

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

SIR,

I should take this opportunity to thank Professor F. Otto Schrader for the appreciative and encouraging review which he has written on my book, *Thought and Reality*, and which has been published in the January issue of this journal. He has been quite fair to me in it, and it is after some hesitation that I have decided to send this short note. There are a few points in the review, which, if taken as he tried to present them, will lead to some misunderstanding of Sankara's philosophy. There are, again, a few points of criticism levelled against Sankara, which, I feel, can be met reasonably from the side of logic.

Professor Schrader objects to regarding the Absolute as conscious, and says, with Duessen, that this is due to Sankara's anthropomorphism. On the other hand, he has no objection to treating it as supra-conscious. But the supra-conscious cannot be the same as the unconscious or infra-conscious; it must be more than our consciousness. The consciousness we have at this empirical level is not perfect; that is, for it there always remains some impenetrable core in the object. But in the Absolute this defect is removed. It is fully mediated immediacy or self-consciousness, in which the screen between the subject and the object drops. Of course, it is not consciousness in the ordinary sense, viz., consciousness of an object that is alien to consciousness. It still is consciousness for which the object itself is consciousness: it is our ordinary consciousness made perfect. It is for this reason that Sankara regards the consciousness of the self, not as its property, but as the same as the self. For the same reason many of the Western idealists too have called the Absolute by the name of Self-consciousness.

Our thought cannot form an epistemological ideal beyond such a Self. It is the most perfect type of existence that we can think of, and which we regard as the truth of our finite existence. That is why whenever we have direct experience of it we are said to reach the deepest depths of our being. We cannot think of deeper depths than that. Buddhism may postulate eight supramundane worlds. But the number of such worlds can never be definitely proved, and the question belongs to mythology, not to logic and metaphysics. The Absolute is postulated as that which transcends all thought, and so all relations. If from any world it is possible to think of a higher, then that world is still within reach of thought and has relations to the higher and the lower. So naturally that cannot be the Absolute. The Absolute is not what is merely supra-mundane, but what is beyond thought. The world of the angels is supra-mundane, but it is not the Absolute. Nor is it logical to postulate something beyond the infinite. Mythology may do so, but it is not metaphysics. Buddha was silent when the question was put to him about the Self or the Absolute; but the reasons for his silence were best known to him only. It would be dogmatic to interpret his silence as denial. But Sankara asserts the truth of the Absolute, because unreality, according to him, is unthinkable without thinking of reality as its basis. The Absolute is real as the basis of the world, which is relatively unreal.

The suggestion is made that *māyā* may be understood from the side of the Greek conception of the world as Being and Non-Being. But there is a subtle and profound difference between the two conceptions. *Māyā*, according to Sankara, is neither Being nor Non-Being, and is not a unity of the two. This point I have explained in my book, and need not repeat what I have said already. Or rather, we should say that Being and Non-Being are understood by Sankara differently from the Greeks. Non-Being is the admittedly unreal, which is never experienced as real. It is not what turns unity into plurality, or Being into Becoming; and it is not the same as absence or difference. It does not enter at all into the constitution of *māyā*. *Māyā* is an entity which is experienced as real; it is positive. Yet it is not Being or Existence, for the Absolute only is such. The Absolute also is positive, yet it is also

CORRESPONDENCE

Being or Existence. It is for the reason that *māyā* cannot be treated as either existence or non-existence that it is said to be inexplicable. The Absolute also may be said to be inexplicable, but in a different sense, viz., that of being beyond thought, not in the sense that it is neither Being nor Non-Being.

Another suggestion is made that *vivarta* may be understood as creation from nothing. This seems to be a misunderstanding. At least Sankara does not understand it in that sense. The creation is out of Brahman, not out of nothing. But this Brahman does not change or undergo modification in the process. For example, when milk turns into curd, the milk is no more; its very substance is transformed. This process is called *pariṇāma*. But when gold is made into an ornament, gold is not transformed into any other substance. Similarly Brahman is the cause of the world; but this is a peculiar cause which does not change in the process. Such a process is called *vivarta*. Sankara does not accept the principle that creation can be out of nothing. On the other hand, he does not also accept the principle that every case of causation must be a case of *pariṇāma*. *Vivarta* is a peculiar concept, and its peculiarity should be as such recognized, and should not be understood in terms of any other concept.

I should like to add that the concept of creation as *līla* or play, though it does not seem to be explicitly mentioned in the Upanishads, is yet found in the *Brahmasūtras* (ii. 1, 33), which are an interpretation of the Upanishads. And all the commentators of the *Brahmasūtras* accept the concept of *līla* as expressing the Upanishadic view. I therefore attributed it to the Upanishads, though I could have been more definite. This and a few lapses will be corrected in a second edition when that is required; *twāvidyā* is not a misprint for *sthūlāvidyā*, but for *tulāvidyā*.

I again thank Professor Schrader for introducing my book to the Western readers as important and comprehensive. And it will give me much gratification if the readers take, not merely antiquarian, but philosophical interest in it.

P. T. RAJU.

ANDHRA UNIVERSITY, WALTAIR,
May 13, 1938.

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

SIR,

When a review by one eminent philosopher of another's work is admitted to be not a review but a "grouse," and a "grouse" declared to be justified, some reply seems called for on behalf of those readers who value the work in question.

Professor A. E. Taylor's complaint (in *Philosophy*, April 1938) against Mr. Santayana's book, *The Realm of Truth*, includes two charges: first, that his "verbal graces," "picturesque metaphors," impair the effect of his work—obscure that straightforward statement of meaning he could give us if he would: secondly, that these freely indulged metaphors are actually no mere adornment but "pieces of a myth, and a myth which impresses one as false." To the second of these charges no reply need be made. That one philosopher's system should appear to another reviewing it as false, or inadequate, is a result for which we are all prepared. What surprises is that those metaphors which at one moment are characterised as parts of Santayana's essential myth, should also be spoken of as deviations from the honest effort to communicate meaning. It is just this point that I wish to contest.

It seems to me that many philosophers are rightly realizing—to-day perhaps more than ever before—that our clearest renderings of reality, whether couched in austere conceptual terms or variegated with abundant imagery, may with equal justice be described as myths—myths in the sense of partial renderings from some human, historically conditioned standpoint of what necessarily transcends human grasp. In Santayana's work, it seems to me, a reader at all in sympathy with his standpoint can feel the effort of a sincere mind to render exactly, now by logical statement, now by brilliant imagery, the outlook to which the writer's experience and powers

PHILOSOPHY

constrain him; and if in some important respect such a reader differs from the author's conclusions, still the clarity of exposition, in its untechnicality and variety of literary presentation, enables one to enter imaginatively the distinctive outlook and to measure and clarify one's own thought against it.

Yours faithfully,
MAUD BODKIN.

2 NORTH GROVE,
HIGHGATE N.6.,
April 1938.

TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

SIR,

May I protest against the last paragraph of the review of Canon Green's *The Problem of Art* in your April number? Your reviewer hopes that the author "will enjoy a *succès de scandale* [*sic*] . . . because he has seen through the meaningless rigmarole of the Neapolitan quack."

I have had, in my time, occasion to express disagreement not only with Croce and Canon Green but also with your reviewer. I hope nothing was lost in explicitness by trying to follow the urbane tradition of Hume and Butler, rather than the bad manners of Bradley.

The passage in Canon Green thus commended seems to me an inadequate interpretation of Croce.

Yours, etc.,
E. F. CARRITT,

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,
OXFORD,
April 8, 1938.