

Search for the Absolute in Neo-Vedanta: The Philosophy of K. C. Bhattacharyya

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SEARCH FOR the Absolute is the central concern of Vedanta philosophy.¹ All sources of knowledge—reason, revelation, experience²—are employed for its speculative apprehension, and all ways of spiritual progress—doing, loving, knowing—are utilized for its practical attainment. The monist or non-dualist (*advaita*) school of Vedanta philosophy differs from the other schools (dualist, qualified non-dualist, and dualistic non-dualist) in that search for the Absolute is its exclusive concern, all else being rejected as illusion. In this school practical philosophy is based strictly on knowing and speculative philosophy, conceived as the rational analysis of ordinary experience, is based strictly on reason. The Absolute is sought in experience, not in analysis of abstract being, but it is sought by means of reason. The authority of the revealed Upanishads is accepted only in the sense of faith seeking understanding, a clue and psychological aid to truth but not a dogmatic basis from which to infer it. The possibility of mystical experience is admitted as of merely religious, not philosophical or cognitive, significance. *Moksha*, ineffable intuition of the Self as Absolute Reality, transcends reason to be sure, but it also transcends

¹ I am indebted to the Trustees of Tufts College for the sabbatical leave of absence, to the Rockefeller Foundation for the financial grant, to Visvabharati University for the hospitality, and to Professor (now Vice-Chancellor) Kalidas Bhattacharyya for the instruction which made possible the study on which this article is based.

² Vedanta epistemologists also recognize three other sources of knowledge—analogy, assumption, and negation. K. C. Bhattacharyya analyzes the six ways of knowing in his *Studies in Vedantism* (I 71-90).

philosophy, to which it is related, if at all, as an end to which philosophy may be a means. Non-dualist Vedanta, therefore, is to be evaluated on rational grounds alone. Rejection of revelation or scepticism concerning mysticism is irrelevant. And if reason is universal, any validity non-dualism may have is likewise universal, nowise conditioned by or confined to the Hindu culture in which historically it developed.

In the classical tradition of non-dualist Vedanta, represented for example by Yajnavalkya in prehistoric, Gaudapada in ancient, Shankaracharya in medieval, Prakashananda in modern, or Malkani in contemporary times, a consensus has developed that the phrase *being-consciousness-bliss (sat-chit-ananda)* is the most adequate formula for describing the Absolute (*Brahman*)—it being understood that this is not literally a description of the ineffable Absolute but a way of thinking of it in our human concepts. The neo-Vedanta which has arisen in the twentieth century, while not denying the correctness of this formula, is not satisfied with merely repeating or deducing it. It strives to find ever more adequate concepts for describing the Absolute, not as a goal to be achieved (only *moksha* is the goal) but as progress in the interminable search for understanding. Neo-Vedanta has developed in the favorable cultural environment formed by the struggle for political independence, the religious revivals of the Ramakrishna Order and Brahmo-samaj, and the Bengali literary renaissance. Its teachers are university professors writing in English, the language of education and scholarship in modern India. Neo-Vedanta is not a doctrine to be accepted or rejected but a way of thinking capable of indefinite development and variation, a lively shoot on the ancient stock of Vedanta philosophy.

The protagonist of neo-Vedanta philosophy³ is Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (1875-1949), King George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in the University of Calcutta.⁴ Students of his

³ For brief studies of some other neo-Vedanta philosophers see my article "Contemporary Vedanta Philosophy," *Review of Metaphysics*, 9 (1955-56), 485-504; 662-80; 10 (1956-57), 122-57.

⁴ His life was spent in a succession of minor teaching and administrative posts in the Bengal Educational Service, and it was only after retirement that he attained the prestige of the King George V chair. His students say that he always considered their philosophical suggestions sympathetically, often adding his own arguments to support them, thus making the students feel elated, but then proceeded to criticize them. Meanwhile he supported a large joint family on his meager salary. He was known for austerity of life, geniality of personality and integrity of character, and was interested in literature, music, and the struggle for independence. For a biographical sketch by his nephew

philosophy, even those who reject his doctrines (notably the editor of his works, II vi) or positively oppose them (notably G. R. Malkani, whose *Vedantic Epistemology* includes a penetrating criticism), are impressed by the subtlety, profundity, and suggestiveness of his thought. While definitely within the tradition of non-dualist Vedanta, it is informed by his original genius⁵ and also enriched by influences from non-Vedantic philosophy both Indian and Western, influences however in which the non-Vedantic accretions (and the same can be said for the Vedantic core also) are so reinterpreted as to transform rather than merely incorporate the philosophical content. But no comprehensive study of his philosophy has been published.⁶ Besides the intrinsic difficulty of following the subtle dialectic there are certain extrinsic difficulties.

Unavailability of texts is no longer a difficulty since the publication of K. C. Bhattacharyya's philosophical works, published and unpublished,⁷ under the title *Studies in Philosophy* (Calcutta, Progressive Publishers, Vol. I, 1956; Vol. II, 1958), edited by his eldest son Gopinath Bhattacharyya, the present incumbent of his father's chair as King George V (now called Brajendranath Seal) Professor at Calcutta. References in this article are to volume and page of that edition. All his works are short and concise: the two most important articles, "The False and the Subjective" and "Concept of the Absolute and its Alternative Forms," are of 7 and 18 pages respectively; the only books he published, *Studies in Vedanta* and *The Subject as Freedom*, are of 79 and 73 pages; unpublished lecture series on Kant, Sankhya, and

Professor P. J. Chaudhury of Presidency College, Calcutta, see *Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya Memorial Volume* (Amalner, 1958), i-viii.

⁵ His originality, says D. M. Datta, "lies in his compact, irresistible logical chain of arguments."

⁶ The most extended study is by D. M. Datta, *The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy* (Calcutta, 1950), 126-145. Other studies have been based on single works, *The Subject as Freedom*: D. M. Datta, "Two Indian Philosophers," *Aryan Path*, 6 (1935), 394-398; K. K. Bagchi, "Notion of Epistemology in K. C. Bhattacharyya," *Philosophical Quarterly*, 36 (1963), 93-99; G. B. Burch, "The Neo-Vedanta of K. C. Bhattacharyya," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 5 (1965), 304-310; or "The Concept of Philosophy:" P. T. Raju, *Idealistic Thought of India* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1953), 354-375; R. Das, "Acharya Krishnachandra's Conception of Philosophy," *Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy*, 2 (1963), 1-13; or else on conversations: (G. B. Burch, "Contemporary Vedanta Philosophy," *Review of Metaphysics*, 9 (1955-56), 485-496.

⁷ "There remains over an immense mass of manuscripts which will, perhaps, remain unpublished for all time to come" (I v).

Yoga are of 48, 76, and 105 pages; the two volumes of 21 works and their analyses total 720 pages.

The brevity of Bhattacharyya's works does not imply that they can be read quickly. The principal difficulty in studying his philosophy is the austerity of his written style. He out-Kants Kant and out-Hegels Hegel, his favorite Western philosophers, in incomprehensibility. He uses only common words, but he uses them with precision, saying exactly what he means, with no figures of speech, rhetorical embellishments, or simplifications, and the reader unaccustomed to such literary severity is psychologically unprepared to grasp the meaning.⁸ He realized the difficulty of his writings, but said they were clear to him, and he did not expect others to be interested in his ideas.⁹ Still, while difficult, it is not impossible to understand them: the trick is to fathom the sentence structure, locate the antecedents of the pronouns, and have faith that what is stated is exactly what is intended.

Further difficulty results from apparent inconsistencies, but I cannot find any real inconsistencies or that he ever retracted a previous statement. Bhattacharyya's philosophy is not a system¹⁰ but a living organism of thought into which new material is assimilated, never raw but digested by interpretation, and in which the same form becomes ever different as it develops under the impetus of an intellectual vital force. The phases of his thought are alternative rather than exclusive formulations of his philosophy. The concept of alternation itself as a logical and metaphysical category is perhaps his most original contribution to philosophy, although he attributed it to Jainism, and the study of its development is of special interest. The phases of his thought cannot be confined in chronological periods; the article on Jainism is separated from the associated article on the Absolute and its alternative forms by a decade of works belonging to another phase; the lectures on Kant were written long after the papers of the Kantian

⁸ His oral teaching, on the other hand, was a model of clarity, fluency and persuasiveness. He could write clearly if he chose, as is shown by the clear and graceful style of his "Svaraj in Ideas," *Visvabharati Quarterly*, 20 (1954), 103-14; reprinted in Silver Jubilee Issue, 25 (1960), 295-303. An earlier paper, "Fifty Years of British Education," is said to have the same clear style.

⁹ A proposal in 1942 by Gopinath Bhattacharyya that his father clarify his writings orally in order that Gopinath might compose a commentary on them was abandoned when they calculated that at the rate they were going it would take 50 years.

¹⁰ When told D. M. Datta was writing a section on him for his *Contemporary Philosophy*, he said he did not realize he had any system of philosophy.

phase; and the dominant concept of each phase can also be found in the others. Only by a distinction of phases, however, can the various aspects of his thought be integrated and its organic character appreciated.

To define the Absolute was his idea from beginning to end. In the first phase of his philosophy he defines the Absolute as *Indefinite*, in the second phase¹¹ as *Subject*, in the third phase as *Alternation*.

FIRST PHASE: THE ABSOLUTE AS INDEFINITE

In his first phase K. C. Bhattacharyya defines the Absolute as Indefinite in accordance with the Upanishadic doctrine that *Brahman* or *Atman* is best described negatively as *neti neti* ("not that, not that").¹² Vedanta was in his blood. Taught by his grandfather, a pandit who observed the brahmanical rites but also fraternized with missionaries to whom he taught Sanskrit, Krishna Chandra was raised in an atmosphere, as Kalidas Bhattacharyya puts it, of "alternation between orthodoxy and liberalism." As a child he had faith in the shastras, the Hindu philosophical classics. He studied Western philosophy at Presidency College in Calcutta, but his temper remained Vedantic. He had no personal guru, saying that the shastras are the guru. But while he had faith in the Upanishads and shastras, he maintained that faith in any scripture implies that the believer should raise himself to the writer's standpoint and feel the truth as the writer felt it. To understand what he believed was the central concern of his life. A Premchand Roychand scholarship¹³ had for its thesis his first book, *Studies in Vedantism* (1904, published 1907).

Traditional Vedanta

This book gives the author's original interpretation of the non-dualist Vedanta which is the basis of his speculation. It presents, he says, "a metaphysical view which is dimly traceable in the Upanishads and which can hardly be said to have been completely brought out even by the commentators" (I 31). It is, he seems to mean, what

¹¹ The first and second together correspond to the "first phase" in my discussion in "Contemporary Vedanta Philosophy."

¹² *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 2:3:6, 3:9:26, 4:2:4, 4:4:22, 4:5:15.

¹³ Awarded to young scholars of the highest distinction, on the basis of examinations and written work, with the expectation of a thesis of outstanding merit.

the Upanishads and Shankara would have said had they thought it through. Still, the traditional doctrines are there. The self, only to be characterized as *neti neti* (I 25), is nonetheless described, in the revealed "central truth of the Vedantic system," as undifferentiated "being, consciousness, and bliss" (I 69). Wherever there is identity in difference, "the identity is the truth and the difference is illusory" (I 38). All perception is illusory (I 73), and the phenomenal world is unreal (I 81). But there are two sides to the Vedantic doctrine of illusion: the world is "unreal apart from *Brahman* and real in the reality of *Brahman*;" the latter side, he adds, "is frequently overlooked" (I 43). And it is just this transcendental realism, the obverse of the empirical subjectivism, which makes revelation necessary for knowledge. "If it be granted that spirit can only teach spirit and that truth can only be *recognised* and not created by mental activity, it must also be granted that revelation is necessary, and that the Word is God, and that accordingly there should be an eternal succession of omniscient teachers" (I 69). It is reason, however, which enables the mind to comprehend these truths and so prepares the way for their intuitive realization (I 70).

The concept of alternation, so important in Bhattacharyya's later thought, already occurs in this early work, in a cosmic, a metaphysical and an epistemological context. (1) Creation and dissolution succeed each other in time: creation is the function of God as action (*Brahmā*); dissolution, that of God as unconsciousness (*Siva*); subsistence of the world, that of God as providence (*Vishnu*). "The alternation of the Trinity is eternal: it is only the nothingness of *Karma* artistically exhibited on the stage of time"—emanation from God's point of view, evolution from ours (I 60). (2) God (*Ishvara*) and the Absolute (*Brahman*) are the same in denotation but different in connotation (like a sphere of light viewed from circumference or center respectively). The Upanishadic verse "May I pass from the dark blank to the figured determinate and from thence to the blank again" indicates "this mystic scintillation of the One reality" in its indefinite and definite aspects, the "conceived inconceivability" which is the "ultimate formula" (I 50). (3) Ignorance and the evil will of which it is "the intellectual reflex" (I 52) are due to partial original sin or irrationality explicable only by preexistence (I 55). Ignorance is not necessarily overcome by the "wonderful power of the understanding," as Hegel held, because at every step dialectical thought, "necessary as it is, has the alternative of absolute scepticism beyond it" (I 53).

