be met with concerning the ordering of nature over and above that which was handled in the *Analytic*. We find it not hard to agree.

Finally, Walsh does not avoid the pertinent question of how, if human knowledge must be tied to sense-intuition, the intellectual insights of the *Analytic* are arrived at. However, after mounting what would appear to be a strong case for some telling criticism, Walsh disappoints with the rather weak observation that Kant might have been prepared to allow an element of the contingent within pure reason after all; it could be that even his a priori categories are based only on fact rather than on necessary fact. Indeed Walsh has remarkably little to say concerning Kant's heavy dependence upon the a priori. It is somewhat strange, nevertheless, that if mankind is able to attain only to phenomenal knowledge at best, one philosopher is entitled to make as much use of transcendental knowledge and to spend as much time with the a priori as Kant has seen fit to do. Kant's critical analysis of the knowing process resolves itself into a transcendental logic largely of his own invention, a development of which Professor Walsh is by no means unaware, and one which he is unwilling to accept without qualification.

London, Ontario,  
Canada

A. W. J. Harper

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Tufanganj College  
New Town, Dt. Coochbehar  
(W. B.) 736 160
- 210) Indira Rothermund  
Gokhale Institute of Politics  
and Economics  
Poona - 411 004.

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- 1) *The Problems of Mysticism* : Nils Bjrn Dvastad : published by him at Scintilla Press (Norway) Oslo (1980) : pp. 368.
- 2) *Sanskrit and Indian Studies* : Essays in Honour of Daniel H. H. Ingalls : Ed. M. Nagatoni, B. K. Matilal, J. M. Masson, E. C. Dimock Jr. : D. Reidel Publishing Company (Dordrecht : Holand) : 1980 : pp. xi + 267.
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- 7) *To be Good* : Satyanarayan P. Kanal : Secretary, Dev Somaj, Chandigarh : 1980 : pp. V + 154.
- 8) *Civil Disobedience, a Philosophical Study* : R. D. Dixit : GDK Publications, Delhi : 1980 : pp. xi + 104.