Two other works, written much later for special occasions, are also concerned with his interpretation of traditional Vedanta. "Shankara's Doctrine of Maya" was Bhattacharyya's contribution to the first session of the Indian Philosophical Congress in 1925. The fact of illusion (*maya*), like the fact of the Absolute (*Brahman*), cannot be established by reason. When believed by faith in revelation or suggested by the feeling of the vanity of life, however, it can then be interpreted by thought and seen to be rationally intelligible (I 95). The experience of dissipation of illusion gives meaning both to illusion and to reality. "The quality of reality is explicitly felt only when it is experienced as dissipated in an illusion" (I 96). But non-dualist Vedanta denies reality to that which is not yet dissipated, that is, the world. "The acosmism of Shankara goes beyond both realism and idealism by reducing the world to absolute illusion, by interpreting the vanity of life as implying the denial of all given reality," while truth, on the other hand, is thought of "as utterly ungiven, i.e., as self-luminous" (I 96).

Illusion, analyzed in terms of the classic analogy of the rope mistaken for a snake, involves three stages: "the snake is first presented, it is next corrected, and then it is contemplated as corrected" (I 96)—and it is thus that the world appears "to uncritical thought, critical thought, and faith" (I 100). (1) The presentation of the unreal world can be thought of "as magic, as freedom, and as nought" (I 101), but it can be understood only as the opposite of dissipation, "the reversed process of the retractive freedom," God's "freedom to create or put forth as also to destroy or retract objectivity" (I 100). This is metaphysical subjectivism and epistemological realism. The world is illusion, existing only in our consciousness, but we are not introspectively aware of constructing it as we construct images. We see it because it is *there*, although not *really* there, "implicitly real" rather than merely "unreal" (I 99). As he says elsewhere, "objects exist as distinct from the knowing of them," and "relation of objects is not a mere mode of knowing them but is as objective as the terms" (II 245). (2) Correction or dissipation of the cosmic illusion and corresponding knowledge of the real Absolute leave the world as still given but unreal, like the snake referred to a definite place where it is not (I 102). The objective illusion is corrected, but not the "subjective defect through which it is still given" (I 102), and until this "scandal" to reason is removed, absolute truth "is only conceived but not known." This is the "Kantian impasse" (I 104). (3) At the third stage the world is neither real nor unreal but indescribable. For some Vedantists this third stage is *jivanmukti* (final freedom from illusion although not

from individual existence); the world is indescribable at the second stage and simply disappears at the third, offering no problem. For Bhattacharyya, however, while *jivanmukti* may be attained at the second stage, the indetermination to which the world is reduced at the third still offers a problem. The world, now seen not to exist and never to have existed, is no longer a possible subject of which anything, even non-existence, can be predicated (I 98). It is neither existent nor non-existent, whereas the unreal object of the second stage was both existent and non-existent. The indescribable world, however, cannot be ignored. It "should be nought but is still given in absolute mockery of thought" (I 99), marking the limit of thought and frontier of faith. The indefinite Absolute, on the other hand, is now apprehended not as *real*, which is known only in contrast to something unreal, but as *true*, which is known directly (I 101), not logically thought, "the self-evidencing truth" (I 106).

Bhattacharyya's second favorite word, after *alternation*, is *demand*.¹⁴ The feeling of the vanity of life is accompanied by "the *demand*"¹⁵ for absolute certitude;" and the whole doctrine of illusion is a "formulation of this feeling and demand" (I 95). This is the key to overcoming agnosticism. For Kant absolute truth is unknown and unknowable. For Vedanta it is unknown, or rather "known as unknown," but for that very reason "*demanding* to be known" (I 104). Faith that this *demand* will be actualized is the basis of metaphysical knowledge. That which truly is *demands* to be known and must be known.¹⁶

The religious aspect of Vedanta, explicitly excluded from the work just discussed, is treated in the chapter "The Advaita and its Spiritual Significance" contributed to *The Cultural Heritage of India* published in 1936. Here the emphasis is on the illusoriness not of the world but of the individual self—"the central notion of Advaita Vedanta" (I 113). The individual, mistakenly thinking that he is not free, needs a discipline which "will lead him to realize that his bondage is an illusion and that he is eternally free," and this discipline is primarily cognitive, not active or emotive (I 118), although these other paths also have a place in the full religious life.

¹⁴ Appearance of these words in contemporary Indian philosophical works is usually a sign of his influence.

¹⁵ Here and elsewhere I have italicized at discretion.

¹⁶ In discussing Yoga he says: "The given-ness of the object in ordinary perception is not an ultimate inexplicability as it is to Kant but implies the consciousness that I have to know it better and the object has to reveal itself more frankly" (I 293).

Influence of Hegel

The principal non-Vedantic influence in the first phase was that of Hegel, whose system was accepted by many in Bengal at that time as the ultimate philosophy. Bhattacharyya was enamored of Hegel, but with reservations, and in his own way. He did not write any systematic work on Hegel, but we may presume that his interpretation of Hegel was no less original than that of Vedanta, Kant, or Jainism. Hegelian logic, he says, while it "does not admit the indefinite but holds instead that dialectic necessity is creative," does not actually create the new category the necessity of which it sees; the demand for a non-empirical method is recognized but not satisfied (II 211). This inability to create is, however, an "*implicit* admission of the indefinite" (II 231). It would seem that Hegel, like Shankara, stated implicitly what Bhattacharyya states explicitly.

Logic of the Indefinite

He is not original, of course, in maintaining that the Absolute, since it is not limited and therefore not definite, is indefinite. But how can the indefinite be defined? Christian theology has its affirmative and negative theology describing the ineffable God positively but figuratively or literally but negatively. The former would be unthinkable for Bhattacharyya, who never speaks figuratively; there is hardly a figure of speech in his collected works. And the latter would be equally unsatisfactory; his concern is to understand the Absolute, not to glorify it by rhetorically denying its limitations. In his last published work he does say that the Absolute "is only negatively understood . . . speakable only by way of symbolism . . . expressible only by the negation of *I* . . . by what I am not . . . not literally expressible at all" (II 116). But this is very different. Symbol is not metaphor. Affirmative theology predicates all positive attributes of God metaphorically, but this doctrine admits one precise symbol, the self or subject indicated by *I*, which applies literally to reality or self but symbolically to the Absolute which transcends even self, "believed in but not understood either in the objective or in the subjective attitude." Negative theology denies all attributes of God, but this doctrine denies only *I*; the positive character of the Absolute "is expressible *only* by the negation of *I*." This has little in common with the notion of *ineffable* as used in mystical literature for what can be experienced emotionally but not described in words.

Defining the indefinite is a logical problem. To elaborate traditional logic, which deals only with the definite, into a more complete system which has in it a place for the indefinite is the purpose of the article "Place of the Indefinite in Logic" in the *Calcutta University Silver Jubilee Volume* of 1916, the most important work of the first phase. It might seem to be merely a three-valued logic, with the indefinite "a third category side by side with affirmation¹⁷ and negation" (II 232), like the three-valued logics developed by Reichenbach and others to handle the data of nuclear physics, but it is rather different. The purpose of Reichenbach's logic is to save the appearances; that of Bhattacharyya's is to save the reality. It is a dynamic dialectic, differing from Aristotle's logic not like Reichenbach's but like Hegel's, by which in part it was inspired.

A preliminary approach to the problem is made in the paper "Some Aspects of Negation" (1914). In all phases Bhattacharyya identifies reason with negation: affirmation is a dead form useless for deduction; negation is a living form by which something is drawn from something else; negative attention "is the very heart of all mental process" (II 211). This paper endeavors to show that "there are certain ultimate modes of logical thought" embodying incommensurable types of negation: (1) mere negation leaves the negated as rejected without any relations and so indefinite; (2) the negated as coordinate with the affirmed is equally definite; (3) affirmation is defined by negation, since each affirmation is "constituted by an infinity of differences, by infinite negation" (II 209); (4) since *any* particular may spring "from the vortex of negation," particulars must be "accepted as they come," with their ground inexplicable. In these four views being "is progressively reduced to negation;" in the last, "being is abolished and absolute negation alone remains, not only as inexplicably definite but also as "inexplicably self-related or self-negating, i.e., as a free function or activity" (II 210). The abstract types of negation are interpreted concretely as modes of illusion: (1) illusion, understood through its own negation as illusion of illusion, is subjectively opposed to self-identity; (2) the subjective idea, while not objective, still has its own definiteness and relations, distinct from the system of objects; (3) the illusion is taken as identity of objective given and subjective explanation—"the last thinkable affirmation which alternates with negation" (II 216); (4) the synthesis of mutual negations produces only uncertainty as to whether all par-

¹⁷ I am indebted to Mrs. James H. Woods for the suggestion that I systematically substitute the synonym *affirmation* for Bhattacharyya's word *position*.

ticularity is illusion, and in this last mode the absence of all positive knowledge makes us aware of the unknown as what alone is not illusory. These types of negation indicate different philosophical temperaments, and all philosophical dispute is a conflict between them (II 207). Pragmatism, the resolution of truth into will, recognizes the fourth type, "creative negation," but, like Hegelianism, proposes no technique for attaining its goal of constructing truth. A discipline of negation is needed.

In "Place of the Indefinite in Logic" Bhattacharyya remarks that the indefinite has often found a place in metaphysics but has had none in logic, which should be neutral and applicable to any metaphysics. Logic is an objective science dealing abstractly with the forms of all thinkables—objective, subjective, or absolute. The most abstract and comprehensive distinction is that between the definite and the indefinite (II 227). This distinction is expressed in the principle that "the indefinite is not and is indefinite at once" (II 228) or that "the indefinite and definite are and are not one" (II 233). In the analogous Hegelian synthesis of being and non-being the identity of the opposed terms is stressed, but in this principle identity and difference are equally stressed, the line between definite and indefinite being itself indefinite. The principle reveals the inadequacy of the three traditional forms of Western logic: against dialectic, it points to unreason as an alternative to reason; against formal logic, it suggests the indeterminate form of doubt or ignorance beyond determinate affirmation and negation; against empirical logic, it points out that the positive object of experience is "a determination carved out of the indeterminate" (II 229).

With regard to *terms*, the bounds demarcating them from the surrounding indefinite are themselves indefinite, and the term may be indifferently taken as either being or transition. With regard to *judgments*, the negation of the indefinite is indifferently affirmative or negative, hence the distinction between affirmative and negative is indefinable and "contradiction is just as conceivable as otherwise" (II 229). With regard to *inferences*, the alternation of the dynamic and static aspects in dialectic shows that "reason is indefinite in its very constitution" (II 230n). These and other considerations are elaborated in the article in ways which are sometimes difficult¹⁸ to follow. With reference to *terms*, "the determinate *this* has not simply being and negation in its constitution but also the indefinite" (II 230), and either being or non-being or the indefinite can be taken

¹⁸ I mean *difficult* literally, not ironically, not suggesting that it is fallacious.

as the starting point of logic. With reference to *judgments*, the relation may be taken alternatively as constituting its terms or not, and either affirmation or negation may be taken as prior to the other. With reference to *inferences*, as opposed to Hegelian logic (*therefore* taken "as the self-creating dialectic of truth"), empirical logic (*therefore* taken as the particular affirmation contingently reached through other particular affirmations), or formal logic (*therefore* taken as the explication of an affirmation by negation), this logic holds that the conclusion is "a definition of the indefinite matter to which reasoning has reference" (II 231). The given analytic necessity within the ideal inferential form is "somehow applicable to the indefinite matter of experience," and on the other hand "the synthetic material process is a definite necessity inexplicably emerging out of the indefinite" (II 232).

This logic, unlike the traditional ones, has categories applicable to widely different metaphysical and epistemological theories, including the Vedantic assertion of the unreality of the world. We must reject the dogmatic assumption that "the knowing self ought to move toward more and more determinate truth." The logical impulse may be satisfied "in getting rid of the limitation of the definite, and not in securing increase of definiteness" (II 239). So far as logic is concerned, freedom or the absolute state may be attained either in the direction of the definite or in that of the indefinite. The limiting mystery of philosophy is neither the definite nor the indefinite but their disjunction (II 239).¹⁹

Logic alone cannot establish the Absolute as the Indefinite. This is established by revelation. But logic can make it intelligible, provided the logic includes the category of *indefinite*. Logically, the term is a determination carved out of the indeterminate. Metaphysically, the definite object of experience is somehow defined out of its indefinite ground, which is itself never given in experience. "Relation must be between two definite terms" (II 247). The indefinite cannot be related, cannot be either subject or predicate of a judgment, is not relative to anything. This, however, is mere logic, and is not advanced as an ontological proof for the existence of the indefinite Absolute. At most, it shows (and that by a dubious conversion) that the Absolute, if there is any such thing, is indefinite. The existence of the Absolute is a presupposition accepted by faith. The purpose of neo-Vedanta is to understand the Absolute, not to determine wheth-

¹⁹ This system of logic is further developed by an elaborate theory of relations in the paper "The Definition of Relation as a Category of Existence" (written 1918, published posthumously, II 245-57).

er it exists,²⁰ and it is understood paradoxically as what cannot be understood, the Indefinite, at once indefinite (not intelligible) and definite (yet somehow intelligible), "only negatively understood" (II 116).

Neo-Vedanta, however, like classical Vedanta, cannot remain satisfied with this quasi-negative conclusion, but seeks, if not any definite connotation, at least a definite denotation for the Absolute. The logical approach gives way to a psychological approach. Vedanta philosophy has always had an epistemological bias. It thinks of metaphysics not as the rational analysis of being but as the rational analysis of experience. The Absolute, as indefinite, cannot be any object of experience, but as the ground of all objects it is understood as the subject of experience. The Indefinite, remaining at every level of experience as a fringe not realized but demanding to be realized, is approached by gradual inward realization of the subjective. This brings us to the second phase of Bhattacharyya's philosophy, where the absolute Indefinite is interpreted as the absolute Subject.

SECOND PHASE: THE ABSOLUTE AS SUBJECT

In his second phase K. C. Bhattacharyya defines the Absolute as Subject in accordance with the Upanishadic formula *Tat tvam asi* ("You are it").²¹ The Subject is analyzed in his second book *The Subject as Freedom* (lectures at the Indian Institute of Philosophy in 1929, published 1930)²² and related logical problems are treated in a series of four articles written and published between 1927 and 1932.

Influence of Kant

The principal non-Vedantic influence in this phase was that of Kant. His interpretation of Kant, based on a thorough study of the texts in translation and formulated in a series of lectures delivered at Calcutta in 1935, is highly original.²³ Unlike the *objective reasoning* of science or ordinary philosophy, where the sequence of conclusion from data is taken as a fact independent of the reasoner's mind, Kant's

²⁰ Neo-Vedanta offers no rational refutation of positivism. "Beliefs in science alone are formulable as judgments and literally thinkable" (II 106).

²¹ *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6:8-16.

²² The first edition of this book, which is suitable for reading in graduate or undergraduate courses on metaphysics, is obtainable from the publisher (Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, Jalgaon).

²³ "Widely different from how it has been understood by English-speaking peoples," but "amply supported by German and Continental commentaries,"

transcendental reflection has its conclusion realized in the very consciousness of the reasoning (II 359). In such transcendental reflection "the free self alone is known to be real and the object is known to be phenomenal" (II 306). Kant's most important thesis, Bhattacharyya says, is "the transcendental ideality of time or the mental world, implying a distinction between self and mind" (II 304). By this, I take it he means: Kant's metaphysics is dissociated from the Augustinian-Cartesian dualism of mental self and material world as real substances and affiliated to non-dualist Vedanta, for which mind and matter are equally illusory as contrasted with the real self.

The three critiques, he insists, must be taken together, but the second is crucial. The conception of a priori knowledge in the first is connected with the moral apprehension of freedom in the second (II 303). Although space is known before time (II 324), the phenomenality of space is dependent on the phenomenality of time, and the latter is dependent on practical knowledge of the self as free causality (II 307). The object is known practically as "an emanation of the self as freedom" (II 305), but the *spatio*-temporal world is known theoretically as distinct from the self and so implying an unthinkable thing-in-itself, and this contradiction in the object as emanation of self yet not mere idea is resolved in aesthetic consciousness into a self-subsistent value (II 306). Causality, on the other hand, is inapplicable to mental phenomena; time is symbolized by space, and the permanent mind cannot be pictured but is only symbolized by the spatial world as gathered up in body²⁴ ("a point which Kant did not bring out"), hence only the external, not the mental, world is "heuristically imagined or reflectively judged to be self-subsistent" (II 311). There is however a practical belief in mental causality bound up with the practical knowledge of free causality. Content of external object, emergence of mental object, and affection of the subject are one and the same fact, that is, sensation (II 315), which is the "conscious limit to free imagination" (II 313), something *positively limit-*

says Kalidas Bhattacharyya (*Memorial Volume*, 227)—but he remarked to me that his father was always "going beyond," i.e., correcting, Kant. (The editor includes this among the original works in Volume II, not among the critical historical studies in Volume I.)

²⁴ Cf.: "Perceived object necessarily refers to the body and implies distinction from it but the body does not imply distinction from the object but implies only distinction from I" (*Studies in Sankhya*, I 159). The external world is the projection as phenomenon, through the necessity of experience, of the self as identified with the body (I 160).

ing the free act (II 314)—a suggestion of Bhattacharyya's crypto-realism as a clue to the maze of Kantian idealism.

This maze is followed through devious arguments which integrate the doctrines of the three critiques. Primarily, however, the transcendental philosophy is concerned with the transcendental or non-objective, that is, a content not distinct from the consciousness of it, which for Kant is *the self as conscious act of freedom* (II 301) realized through willing (I 285). This is the foundation and presupposition of the whole system. Even the Transcendental Aesthetic presupposes without proving a real self utterly unobjective; objective causality is intelligible only in reference to the self's free causality; and the conclusion that the self constructs the known object would be a mere figure of speech without prior theoretical knowledge of the self as real (II 304). Assuming the *subjective attitude*, that we do not know the self as object or mind, is the first, negative, step toward practical knowledge of the self as free cause (II 308). Self, to be sure, is mind, but mind is not self (II 313). Essentially the self is freedom. This is not indeterminism, for only *right* willing is free (II 343); there is no "bad freedom" (II 346). Good or free will knowing itself as free in the knowledge and as the condition of the moral law is Kant's "master principle" (II 347). This knowledge of the self or subject as freedom, which is the presupposition of Kant's transcendental philosophy, is the demonstrated conclusion of Bhattacharyya's *The Subject as Freedom*.

Epistemological Problems

Transcendental psychology, which is the theme of that book, is first defined two years earlier in the article "Knowledge and Truth" (read at the Indian Philosophical Congress in 1927, published 1928). Objective logic recognizes negation only as exclusion from a particular context. Epistemology recognizes negation as pure non-existence. But transcendental psychology, a sort of meta-epistemology, recognizes falsity, which is apparent existence, something we are aware of but do not know (II 151). A known content ("this is so") is not as such known as true, but only as implicitly true, "demanding" to be known as true (II 163). Only when it is challenged and confirmed ("I *know* that this is so") is it explicitly true. Now the truth, formerly fused with the content, is distinguished from it.²⁵ Knowledge and truth,

²⁵ Compare the assertion symbol of *Principia Mathematica*.

therefore, imply each other: only truth is known, and only the known is true (II 154). Truth, thus distinguished from its content, is known as such, and as such is the ultimate reality present in all things.²⁶

This affiliation of epistemology and metaphysics is developed more explicitly in the article "Fact and Thought of Fact" (1931). The coherence, correspondence, and pragmatic theories ("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") are summarily rejected on the ground that they already assume some fact. *Fact* is defined as *what is believed*: "what a person believes is a fact to him" (II 169). The concepts *fact*, *thought*, *speaking*, *thinkable*, *assertable*, and *existent* are carefully distinguished and analyzed. Fact does not imply existence. Non-existence is also fact; the moral "ought," neither existent nor non-existent, is also fact—provided they are believed. But a fact is *thought* only when a question of existence is involved (II 170)—and the article is largely concerned with the defense of this existential thesis. A content abstracted from its possible existence is a significant speakable but has no objective meaning even as "subsistent." An *unreal* content may or may not have been previously believed, but it is *false* only if it was previously, but no longer, believed to be at least possibly existent (II 173). Here as always Bhattacharyya emphasizes negation, falsity, unreality. We advance in wisdom not by discovering new existences—existence is obvious and does not need to be discovered—but by discovering new non-existences, that is, by rejecting what we formerly thought to be existent.

These logical considerations form a framework²⁷ for Vedanta metaphysics. To deny subjectivity is meaningless, but to deny objectivity, to say an objective content is neither existent nor non-existent, is merely unthinkable. It is not meaningless to suggest that objectivity, including both existence and non-existence, is unreal. It is, to be sure, impossible and motiveless for *logic*. The suggestion acquires value only through a *spiritual* feeling or experience of such unreality—"a *spiritual* feeling of the symbolistic character of the object or of its unsubstantiality in itself or both, of the vanity of the

²⁶ This interpretation of the article, for which I am indebted to Kalidas Bhattacharyya, may "go beyond" the text a little (representing, as he said, his own rather than his father's philosophy).

²⁷ I say framework, not foundation. He says elsewhere (II 115) that logic is based on metaphysics.

object-interest as independent of the spiritual interest—the heart of religion and the perennial spring of all idealism” (II 175). But no question can arise about the facthood of the subject unless it is artificially objectified by language or otherwise, apparent doubt referring only to some symbolic characterization of it. The subject as spirit realizes itself on the one hand by freeing itself from objectivity, on the other hand by “contemplating itself as object to consolidate its freedom” (II 176). So long as the dualism of logical and spiritual consciousness persists, object is unquestioned, subject unquestionable, fact. Their unity, neither asserted nor denied by logic, is realized only when object is recognized as the spirit’s symbolizing of itself.

Rasvihary Das summarized and criticized this article in a paper in the same journal.²⁸ He questioned especially the definition of *fact* as *what is believed* and the restriction of *thought* to *possible existents*, and he concluded that opponents of non-dualist Vedanta (like himself) should be grateful for the concession that the denial of objectivity is neither logical nor thinkable, so that those who do not utilize “any spiritual consciousness other than the logical or thinking one” need not admit it. Replying in the same number,²⁹ Bhattacharyya says that his definition indicates the use, not the linguistic definition, of *fact*. He reasserts and elaborates the thesis that to think is to think a content which is thought as a possible existent. Anything else, even though made up of meaningful elements, is only tried to be thought, not thought. Admitting that the article is slanted toward non-dualist Vedanta, he goes beyond his own text to say that *spiritual feeling* (of the world’s unreality) is equivalent to *scriptural teaching*, that the ultimate unreality of the world fits in with the objects’ “indeterminate logical status,” that this is like Kant’s moral postulates’ giving reality to his theoretic ideas, and that in Vedanta “logic follows faith or spiritual experience.”

The thesis of the article just discussed, that a belief is false only if previously held, is both elaborated and qualified in an article, “Correction of Error as a Logical Process,” four months later. Correction of error, disbelieving in what I am aware I believed, cannot be expressed in any unitary “logical form” (form referring only to the content of thinking and not to the thinking itself). It requires two sentences: “*this* was taken as *this* snake,” and “what *this* was taken to

²⁸ *Philosophical Quarterly*, 7 (1932), 387-96.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 397-404.

be was no fact"—sentences which cannot logically be combined into one (II 182). Correction cannot be formulated without referring to the past believing. The *present* consciousness, which is belief in *this* being a rope is not disbelief in *this snake*, because for it there is no such thing even to disbelieve. The content *this snake* was true³⁰ when the belief was there and is false in relation to the present belief (II 185).³¹ There is no awareness of the content *this snake* as having been false when believed. What was then taken as *this snake* was not false, and what is now taken as false is not *this snake* (II 187). Correction "is not disbelieving in a previously believed *content* but only disbelieving that the previous belief had a content at all" (II 188). This view of a contentless belief, he claims, although "perilously near an idealistic view according to which object is nothing but belief with its subjectivity alienated," is, strictly speaking, realistic (II 189). Now that I disbelieve, I cannot describe in objective terms what I then believed, but neither can I say that there was only the subjective fact of contentless belief (II 190). The content is neither fact nor nothing.³²

The discussion of correction of error is strictly abstract, but its metaphysical application is obvious. Rope is *Brahman*, snake the physical world, correction *moksha*. Theoretical denial of the world cannot be formulated in a single sentence because we cannot speak simultaneously from both points of view. Before *moksha* this world is experienced and believed. After *moksha* it is nothing. Perhaps we might, speaking figuratively, imagine *Brahman* as denying all possible worlds, but not this world (just as we might deny that there are any snakes in the jungle, but not that the snake we mistook the rope for is there). In our present state of illusion, however, the world is fact. If I see a rope as a snake, I can say truly, "This is a snake," whereas it would be a lie to say, for example, "This is a scorpion" (and equally a lie to say, "This is a rope"—as I might say to encourage a timid companion). Likewise, the world is fact so long as we see it, and it is fallacious either to deny its events theoretically or reject its demands practically on the ground of a hypothetical future enlightenment.

³⁰ Note that he does not restrict the terms *true* and *false* to propositions.

³¹ This way of putting it is in the spirit of Jain logic, which however is not mentioned in this article.

³² "I believed in a content which was [!] not fact nor absolute nought" (II 190). I do not quite understand this, in view of the definition, reaffirmed in this article (II 186), of fact as what is believed.

Falsity and Subjectivity

"The False and the Subjective" (1932), the last and most important of these four logical treatises, asserts the thesis that consciousness of the false and consciousness of the subjective imply each other. Whatever is false is reflected on, and whatever we reflect on is false. According to Professor T. R. V. Murti of Banaras Hindu University (who has been called the one among Bhattacharyya's students who best understood him), this is the basic principle of Bhattacharyya's philosophy.³³

The first half of this thesis, that consciousness of the false is thereby consciousness of the subjective, is the less difficult to understand. It is a more explicit development of the doctrine of "Correction of Error as a Logical Process" that correction of error is disbelief in what we are conscious of having believed. Consciousness of the false is consciousness of a content speakable³⁴ only as the content of a belief which in turn is speakable only as "that the content of which is false" (II 195). Falsity is not mere objective non-existence, and disbelief is not mere lack of belief. Disbelief is a positive mode of consciousness, the correction or rejection of what was believed. The false is what is rejected or disbelieved, and can be expressed only as what was believed. What was believed is neither the *judgment* "This is A" (for the copula expresses only a confused unity of the fact believed and the believing act) nor the *proposition* "This being A" (for the copula expresses a relation between the terms, whereas the belief was in the concrete this as related to A) but the *content* "This as A" (the concrete fact this as characterized by A). But the content of the corresponding disbelief cannot be expressed in this form; we cannot say that "This as A" was believed, for the word *this* would mean content of a present belief. The content of disbelief can be expressed only as "what was believed," the *what* being unspecifiable in objective terms. The prior belief cannot be specified by its content, for the content is specified only by reference to it. The previous belief can be spoken of only in reference to the disbelief, can be specified only as that the content of which is false or disbelieved. Disbelief, consciousness of prior belief, is a form of non-cognitive consciousness (consciousness of something which cannot be spoken of without reference to the

³³ He also considers it the basic principle of the Madhyamika Buddhist philosophy of Nagarjuna (*The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1955, p. 209).

³⁴ "Speakable," capable of being expressed at all—a category more inclusive than "intelligible."

consciousness), *reflective* consciousness referring not to object but to itself, subjective. "To be conscious of the false as such," therefore, "is to be conscious of the subjective" (II 197).

The second half of the thesis, that consciousness of the subjective is thereby consciousness of the false, is more difficult to understand. It appears, as the author himself remarks, "paradoxical, if not obviously false" (II 197). The reader should realize, however, that Bhattacharyya means this very seriously, and should try to understand its significance.³⁵

In the first place, "consciousness of a belief implies disbelief in its content" (II 197). Consciousness of *belief*, as contrasted with consciousness of its content, is not mere memory, not non-committal consciousness of the content as merely subsistent, but is consciousness of having the past belief for present rejection or reaffirmation. To reject a belief is to dissociate its content from fact. To reaffirm a belief implies consciousness that the content might not be fact and so also is to dissociate the content from fact. But "we are conscious of the dissociation of the content from fact *only through positive disbelief*" (II 199).³⁶ Reaffirmation is "the rejection of disbelief," so that consciousness of a past belief as true is also consciousness of its being false. In case of *doubt*, there is alternation of belief and disbelief. Whenever we are explicitly conscious of a past belief, we have a disbelief in its content. Reflection is always negative.³⁷ As he says elsewhere, "the appearance of presentation is a disbelieved possibility of object" (II 77).

In the second place, "consciousness of the subjective is consciousness of a belief" (II 199), of a content with intentional (believing or disbelieving) reference to fact. Introspection, reflective consciousness or consciousness of the subjective, is distinguishing the subjective, that is, a mode of consciousness, from its content. What we are reflectively conscious of is the consciousness of "a content as what is or may be believed" (II 200). Since consciousness of a belief involves disbelief in its content, consciousness of the subjective is consciousness of the false (II 201). Reflective consciousness involves disbelief in the content of the corresponding unreflective consciousness. We think reflectively only in order to reject some belief.

³⁵ Faith seeking understanding is perhaps the best approach to this article, which is hard to understand unless its truth is presupposed.

³⁶ This sentence, which is indeed "paradoxical, if not obviously false," seems to be the crux of the argument.

³⁷ Even the "primal certitude" *I am I* really means *mind is not I*, a negative judgment (I 184).

Bhattacharyya states, without discussing, two corollaries of this thesis: "the object is through the self-alienation of the subject," and "the subject is not known except by a denial of the object" (II 195). These may be rephrased to say that the object is relative to the subject, consequently *the Absolute is subject*; and that in its essence so far as it is knowable *the subject is freedom* from object. These are the central doctrines of the book *The Subject as Freedom*.³⁸

Transcendental Psychology

This book is described³⁹ as "a systematic elaboration of the concept of subjectivity, conceived in general after Vedanta as conscious freedom or felt detachment from the object." The first two chapters (II 19-49) present abstractly the principles of *transcendental psychology*, and the remaining eight chapters (II 50-92) are its concrete application to the steps of subjectivity.

In an earlier work Bhattacharyya raised the question whether the antithesis between subjective and objective, which "has only been reached very gradually in the history of thought" (II 207), is a necessary dichotomy at all. Apparently he resolved this question in the affirmative, since this dichotomy is the fundamental category of thought in *The Subject as Freedom*. *Object* is whatever is *meant*. But that which is significantly speakable and communicable and even intelligible is not necessarily meant. *Subject* is not meant. The word *I* has no universal meaning, since its significance differs for each speaker; the thing intended, the speaker himself, is understood "through the word but not through the *meaning* of the word" (II 19, 26, 83, 85). Since *I* has no meaning, whereas *this* (symbolizing what is perceived) does, the statement *this is I* is rejected as false, but *I am this* is only felt as undeniable (II 20). *You* and *he* also indicate the subject, and the three persons are known neither to be distinct from nor to be identical with each other (II 23). Object is known (although not indubitably) as distinct from subject. Subject, however, is *known* (indubitably) in itself, although it is *felt* as dissociated both from object

³⁸ The chronological order of publication does not follow the logical development of ideas, as three of the four preliminary articles (1928, 1931, 1931, 1932) were published after the book (1930). But we may reasonably suppose that Bhattacharyya, never one to rush into print, had the substance of the articles clearly in mind, and very likely reduced to writing, before delivering the lectures which became the book.

³⁹ By Kalidas Bhattacharyya (*Memorial Volume*, 220; cf. II 3).

and from other subjects (II 23). Metaphysics, which studies "reality conceived as meanable" (II 24, cf. 27), is not concerned with the subject.

What is concerned with the subject is *transcendental psychology* (to be carefully distinguished from metaphysics, mysticism, epistemology, or introspective psychology), which studies knowing and subjective function in general by "the spiritual cultivation of a subjective attitude" (II 28). Consciousness of the subjective is consciousness of the false, rejection of object. This is a gradual process with several steps or modes. "The modes of subjectivity are the modes of freeing oneself from the modes of objectivity" (II 28). But transcendental psychology goes beyond this. It not only analyzes "the positively felt and believed freedom of the subject from objectivity" but also elaborates "modes of freedom that have no reference to object at all" (II 29). For metaphysics (objective attitude) the knownness of the object appears positive and knowing "its problematic negation," and the object appears to exist beyond its relatedness to the subject. For transcendental psychology (subjective attitude), of which Kant's critical philosophy is a disguised form,⁴⁰ freedom is positively believed, the objectivity of the object appears as not belonging to it (like change) but as the subject's self-negation, the transcendent object is meaningless, and metaphysics is "the quest of a chimera" (II 30).

Spiritual progress, realization of the subject as free, may result unselfconsciously from a good life, but for others theoretical elaboration of stages of freedom may propose a discipline for such realization. "Consciousness of perfection, freedom, or salvation" is a *demand* for activity which takes the form of dissociation of the subject from the object by theoretical "awareness of the subject as what the object is not" (II 32).⁴¹

The relatedness of an object to the subject, its knownness or feltness, studied in transcendental psychology in abstraction from the object itself, is called *psychic fact* (II 34).⁴² Psychic fact is not coordinate with objective fact; it "should be more real but is actually less real" (II 47). It is only "in the awareness of the illusory" (II 39) and "as

⁴⁰ With serious shortcomings: a persisting objective attitude in the first critique, admission of the unknowable reality ("an unwarrantable surrender to realism"), denial of self-knowledge, disbelief in the possibility of a spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason through which self-knowledge may be attainable, confusion of undeniability with truth (II 31).

⁴¹ This is the way of knowledge (*jnana-marga*) of traditional non-dualist Vedanta, opposed to the way of morality (*karma-marga*) involved in the "good life."

⁴² The 32 paragraphs of chapter 2 are devoted to the definition of this concept.

the implication of belief in value" (II 157) that the relatedness or presentation of the object emerges from the perceived object into which it was merged. This emergence is freedom which "no longer embodies belief" in the object. The object possesses knownness just as it possesses color, but the knownness, unlike the color,⁴³ can be studied independently and so reveals knowing as distinct from object known. Unlike objective fact, which is known as accomplished, psychic fact is known as being accomplished ("at once accomplished and to be accomplished"), a reality which "is only not denied as objective and may be conceived to be subjective" (II 42). In becoming known, however, it is converted into object, "a fact of which we are introspectively aware as capable of existing apart from introspection" (II 50). To the Kantian objection that "the metaphysical reality thus adumbrated in the presentation" is only subjective, though appearing real by a permanent illusion corrigible only in a moral or aesthetic way, Bhattacharyya answers that psychic fact demands to be known cognitively and that this demand can be fulfilled (II 43). A faith spiritually demanded (like Kant's moral postulates) must be capable of becoming knowledge (II 44). The reality behind the object, known as unknown, is not objective thing-in-itself, subjective in the sense of illusion, or unknowable content of faith, but the subject of which we become aware by its constructive faculty through which the object comes to be for the subject and its self-realizing activity through which it frees itself from the object (II 43).⁴⁴ The will to realize the self implies knowledge of the self as unknown but knowable and demanding to be known (II 44). As with Kant, although inaccurately interpreted by him,⁴⁵ will is the key to knowledge.

Modes of Subjectivity

There are three general modes or stages of subjectivity—bodily subjectivity, psychic subjectivity, and spiritual subjectivity (II 33). Each comprises a number of subsidiary modes. Each subsidiary mode involves freeing yourself from the corresponding mode of objectivity by assuming the subjective attitude, and each in turn becomes ob-

⁴³ But like spatiality, studied independently of any object in geometry, Kalidas Bhattacharyya remarked.

⁴⁴ The *maya* and *moksha* of traditional Vedanta.

⁴⁵ Hegelianism, coordinate dualism of psychic and object, psychic as comprehending object as a real element, experience-unity of subject and object, and distinction between enjoying and contemplative modes of knowing are also criticized and rejected.

jective when viewed from the objective attitude and so itself demands to be transcended.

Bodily subjectivity is that by which my body, although part of the physical world, is nevertheless dissociated from other perceived objects and identified with myself. An object may be present in any of three ways—as external, as internal, as absent (II 55)—environmental objects being in the first or third class, body in the first or second. Present external objects are purely objective, not distinguished from their presentation, and are perceived only as exteriors; their unseen sides are imagined as perceived by me from a different direction, and their invisible insides are imagined, if at all, as perceived, that is, as exteriors. The exterior of my body is also perceived, although in a unique way. Whereas other objects are here or there relative to me,⁴⁶ the body is always here, and its unseen sides are imagined only as perceived by somebody else. The interior of the body, however, is not only imagined⁴⁷ but also directly *felt*. As felt it is not distinguished from the body as perceived, but the perceived body is somehow distinguished from the felt body as something itself imperceptible.⁴⁸ Feeling of the body is not psychic fact, yet it is the potentiality of psychic fact, being the possibility, although not the actuality, of being dissociated from the objective body (II 52). In actual feeling we are not interested in withdrawing from the environment, although an interest derived from higher modes of subjectivity may suggest such withdrawal (II 53), and this possible detachment is the “first hint” of freedom (II 54). The approach to psychic fact is found in knowledge, by conscious non-perception, of absence as a present fact.⁴⁹ Here the consciousness is detached from the object. The absence is perceived, or strictly speaking non-perceived, not felt or imagined, but the object is not perceived. Non-perception may be of *absence* (for example, a familiar field from which a tree has been removed, now perceived as having something missing, but something unidentified) or of *the absent* (for example, a book we cannot find, although there is no particular place where it is not) (II 57). Perceived absence (that

⁴⁶ “The objectivity of other perceived objects is constituted by their position relative to the percipient’s body” (II 50), hence the latter, which has no perceived position (II 63), involves “the mystic awareness of dissociation from the object in which subjectivity consists” (II 51).

⁴⁷ “To those who would not go farther in psychology [i.e., behaviorists], introspection is only observation of the indefinite body-interior” (II 62).

⁴⁸ The asymmetry of *distinction* is a dialectical principle found throughout Bhattacharyya’s works.

⁴⁹ The 13 paragraphs of chapter 4 are devoted to the analysis of this concept.

of the tree) is like the felt body, not dissociated from what is actually perceived. The absent known by conscious non-perception (the book) has no locus, is free from space, but not from time (the present), and so is not fully dissociated from object (II 60), but it is partly so dissociated, and is a transitional stage to the fully psychic fact of imagination (II 60).

Psychic subjectivity involves psychic fact, in which knownness is distinguished from the known in introspection. Abstract knownness, however, emerges only with the positive awareness of what is unknown (II 63). Psychic subjectivity begins with imagination. *Image* is fact, but a different sort of fact from object, a "substantive something from which the object is distinct" (II 62).⁵⁰ External object is known as with position, perceived body is imagined to have position, felt body is known as with an unknown position, absence is not known to be with position, but image is known to be without position. Like absence image has no locus, but unlike absence it has no time-position either, not even present absence, though time-position is not denied to it (II 64). We must reject "the current banality that psychic facts are only in time while objective facts are in both space and time" (II 65). Image has objective form but no objective position and no necessary time. Image is always incomplete, a form being formed, substantive and functional (II 67)—else it would be percept. The completed form which fulfills the forming is *idea* (II 68). Idea, however, may be dissociated from image, idea of object as not imaged but sought⁵¹ to be imaged, conscious want of image (II 69). Contrasted to such pictorial thought is *thought* proper, the content of which is unpicturable yet meaningful and therefore object. Thought is about object, but of something unobjective about object. Unimaginability of content and consequent awareness of the impossibility of its objectivity involve complete detachment from objectivity (II 70). Thought is eternal, altogether dissociated from time. It is *about* object, but its content is characterized "as what the object is distinct from" (II 71). It is a psychic fact, but having an object is not pure subjective activity. As compared with pure subject it is "objective in its very dissociation from objectivity" (II 71), necessarily characterized as *what the object is not*.

Spiritual subjectivity begins with *feeling*. While thought is negatively unobjective, as dissociated from the object to which it refers, feeling

⁵⁰ Fact in general means what is asserted, but the meaning of facthood as a predicate apart from the assertion changes as we pass from perceived object to perceived body, felt body, absence, and image.

⁵¹ *Sought*, in this context, seems to indicate the object-directed constructive faculty (*maya*), whereas *demanding* indicates the subject-oriented self-realizing activity (*moksha*).

is positively subjective, without any reference to object (II 73). It is not distinguished from its unthought, unmeant, and unmeanable content (though the latter may, in the objective attitude, be distinguished from it), for the content is recognized as mere symbolizing, not really its content at all (II 74). "Feeling does not *mean* anything but itself" (II 75). It is freedom first from actual and finally from all possible thought (II 77). In the subjective attitude, up to the stage of thought, object appears alien to subject, but in feeling the subject is free from all meant content, which is reduced to mere symbolism. It is free, but not yet freedom itself (II 88). The feeling of not having a feeling, awareness of wanting a feeling, leads to *introspection*, complete dissociation from felt being, the pure knowing function (II 79), freedom itself, though still as a distinct individual (II 88). Introspection, defined in general as "the distinguishing of the presentation of an object from the object" (II 66), acquires a deeper connotation, in the case of feeling, as awareness of feeling being distinct in itself, not *from* anything (II 80). Introspection involves not merely conscious absence of meaning but conscious impossibility of meaning, pure subjectivity, not meant "even as unmeanable," since it presents no problem in meaning (II 83). It is the *I*, the self, self-revealing. To the speaker *I* means actual introspection, but to the hearer *I* means a *possible introspection* (II 84). The latter awareness is a mode of self-consciousness which goes beyond actual introspection. Awareness of a possibly intuited subjectivity beyond that actually intuited indicates the possibility of subjective illusion comparable to objective illusion and governed by the same law that consciousness of the subjective is consciousness of the false. Awareness of a subjective mode as beyond introspective appropriation suggests an introspection that is not appropriative, that rejects the distinct *I* and all distinction as illusory. This ultimate mode of subjectivity, eliminating the exclusive *I*, having no even subjective fact distinct from itself, is the absolute self (II 87).⁵²

At each step of this anagogic path⁵³ the subjective attitude appears as a demand for freedom from the illusory (II 54). Elaboration of these stages of freedom suggests the possibility "of realising the subject as absolute freedom, of retracting the felt positive freedom towards the object into pure intuition of the self" (II 33). At its final stage

⁵² The *Atman* of traditional Vedanta, contrasted with the individual self *jiva*.

⁵³ The whole scheme is summarized in the last chapter, which may therefore be read as a summary of the book—but a *sutra*-like summary intelligible only as a reminder of what has already been studied in detail.

the subjective attitude appears as a "conscious spiritual demand" for intuition of the subject (that which is not meant but intended, or rather intends, by the word *I*) as absolute freedom, absolutely un-objective (II 88-90). This demand is not fulfilled in introspection either actual or possible, where it is only a possibility to be realized (II 89). I am not introspectively aware even of my actual introspection, which is not itself introspected. But in my introspection of feeling I am aware that the self from which the feeling is distinguished may transcend both actual and possible introspection, may be free even from this distinction between (my own) actual introspection and (others') possible introspection, may be completely de-individualized (II 92). This does not mean that the Absolute is indefinite—the doctrine of Bhattacharyya's first phase before the adoption of the subjective attitude, and perhaps the most profound conclusion possible in the objective attitude. The absolute self or subject, although de-individualized and free from all distinctness, is still definite and positive. In classical non-dualism, as interpreted by Bhattacharyya, where *moksha* is not "something to be reached or effected or remanifested" but is the self itself as essence of *Brahman*, "the self or the absolute is not a thing having freedom but is freedom itself" (I 118). And in transcendental psychology the self or Absolute, progressively known at each step as relative freedom from object, is this freedom. When all distinctness is transcended, the subject is not a distinct thing, even a free thing, but simply *freedom*.⁵⁴

K. C. Bhattacharyya is not unique in asserting that the subject is freedom. The most distinguished of his contemporary philosophers in East and West said the same. Nishida said: "The true noetic intelligible Self is essentially individual and free; it is freedom itself."⁵⁵ Bergson said: "*La conscience est essentiellement libre; elle est la liberté même.*"⁵⁶ But Bhattacharyya asserted this thesis as the significant conclusion of an extraordinarily subtle and original dialectic, and the precision and conciseness of his style made it possible to include a wealth of dialectical detail in a short book.

There are, however, some difficulties, not merely stylistic but substantial.

⁵⁴ The dialectic may be summarized in eleven steps: environment, perceived body, felt body, absence, image, idea, thought, feeling, introspection, non-individual self, freedom.

⁵⁵ *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, tr. R. Schinzinger (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1958), p. 129.

⁵⁶ *L'Évolution Créatrice* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1962), p. 270.

(1) *Willing* enters in a very awkward way into the discussion of feeling. It is said to be coordinate with feeling (as if the train of thought were here running on a double track). Feeling is dissociation from objectivity, withdrawal from the object; willing is identification with objectivity, conquest over the object (II 75), conscious projection of objectivity (II 76). There is progress and regress⁵⁷ (as if the train of thought were backing up). The whole matter is passed over hastily. One might expect will to play a dominant role in the philosophy of freedom, just as it does in Kant's philosophy as interpreted by Bhattacharyya, but the psychological act of willing does not seem to have any place, at least any neat place, in the system.

(2) A still more basic difficulty is the identification of truth with freedom. Since consciousness of the false is consciousness of the subjective, we attain subjectivity or freedom, and ultimately absolute freedom, by progressive rejection of the false or illusory in favor of the true or real. The method is cognitive; the end, freedom, is presumably truth. That *the truth shall make you free* is a venerable principle, but is it really so? Does not devotion to truth require rather the sacrifice of freedom? Is not the first principle of scientific method to accept whatever evidence and logic show to be true regardless of what we may will? That truth is freedom is at best a paradox.

(3) A third difficulty may be suggested by the question, "Why assume the subjective attitude?" Granted it leads to freedom, is freedom an end which justifies the subjective attitude as a means, or is the subjective attitude somehow right in itself, with freedom a happy consequence justified by rather than justifying the means? Cannot a case also be made for the objective attitude?

Bhattacharyya does not discuss, or even raise, these difficulties. They are solved, however, by the concept of alternative forms of the Absolute which characterizes the third phase of his thought.

THIRD PHASE: THE ABSOLUTE AS ALTERNATION

In his third phase K. C. Bhattacharyya defines the Absolute as Alternation, in a departure from the Upanishadic tradition. The logical category of alternation, frequently appearing in his earlier works, is now applied to the Absolute itself. This is his most original contribution to philosophical thought.

⁵⁷ These words are used in a way the opposite of what one might expect: "as knowledge deepens, there is a *regress* to prior presuppositions, the felt body etc., up to feeling" (II 75).

Influence of Jainism

The principal non-Vedantic influence in this phase was that of Jainism.⁵⁸ About 1920 he studied and was impressed by the Jain philosophical work *Prameya Kamala Martanda*.⁵⁹ In the first chapter, after considering the various Indian schools of philosophy and discussing doubt and theories of error, the author presents his own theory of knowledge as that which reveals both itself and its object. In the second he refutes all absolutistic metaphysical theories in typical Jain fashion. In the third he discusses epistemological problems: memory, recognition, hypothetical argument, inference, causality, non-perception, authority. In the fourth he discusses the theories of relations and universals, distinguishing between continuant and recurrent universals (i.e., things and classes). In the fifth he considers what *appears* to be knowledge. In the sixth he analyzes the Jain categories of whole-expression (*sakaladesa*) and part-expression (*vikaladesa*) and defends the thesis that the former concerns ways of knowing (*pramanas*) and the latter concerns theories of philosophy (*nayas*).⁶⁰

Bhattacharyya's immediate reaction to this book was a paper "The Jaina Theory of *Anekanta*"⁶¹ presented to his seminar at Dacca in 1921 (published 1925 in the first issue of the *Philosophical Quarterly*, reprinted 1943 in *Jaina Antiquary*), which introduces the third phase, although chronologically contemporary with the first. In analyzing *anekantavada* (non-absolutism), which is the Jain theory of truth, he affirms the category of alternation in the first sentence. "The Jaina theory of *anekanta* or the manifoldness of truth is a form of realism which not only asserts a plurality of determinate truths but also takes each truth to be an indetermination of *alternative* truths"

⁵⁸ The influence of Jain logic on K. C. Bhattacharyya's philosophy (my sabbatical project) was the point of departure for this study. For Jain logic see my article "Seven-Valued Logic in Jain Philosophy," *IPQ*, 4 (1964), 68-93.

⁵⁹ *Prameya* knowable, *kamala* lotus, *martanda* sun: "the light which makes the truth unfold." *Prameyakamal Martand* by Shri Prabha Gandra [980-1065, a Digambara ("sky clad," i.e., naked) monk], a Commentary on Manik Nandi's *Pareksha Mukh Sutra*, edited by Mahendra Kumar Shastri (Bombay, 1912, 755 pp.). I am indebted to Dr. K. Sivarama of Banaras Hindu University for calling my attention to the significance of this work in the development of Bhattacharyya's thought.

⁶⁰ I am indebted to Professor D. M. Datta for a summary of this untranslated work.

⁶¹ I am also indebted to Professor Datta for reading this extremely difficult work with me in a leisurely way. His own small mind, Datta remarked, nibbled a grain of truth like a squirrel nibbling a grain of corn, while Bhattacharyya's mind was like an elephant which swallows a whole jackfruit.

(I 331). The purpose of the paper is to show the necessity of this "indeterministic extension" of ordinary realism, and that togetherness, the fundamental category of realism, is itself manifold, signifying fundamentally different aspects of truth not subsumed under a universal or making a unity (I 332). The Jain category "distinction from distinction" has *alternative* values, only one of which is the togetherness of ordinary realism. We can think of a composite and its components alternatively but not simultaneously: if the former be given, the latter are *its* analysis; if the latter, the former is *their* plurality (I 332). Hegel subordinates distinction to identity, Nyaya (Hindu logic) subordinates identity to distinction, but Jainism makes them coordinate.

Jain logic, like Bhattacharyya's, involves the indefinite, which is thought and therefore objective. *Anekantavada* contrasts the difference between two definites with the difference between definite and indefinite, "and obtains from their contrast certain other forms of truth, simpler and more complex" (I 338). The objective, and therefore definite, indefinite, with these incompatible elements, is a togetherness of unrelated elements, neither one nor many, to be thought only as *alternation* (I 339). *Anekanta*, "the indeterminism or manifoldness of truth," appears primarily in the two forms of difference and non-difference, consecutive presentation and co-presentation.⁶² The logical predicament of Jain logic, that "distinction from distinction is other than mere distinction and yet asserts the distinction" (I 339), is grounded in the epistemological predicament that the subject is distinct from the object yet knows the distinction (I 340). This "of-relation," the relation between knowing and content (no-content and content, no-being and being), is intelligible only by the category of indetermination. Distinction and identity (differenced and undifferenced togetherness, particularity and thinghood)⁶³ are related by *indetermination or alternation*; they are in each relation without being in the other relation at the same time. "Identity is distinct from distinction and yet implies it, i.e. is in *alternation* with it" (I 340).

Ordinary realism, he says, is based on the category of distinction; certain forms of realism, on distinction from distinction; Jain realism, on the indetermination of the two. This indetermination is developed into seven *alternative* modes of truth.⁶⁴ The definiteness of the given

⁶² Two modes of truth in Jain logic: successive affirmation and negation distinguished from each other (*both is and is not*), simultaneous affirmation and negation rejecting an incompatible synthesis (*is indeterminate*).

⁶³ The Jain categories part-expression (*vikaladesa*) and whole-expression (*sakaladesa*).

⁶⁴ The seven truth values of Jain logic: somehow it is, is not, is indeterminate,

indefinite, which "sits lightly on the indefinite" as a detachable definite or affirmation with no existential import, is contrasted with characterless givenness or existence, its negation.⁶⁵ To say that a determinate existent A *is* in one respect and *is not* in another respect⁶⁶ "does not mean that A is A and is not B; it means that existent A, as existence universal, is distinct from its particularity"⁶⁷ (I 341). The determinate existent, therefore, is being and negation distinguishably together (*is and is not*). The indefinite, on the other hand, which involves non-distinction of being and negation, is neither not affirmed nor non-existent nor a distinction of affirmation and existence; it is a separate mode of truth, "indeterminate" (*avaktavyah*) (I 341). It is not expressible by any concept, but "a truth has to be admitted if it cannot be got rid of even if it is not understood" (I 342). The four modes of truth implied by the distinction between definite and indefinite are augmented by considering the indefinite either with or distinct from each of them. We thus complete the seven truth values of Jain logic, which Bhattacharyya describes as follows: particular affirmation, universal negation, affirmation and negation distinguishably together as determinate existent, the same indistinguishably together as indefinite, this indefinite as itself an affirmation, the indefinite as many negations together, the indefinite as distinct from the determinate existent. "These modes of truth are not merely *many* truths but *alternative* truths" (I 342). Each is *alternative* with the others, objectively possible. This is *indeterminism*, not of will but of cognition. What is presented is truth even though thinkable only in alternative ways (I 343).

This treatment of Jain logic is characteristically original. Bhattacharyya's interpretation of *anekantavada* (non-absolutism) is quite different from that of the Jain philosophers themselves, either classical or contemporary. Jain *anekantavada* means that in any given case each of the seven predicates (*is, is not, etc.*) may be asserted, not absolutely (for that would be to reject the others) but relatively, that is, somehow, in some respect (*syat*).⁶⁸ The purpose of research is not to

is and is not, is and is indeterminate, is not and is indeterminate, is and is not and is indeterminate.

⁶⁵ Here again, negation, rather than affirmation, is associated with existence.

⁶⁶ In some respect: the category "somehow" (*syat*) of Jain logic.

⁶⁷ The categories universality and particularity (*sakaladesa* and *vikaladesa*) of Jain logic.

⁶⁸ *Syat*, the fundamental category of Jain logic, is not mentioned in the article and is referred to only once (I 341).

determine the truth value for a given proposition but to determine the qualifications which must be specified to make each of the truth values apply. All are valid simultaneously (in different respects), not alternatively. The elephant inspected by blind men really and always is somehow like a wall, somehow like a column, somehow like a fan, somehow like a snake; it is not alternatively like a wall, a column, a fan, a snake. There is no skepticism in Jain logic (*syat* not meaning "maybe"), as Bhattacharyya correctly remarks (I 343), but neither is there alternation. What he calls Jain logic is not the logic of the Jains.

It is not to be supposed that Bhattacharyya mistakenly believed, through ignorance, that he was giving a historically faithful account of Jain teaching. Rather, he was showing, as Gopinath Bhattacharyya says, that "a new interpretation of the Jaina theory of *anekanta* is possible in the light of the concept of alternation" (I xiv). In a postcard to Professor D. M. Datta dated August 21, 1930, referring to this article, he wrote: "My paper was developed only in the general line of the doctrine of *syadvada*; if you take it as historical description of Jain philosophy, certainly there are many errors and defects there which you will easily understand."⁶⁹

Nevertheless, Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya of Visvabharati University, who has succeeded his father as the leading advocate of the theory of alternative forms of the Absolute, considers that this article does correctly interpret the Jain tradition. He says he cannot believe that the great Jain philosophers were teaching the trivial truism that there are different ways of looking at things. The *aneka* (not one) of *anekantavada* (non-one-end-ism) may have the negative meaning *not one* or the positive meaning *more than one*, so that *anekantavada* might mean "there is no one exclusive feature of reality" or "reality has many features." But incompatible features cannot be conjointly true; they alternate by not being exclusively true. *Anekanta* means not what is common in the seven modes, for they have nothing in common; nor integration of the seven modes, for they cannot logically be integrated; but alternation among the seven modes, the only reasonable interpretation. Since it is the logically correct interpretation, we must assume that it is what the Jain logicians intended. Kalidas Bhattacharyya, if I understand him correctly, maintains that alternation is what the Jains must have taught, whereas his father maintained only that it is what they should have taught.

⁶⁹ Translation by Kalidas Bhattacharyya.

Be that as it may, K. C. Bhattacharyya interpreted Jain non-absolutism in the sense of alternation, statements each valid apart from the others but not in conjunction with each other. The attitude of alternation had always characterized his thought. It is found in his earliest works. It was fostered in his student days by uncertainty concerning Kant, Hegel, and Vedanta; sometimes he felt that Vedanta goes beyond Kant, sometimes that Kant goes beyond Vedanta. When he read the *Prameya Kamala Martanda*, he discovered in, or read into, Jain logic a systematic formulation of this attitude, and composed his paper on *anekanta*. At the first meeting of the Indian Philosophical Congress in 1925, the year the paper was published, G. Hanumanta Rao of Mysore presented a paper "The Jaina Instrumental Theory of Knowledge," in which he said: "Its [Jainism's] great defect lies in the fact that it yields to the temptation of an easy compromise without overcoming the contradictions inherent in the opposed standpoints in a higher synthesis."⁷⁰ Bhattacharyya, who was present at this meeting to read his own paper "Shankara's Doctrine of Maya" and may be presumed to have heard Rao's paper, would have agreed with this interpretation, similar to his own interpretation of Jain logic as alternation without integration, but for him this was its merit, not its defect. The concept of alternation developed in his own paper remained latent during his second phase, but emerged to dominate the thought of his third phase. It was in his interpretation of non-absolutism that he found the clue for comprehending the Absolute in a way at once more subtle and more profound than that given by the notions of Indefinite or Subject.

Consciousness and Content

The basic work of the third phase and final statement of Bhattacharyya's search for the Absolute is his Presidential Address at the 1933 meeting of the Indian Philosophical Congress, published in 1934,⁷¹ entitled "The Concept of the Absolute and its Alternative Forms." I say *final*, not *definitive*, as he never suggested, and I believe never supposed, that any philosophical statement is definitive. The Presidential Address, however, provided an appropriate occasion

⁷⁰ *Proceedings of the First Indian Philosophical Congress, 1925* (Calcutta: Calcutta Philosophical Society, 1927), 133.

⁷¹ In the *Philosophical Quarterly* edited by G. R. Malkani and published by the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner, India's leading philosophical periodical from its beginning in 1925 to its cessation in 1966, which first published seven of K. C. Bhattacharyya's articles.

for a direct and explicit consideration of the central problem of philosophy, the nature of the Absolute. The ruling category of this address is taken from his interpretation of Jainism, but the content obviously reflects Kant's threefold critique, the vocabulary sometimes suggests Hegel, and the epistemological approach is characteristic of Vedanta. In his own copy the author marked paragraphs 2-4, 7, 15, 27-29, 31-41, and 44 with the letter O, and Gopinath Bhattacharyya suggests that O might have meant "omit" in anticipation of an abridged version. Taking this hint, I will base my summary primarily on the paragraphs not so marked.

"Philosophy starts in reflective consciousness." This first sentence of the address asserts Bhattacharyya's attitude toward philosophy. It needs no external motivation, either wonder as in the Western tradition or suffering as in the Hindu tradition. It is the natural activity of the human, "reflective," consciousness. Reflection is awareness of the relation between subject and object, consciousness and its content. "It is in reference to this relation that the concept of the absolute has to be understood" (II 125).

Within reflection consciousness and content are somehow distinct, yet their identity cannot be denied (II 126). Their relation is indefinite. But whatever appears as indefinite in some respect *demand*s to be definable in that respect, and if such indefiniteness necessarily appears to a stage of consciousness, that stage demands a higher where the indefinite is defined (II 127). The demand is for a "supra-reflective consciousness" where the distinction of consciousness and content becomes clear. The concept of the Absolute belongs to such supra-reflective consciousness. It need not involve identity of consciousness and content. It is hypothetically understood within reflection simply as "a completely definite distinction of content and consciousness" (II 128).

It is already apparent that Bhattacharyya, if not actually rejecting, is certainly transcending the doctrines of his earlier phases. The logic of the indefinite is still required, but the indefinite as such is considered a challenge rather than a position, and the demand is for defining the Absolute, instead of conceding its apparent indefinability as ultimate. The search for the Absolute leads to a higher form of consciousness, that is, to "the Subject as Freedom," but the previously presupposed superior cognitive value of the subjective attitude is questioned, and the object or content, so ruthlessly condemned as illusory in the subject-oriented dialectic of that book, is now given its day in court. This is *anekantavada* in action.

Alternat^{ive}~~ive~~ Absolutes

There are three forms of consciousness: knowing, willing, feeling. The relation ("implicative distinction") between consciousness and its content (i.e., subject and object) is different in each form. In knowing the content is not constituted by consciousness; in willing the content is constituted by consciousness; in feeling the content constitutes "some kind of unity" with consciousness (II 129). Each, consequently, has its own "formulation of the absolute." For knowing, the absolute is *Truth*; for willing, it is *Freedom*; ⁷² for feeling, it is *Value*. The central thesis of Bhattacharyya's philosophy is that in reflective consciousness "these absolutes or formulations of the absolute" cannot be identified or integrated but are "in a sort of alternation" (II 128).

The content of *knowing* is not constituted by the knowing. "The particular act of knowing discovers and does not construct the object known." This is epistemological realism, ⁷³ or rather a definition of what knowing means. *Knowledge* means "that the object known is in some sense independent of it." The subjectivism of *The Subject as Freedom* is now recognized as due to a confusion between knowing and willing. This realism, however, has two qualifications: (1) The object may essentially "be constructed by *some* knowing," although not by the particular act by which we know it. Metaphysical idealism (*mayavada*) does not imply epistemological subjectivism (*drishti-srishtivada*); ⁷⁴ we *know* something insofar as it is independently of the knowing, even if it is only as illusion. (2) What we ordinarily *claim* to know may be at least partly dependent on the knowing, but if so it is known only "empirically," not truly or absolutely (II 129).

The content of *willing* is constituted by willing; apart from the willing it is nothing. The willed future, unlike the known future, is not fact but contingency, not what will be but what would be if willed, not already determined but being determined by the willing.

The content of *feeling* is unified with the feeling. Feeling is consciousness of an imperfect distinction between content and consciousness. It is consciousness of *value*, which is as much content as consciousness, not both at once but each alternately. We do not know, but we cannot deny, that the value of an object is in it (II 130).

⁷² Which he also calls "reality" (not to be confused with truth).

⁷³ Realism (that what is known need not be known) cannot be proved, but subjectivism (that what is known is constituted by the knowing) is "plainly opposed to reflective testimony" (II 131).

⁷⁴ Here Bhattacharyya agrees with the classical non-dualism of Shankara.

The known content, although before the mind only as known, is understood as distinct from knowing, not necessarily related to knowing (II 131). But this realist theory is true merely by definition; the significant question is, what, if anything, *is* known? What is known is eternal *truth*; the object may be temporal, but what is *known* about it is formulated in eternally true judgments (II 132). But contingent judgments ("It is to me") are not independent of the knower. Only the self-evident ("It is.") is known as what need not be known. An elaborate analysis of self-evidence (II 132-136), "the consciousness that something must be without the consciousness that it is" (i.e., to me), shows that in reflective consciousness it is limited to logical implications (which strictly speaking are not judgments at all). The self-evident content is *known* only accidentally, and so is a *content* only accidentally. This is the element in all that is known which is known as what need not be known, and so satisfies the definition of knowledge. It "demands to be freed from its immanence in the implicational distinction of content and knowing." This is the absolute for knowing (II 136).

The willed content is constituted by willing, but it appears as limiting and foreign to the willing. Reflection does not comprehend, yet demands to comprehend, that this is self-limitation, that the will limits itself to realize itself and so become free. The idealistic view, Kant's, is that the good will is itself the value for which we will to act, that we act objectively in order to be free subjectively. The realistic view is that we act for an objective end. In the case of knowing the realistic view is to be accepted, but in willing the idealistic view, the realistic leading to an infinite regress of means and ends (II 137). *Freedom* of the will is consciousness free from its content, solely constituting its content, making the content a content, creating its distinction from itself. This is the absolute for willing (II 141).

The felt content, not definite in itself, is understood as though it were a unity of content and consciousness, and reflection demands such unity (II 138). Neither the realistic view (value as objective) nor the idealistic view (value as feeling) is preferable; their alternation is stopped only when the unity becomes definite (II 139). In reflection felt content and feeling consciousness are *alternately* distinguished from the value that is their unity; the demand is for them to be *together* distinguished from this unity (II 140). Just as we understand the possibility of known content not being known, and the possibility of willing without the act willed, so, in the appreciation of beauty, we understand the possibility of the self-subsistent unity of felt content and feeling—although these possibilities cannot be realized in reflec-

tion, because they involve modes of negation (unrelatedness, negation of the emergent, indifference of being and non-being) unintelligible to the logic of understanding. *Value* is *unity*, that is, indetermination, not identity (II 117), of content and consciousness. This is the absolute for feeling (II 141).

The Absolute is "what is free from the implicational dualism of content and consciousness." There is an⁷⁵ absolute for knowing, an absolute for willing, and an absolute for feeling. We cannot say that there are three absolutes or that there is only one; "the absolute is not a known content, about which alone the question 'one or many' has meaning" (II 141). Each is absolute; they are "understood together but not as together" (II 142). The Absolute is either truth or freedom or value, but not all. It is an *alternation* of truth, freedom,⁷⁶ and value (II 143).

I will oversimplify still further the subtle and detailed argument⁷⁷ of the Presidential Address by restating it in my own words.⁷⁸ Philosophy is rational analysis of experience, which is consciousness of some content. There are three conscious functions because there are three ways in which consciousness and content can be related. Content may determine consciousness: this is knowing. Consciousness may determine content: this is willing. Both may determine each other: this is feeling, as in the appreciation of beauty, which is neither purely objective nor purely subjective but a union of the two. Knowing is *truth*; willing is *freedom*; feeling is *value*. Ordinary experience is a confused mixture of the three, but each function can be purged of the accretions of the others and so become pure or absolute. We purge our knowing of its non-cognitive (volitional or emotional) accretions by rejecting its subjective elements⁷⁹ (in accordance with

⁷⁵ The indefinite article, a concession to idiom, does not mean that the "absolutes" are members of a class; the definite article would be more precise but might wrongly suggest one absolute with three functions.

⁷⁶ Bhattacharyya also calls this (unhappily, I think) *reality* (II 142), meaning (I take it) the concrete Self not limited by its conscious contents.

⁷⁷ For example: "In one direction their [the absolutes'] identity and difference are alike meaningless and in another direction their identity is intelligible though not assertable. Truth is unrelated to value, value to reality and reality to truth while value may be truth, reality value and truth reality" (II 143).

⁷⁸ Based on instruction by Bhattacharyya's student Professor T. R. V. Murli, to whom I am indebted for my introduction to this doctrine. This paragraph is condensed from my "Contemporary Vedanta Philosophy," *Rev. of Met.*, 9 (1955-56), 665-69.

⁷⁹ These would include such pseudo-cognitive elements as forms of intuition

Bhattacharyya's law that "consciousness of the false is consciousness of the subjective"). Carried to its theoretic limit, knowing purged of *all* apriori aspects is apprehension of the object as it is in itself; consciousness simply reflects the object. We purge our willing of its non-volitional (cognitive or emotional) accretions by rejecting its objective elements. Willing purged of *all* external aspects is determined entirely from within consciousness, not determined by but completely determining its object. We purge our feeling of its non-emotional (cognitive or volitional) accretions by rejecting the objective or subjective biases which interfere with the aesthetic union of consciousness and content. Feeling purged of *all* abstract⁸⁰ (either objective or subjective) aspects is togetherness of subject and object. Knowing freed from all subjectivity is *absolute truth*, uncategorized being in its concrete richness.⁸¹ Willing freed from all objectivity is *absolute freedom*, unrestricted consciousness. Feeling freed from all separateness is *absolute value*, unalloyed bliss. Each is absolute, pure experience, alike negatively as lack of confusion and practically as salvation. But they are incompatible, opposed to each other, incommensurable, neither reducible to each other nor comprehensible under a higher synthesis. They are *alternative absolutes*.

Logic of Alternation

The conclusion is that there are alternative absolutes; more precisely, there are alternative forms of the absolute;⁸² still more precisely, the Absolute is an alternation—and even this formula expresses the ineffable doctrine rather awkwardly. Alternation is opposed to condemnation and to integration. According to condemnatory or dogmatic philosophy, there is one Absolute and one path; among opposing views, all but one are false. According to integrative or liberal philosophy, opposing views find ultimate agreement through integration or synthesis; there are many paths leading to the same mountain peak. According to alternative or selective philosophy, there is a choice among incompatible alternatives; there are many paths, each

or categories of understanding. Whatever *we impose* on the world is, strictly speaking, will, not knowledge.

⁸⁰ As concrete experience not differentiated into content and consciousness, feeling may be considered psychologically as the primitive form of experience.

⁸¹ Not to be confused with concrete *experience* (feeling).

⁸² "The self-caused is understood in three forms—self-known, self-willed or self-felt; knowing, willing and feeling amount to self-becoming in the region of the absolute" (I 181).

leading to a different mountain peak,⁸³ and each peak is an absolute summit. The ways to the Absolute diverge; they coincide only at the starting point of ordinary experience where the non-absolutes mingle in confusion. No absolute can judge or be judged by another, for they are incommensurable. There is no external position from which one can be preferred to another, for they are absolute. They cannot be integrated in a higher synthesis, so far as rational philosophy can attain,⁸⁴ for they are incompatible. No absolute can claim preference over the others,⁸⁵ but each, once accepted, rejects the others. They are true alternatives, and "The Absolute" can only be described as their alternation.⁸⁶

Mention of alternative absolutes sometimes evokes a negative response. This is understandable, in view of the traditional association of absolutism and monism, but its logical ground is questionable. The objection that the Absolute *means* that there is only one can be dismissed as definition by initial predication. The objection that there can be only one absolute Truth shows ignorance of the doctrine; absolute Truth may be one but there are other absolutes besides Truth. The objection that the Absolute should include everything is pantheism; non-dualist Vedanta seeks the Absolute not by including everything but by excluding almost everything. The objection that plural absolutes would limit each other and therefore not be absolute is more serious. This is indeed the point. The theory is that *absolute* Truth, Freedom, and Value, being radically different and incommensurable, do not limit each other. Only *partial* truth, freedom, and value can be associated with and therefore limit each other. Logical questions, however, involve a consideration of the logic of alternation.

A metaphysics is associated with a logic. The logic justifies the metaphysics, but psychologically and existentially the metaphysics determines the logic; "whether one logical system is better than an-

⁸³ A practical corollary is that persons desiring to reach the same goal should follow the same path.

⁸⁴ "Whether a mystical identity of the absolutes can be reached in the supra-reflective consciousness does not concern us. Our problem is to show how reflection demands a specific absolute in each case" (II 128).

⁸⁵ Choice among them can only be justified psychologically by individual temperament. The ways of knowing, willing, and feeling are for the intellectual, active, and artistic (*sattvika*, *rajasika*, *tamasika*) man respectively (I 173ff). Bhattacharyya himself, his son Kalidas remarked, was "cognitive;" that was the alternative he chose, but he recognized the equal possibility of the others.

⁸⁶ "There is no sense in speaking of the absolute as the unity of truth, freedom and value. It is *each* of them, these being only *spoken* separately but not *meant* either as separate or as one" (II 116).

other is settled not by logic but by metaphysic" (II 112).⁸⁷ Aristotelian logic is based on *not*: if a judgment is true, its contradictory is not. Dialectical logic is based on *and*, a judgment and its contradictory both accepted: in *anekantavada* (although not as interpreted by Bhattacharyya), the contradictories are true in different respects; in Hegelianism, they are assimilated in a synthesis. The logic of alternation is based on *or*: either alternative may be accepted but not both. The first is the logic of dogmatism (you are wrong); the second is the logic of liberalism (we are both saying the same thing in different ways); the third is the logic of tolerance (this is my way, but I do not deny your right to follow another). The logic of alternation is the logic of choice, commitment, and coexistence. It is the logic of ordinary life, in which we are always making choices, not because only one alternative is correct nor because the alternatives are equivalent but because we must choose and having chosen abide by the choice. It is the logic which justifies alternative forms of the Absolute.

Since⁸⁸ there are three conscious functions, there are three alternative forms of the Absolute—absolute knowing, absolute willing, absolute feeling—Truth, Freedom, Value. Different religious or philosophical traditions seek different forms of the Absolute. In "The Concept of Philosophy," his last published work, Bhattacharyya states that the Absolute is understood as Truth in non-dualist Vedanta, as Freedom in "what is loosely called nihilist" Buddhism, and as Value in Hegelianism (II 117). It seemed to me that *value* is not exactly the word for absolute feeling, being rather a generic term for all three (cf. II 137), and that Hegel's intellectual system is not exactly the locus of absolute feeling. In an article "Absolute Feeling"⁸⁹ I expressed the opinion that absolute feeling as union of subject and object is *love* in the religious sense of love of God, and that this is the *Christian* ideal; absolute Truth, Freedom, and Love are the goals of Vedanta, Buddhism,⁹⁰ and Christianity respectively. It was only after the

⁸⁷ The metaphysics, in turn, is determined by the philosophy of religion, and this by religion itself, according to Bhattacharyya (II 115).

⁸⁸ In the order of knowing. The order of being is the reverse. "This triple absolute is apparently the prototype of the three subjective functions—knowing, willing and feeling" (II 117).

⁸⁹ *Shrimant Pratapsheth Amrita Jubilee Volume* (Amalner: Indian Institute of Philosophy, 1954), Vol. III, 14-19.

⁹⁰ A classical example of alternative absolutes is the schism in Zen Buddhism at the time of the fifth Chinese patriarch, who invited candidates for the succession to submit verses. Shen-hsin wrote, "The soul is like a shining mirror; take care to keep the mirror clean;" Hui-neng retorted, "The soul is not a shin-

publication of his collected works that I found that my opinion was substantially in accord with Bhattacharyya's own final opinion. In his last work, *Studies in Yoga Philosophy*, lectures delivered in 1937, four years after the Presidential Address and one year after "The Concept of Philosophy," but not published in his lifetime, he called the absolutes knowledge, will, and *bhakti* (I 305, cf. 289). *Bhakti* means love in the religious sense of love of God. Now, keeping within the context of Hinduism, he assigned the absolutes respectively to Vedanta,⁹¹ Yoga, and Vaishnavism. Vaishnavism is a religion which in its theology and soteriology, and even its Christology and Mariology if these terms can be extended to their Hindu analogues, has much in common with Christianity. But whether we seek the absolutes in non-dualism, Yoga, and Vaishnavism or with a wider perspective in Vedanta, Buddhism, and Christianity, the three religions are *alternative*, incapable of refuting each other and incapable of accepting each other in any synthesis.

The Absolute is ineffable,⁹² "an entity that cannot be understood as it is believed, and is speakable only by way of symbolism" (II 116). Perhaps it can be experienced in "supra-reflective" consciousness, but it can be understood only negatively as not being what it is not. In neo-Vedanta it is understood as the limit of the process by which experience is purged of the qualifications which make it relative. As there are three such processes, there are three limits, but none can be comprehended by thought or reflection. Absolute Truth, knowing the thing in itself without the subjective categories which give it meaning, can be understood only negatively and spoken only symbolically (II 116). Absolute Freedom, willing without any willed object, is equally meaningless, since what is meant is object. Absolute Love, feeling of subject and object as one though not identical, is the unitive experience of mysticism. The Absolute is incompre-

ing mirror; no such thing has ever been." The former presented the soul as a mirror passively reflecting, and ideally perfectly reflecting, objective Truth; the latter denied that there is any substantial soul underlying the free process of consciousness, and this became orthodox Zen. If the ideal of Truth, the mirror, was denied, it was denied not in the name of Truth but in the name of an alternative absolute.

⁹¹ Obviously meaning non-dualism; other schools of Vedanta are associated with Vaishnavism.

⁹² I retract my statement in "Contemporary Vedanta Philosophy" (*Rev. of Met.* 9 [1955-56], 492) that "he has no place in his theory of knowledge for the ineffable, taking the plausible position that everything we speak is speakable." *Ineffable* properly means "speakable, but symbolically, not literally."

hensible, and according to Bhattacharyya it is not one Incomprehensible but three Incomprehensibles.

There are, then, three ways to the Absolute, not converging but diverging. This study will be concluded with a separate discussion of each.⁹³

Absolute Knowing

The process of knowing which leads to the Absolute as Truth is analyzed in the article "The Concept of Philosophy,"⁹⁴ the last and best known of the works published in his lifetime, which was K. C. Bhattacharyya's contribution to the volume *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, in which thirteen eminent Indian philosophers stated their philosophical positions.⁹⁵ He begins by contrasting his position with Kant's. For Kant the self is a necessity of thought but not knowable. For Bhattacharyya the self is unthinkable but knowable without thinking, "demanding to be known without being thought" (II 107), there being "a *demand*, alternative with other spiritual demands, to realize such knowledge" (II 100). On the critical side he goes beyond contemporary positivists in denying not only metaphysical but even logical *thinking*, since he considers logical forms as mere "shadows of metaphysical symbolisms" and logic a philosophical, not scientific, subject. The extension of thought beyond experience or the possibility of experience is only "the use of the verbal form of thought as a symbol of an unthinkable reality, such symbolizing use not being thinking." On the speculative side, however, he rejects Kantian and positivist agnosticism to assert that the contents of metaphysics are contemplated as true in the faith that only by such contemplation can absolute truth⁹⁶ be known (II 101).

Thought⁹⁷ or theoretic consciousness is "the understanding of what can be spoken . . . as known or to be known" (II 102). It has four

⁹³ "The theory of truth . . . recognises the possibility of elaborating a primary theory of each of them" (II 117).

⁹⁴ The title does not mean that the article is concerned with philosophy in general in all its three branches, although these are briefly mentioned at the end. It means that, within the context of knowing, *philosophy* is distinguished from *science*. I am indebted to Professor Rasvihary Das of the University of Calcutta for reading this article with me in 1953, as well as for first calling my attention to K. C. Bhattacharyya's philosophy.

⁹⁵ London, Allen & Unwin, 1936. A second edition in 1952 added eleven younger philosophers.

⁹⁶ *absolute truth* (*Cont. Indian Phil.*, 2nd ed., 106); *the Absolute* (II 101).

⁹⁷ This is the wider or symbolic use of *thought*, not synonymous with *thinking*.

grades: empirical thought, pure objective thought, spiritual thought, transcendental thought. Their contents are respectively fact, self-subsistence, reality, truth. Science deals with fact, which is only contingently speakable, need not be spoken, is *spoken of* as information. Philosophy, which is not a body of judgments but elaboration of the self-evident (II 103), deals with the others, which are intelligible only as spoken, pure thought of a self-evident content not distinguishable from the thought although independent of any individual mind (II 103); it has consequently three grades—philosophy of the object, of the subject, and of truth. Fact is *literally spoken of as meant*; the self-subsistent is *literally spoken*⁹⁸ *as meant*; reality is *literally spoken as symbolized*; truth is *spoken symbolically* (II 105).

(1) *Empirical thought*, as Bhattacharyya defines it, 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” (II 102.).⁹⁹ Fact, its content, “is perceivable or has necessary reference to the perceivable, is speakable in the form of a literal judgment and is believed without reference to the speaking of it” (II 107). Only scientific beliefs about fact are “formulable as judgments and literally thinkable” (II 106); in this the positivists are right. But science does not recognize any mystery, or any sacredness, in its perceived or imagined objects. For science the object is intrinsically knowable; there is nothing in the object to *make* it known; it is just what is known or at least knowable (II 108). It is not only knowable but also usable, and it is this “wrong spiritual attitude of science toward the object,” not any inadequacy in scientific theory,

Only empirical facts are *literally thinkable* (II 106, 113), but the philosophical entities are objects of *thought*.

⁹⁸ What is not *literally thinkable* may still be *literally spoken*, not ineffable.

⁹⁹ What may be considered a long footnote to this sentence is the short article “Objective Interpretation of Percept and Image” published in the *Philosophical Quarterly* the same year. The author assumes the objective attitude to translate these subjective terms into objective terms (II 263). To *perceive* is to apprehend “a spatial object with a spatial outside,” to be conscious “of a definite shape and of an outside,” though the outside itself may not be definite. The object is perceived as *existent* when it defines its outside. This occurs when the object appears, as a scar on a man’s face when he approaches—the object emerging in time but existing in space, or disappears, as a flame going out—the field emerging in time but the object existing in space. To have an incipient *image* is to know an object as persistent but not as existent (II 266). To have an image proper is to know an object as persistent and not existent (II 267). Existence and persistence are the objective interpretations of percept and image respectively.

which provokes a philosophy which goes beyond science, based on the spiritual demand "that nature should be contemplated and not merely used" (II 108).

(2) *Pure objective* (or contemplative) *thought* is thought of objective but imperceptible contents (II 102), that is, universals. The self-subsistent object "has no necessary reference to the perceivable,"¹⁰⁰ but "has necessary reference to the speaking of it" (II 110), is "believed only as it is spoken" (II 107), is constituted by being spoken (II 112)—a conceptual theory of universals, which makes them independent of particulars but dependent on the thinking (although not literally thinking) process, although Bhattacharyya calls it *realism* in contrast with the "solipsistic idealism" of science (II 108). Anything speakable "is understood in necessary reference either to sense-perception or to the speaking of it," and the latter, not restricted by perception, is believed as independent of the belief of any individual mind and so self-evident. The self-evident understood in the objective attitude is the self-subsistent object. It may be inaccessible to the mind, and so is of no interest to science, which is concerned only with intrinsically knowable objects. The philosophy (not science) of the self-subsistent object comprises logic, which studies the form of the object, and metaphysics, which studies the object itself (II 110). Logic, a system of "speech-created forms of meaning" (II 112), presupposes metaphysics (II 111), which "defines itself in logic" (II 113), and insofar as there are alternative metaphysics there are also alternative logics (II 112). No metaphysical concept, however, is intelligible without reference to the "subject or spirit" which goes beyond metaphysics (II 111). Alleged deductive proof in metaphysics is a sham. Metaphysical abstractions (considered high grade abstractions by metaphysicians and diseases of speech by positivists) are "symbolic meanings which derive their whole value for belief from the spiritual experiences that they symbolise" (II 112). Pure objective thought, therefore, necessarily leads to spiritual thought. And it is the contrast between logic, the entities of which are obviously not real, and metaphysics, where they are supposed to be real, which suggests the distinction between the self-subsistent and the real. This distinction is verified in the consciousness of objectivity as a symbol of the real subject (II 113).

(3) *Spiritual* (or enjoying) *thought* is introspection, theoretic consciousness which rejects the objective attitude, the enjoying under-

¹⁰⁰ Philosophy, consequently, is neither a speculative world-view or synthesis of sciences nor a critical examination of the structure of science (II 109).

standing of a content "as symbolised by an objectively contemplated meaning" (II 113). It is not mere consciousness of reality but is reality (II 114). Its content is neither the interior of the body (which is fact) nor the mental (which is self-subsistent object) but *I*, spoken as though it were an object but understood as what object is not, as the speaking subjectivity (II 113). Spiritual (unlike psychological) introspection involves the explicit consciousness of *being* what is spoken—*I*. The subject, however, is not enjoyed alone. Something else is always enjoyed along with, and in reference to, the subject. There may be consciousness of the subject as embodied, or consciousness of personal relation to other selves, or consciousness of the over-personal self related to *I* by identity in difference—a relation unintelligible in the objective attitude (II 114). This religious experience is not of *I* as symbolized by something but of the over-personal reality as symbolized by *I*. Symbolizing by *I* is a non-theoretic experience of self-negation, not consciousness of yourself as nothing but consciously being nothing. "What emerges to *theoretic* religious consciousness" is the over-personal reality alone, "the enjoyed fulness of being" which transcends both objectivity and subjectivity (II 115).

Taking a dialectical glance downward at this point of the ascent, Bhattacharyya notes that individual religious experiences are different, not to be systematized by secular reason, but presenting themselves in alternative systems. Each generates its own philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and logic (differences in logical theory being ultimately religious differences). Philosophy is systematic symbolism, which necessarily admits of *alternatives*, so "there is no question of philosophy progressing towards a single unanimously acceptable solution" (II 115).

(4) *Transcendental thought* has for its content neither fact (things) nor self-subsistent object (universals) nor reality (individual self) but absolute Truth. In the spiritual thought of religion the subject negates itself enjoyingly, not theoretically, but this involves theoretic consciousness of the possibility of the individual self's being unreal. "The denial of the *I* is possible because we already believe that the absolute is" (II 115). The Absolute, not to be confused with the over-personal reality, is meant negatively as what the subject *I* is not, understood negatively but believed positively. Whereas the over-personal reality is symbolized as *I* and expressed literally as a self, Truth is symbolized as *not-I* and so not reality, not to be enjoyed, and not literally expressible at all. Unlike literally speakable reality, which is revealed by being spoken, Truth, "being spoken as what the speaking *I* is not," is self-revealing (II 116). Far from being identical with

the Self, as classical non-dualism teaches, *Brahman* or absolute Truth is definable as what Self is not.

To be spoken at all, even symbolically, an entity must be somehow distinct, and so distinguished from something, but the Absolute has nothing outside itself from which to be distinguished. It can be distinguished only from alternative forms of itself. Truth is the Absolute, but the Absolute is not necessarily Truth. It may be Truth, or it may be what Truth is not, or it may be their indeterminate togetherness—absolute Truth, Freedom or Value (II 116). The theory of alternative forms of the Absolute is not a paradoxical accretion to the theory of the Absolute but is what makes possible any *theory* of the Absolute at all.

Absolute Willing

The process of willing which leads to the Absolute as Freedom has its fullest systematic presentation in the book *The Subject as Freedom* already analyzed. This book, however, was written before Bhattacharyya had formulated the doctrine of the alternative forms of the Absolute. Knowing and willing are not clearly distinguished, and absolute Subject as absolute Freedom seems to be also absolute Truth. Still, if read with care, the book is not inconsistent with the later doctrine, which may even be said to be implicit in it. His final doctrine might be formulated: *the Subject as Freedom, the Object¹⁰¹ as Truth, their Unity¹⁰² as Love*. In *The Subject as Freedom* the dialectic is rigorous pursuit of the subjective attitude. In "The Concept of Philosophy" it is rather different: the first step is from perceivable fact to self-subsistent object; the second step is from objectivity to subjectivity; the third step is from subjectivity to Truth. The individual subject or self known in introspection is the antepenultimate stage in the former work, the penultimate in the latter. In the former this is transcended in favor of the larger, non-individual, subject, the greater *I*, and this in turn in favor of Freedom itself as what subjectivity is. In the latter it is transcended in favor of Truth, the absolute object, more fundamental than facts or universals but opposed to the subject, defined indeed as what the subject *I* is not. The two concepts of the Absolute are not only different but opposed. In the article absolute Truth is *Being*: "the absolute as transcending the enjoyed reality of religion is positive being (truth) or positive non-

¹⁰¹ Or, at any rate, the non-ego, if the word *object* is taken to involve reference to subject (I 151).

¹⁰² Or, as he would put it, their indeterminate togetherness.

being (freedom) or their positive indetermination (value)" (II 117). And in the last sentence of the book freedom is opposed to being: "freedom without being" (I 92).¹⁰³ The *subjective attitude* leads to the subject as Freedom. *Theoretic consciousness* leads to the non-subject as Truth.

K. C. Bhattacharyya's last and longest works, not published in his lifetime, are two series of lectures, on Sankhya and Yoga,¹⁰⁴ delivered at the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner in 1937. These ancient systems are treated with the same originality which characterized his earlier studies of Vedanta, Jainism, and Kant (I xi). In Sankhya especially, where the classical commentators "do not help us much" but the sources "are suggestive enough to tempt us to construct the system anew," the reconstruction "involves supplying of missing links from one's imagination," without which "one cannot be said to understand Sankhya as a philosophy" (I 127). In both studies technical terms are given in Sanskrit, a source of difficulty for the non-Sanskritist reader. But the ancient traditions are presented as living philosophies.¹⁰⁵ The *Studies in Sankhya* are of great intrinsic interest, with more metaphysical detail than any of his other works. There are some characteristic Bhattacharyya expressions. *Prakriti* or matter, traditionally described as constituted by the *gunas* or qualities as a rope by its strands, is said to be not a unity or substratum or togetherness of the *gunas* but their *alternation* (I 200). The doctrine of alternative absolutes is discussed: "knowing, willing, and feeling amount to self-becoming in the region of the absolute" (I 181); "the aesthetic (*tanmatra*) in fact is an absolute mentality like willing (*ahamkara*) and certitude (*buddhi*)" (I 180). He even suggests what seems like the beginning of a further development if not radical revision of this doctrine when he says, "These forms of the absolute mind are really three stages: *buddhi* as self-knowing becomes *ahamkara* as self-willing which in its turn becomes *tanmatra* as self-feeling" (I 181). Were this sentence elaborated in an article, it might be considered a fourth phase (hierarchical absolutes) in the development of

¹⁰³ Cf.: "It is not objective being but objective negation or freedom that is eternally willed" (II 295).

¹⁰⁴ Of the four principal Hindu philosophies, the metaphysically oriented Vedanta, scientifically oriented Sankhya, psychologically oriented Yoga, and logically oriented Nyaya, Bhattacharyya wrote studies on all except the last. This is perhaps to be regretted, as Nyaya, already exquisitely subtle in its classical form, would seem an especially fertile field for his peculiar talents.

¹⁰⁵ He "has almost at every cardinal point turned Sankhya into a living and original thought," says Kalidas Bhattacharyya (*Memorial Volume*, 230).

Bhattacharyya's philosophical thought, but by itself it is only a suggestion of what a fourth phase might have been. Sankhya dualism also suggests the simultaneous attainment of alternative absolutes: the consummation of knowing, which is the "reversion" of willing, is not "eternal quiescent knowledge," which would be the self, but mind distinguishing, defining, or detaching itself from the self to be lost in unmanifest matter, while the self is left "in its eternally manifest solitariness" (I 144)—which seems to mean mind absolutely knowing the thing-in-itself and self absolutely willing without any object. In general, however, this work is of relatively little relevance to the present study, since Sankhya, with its interest in the world, is not like Vedanta and Yoga exclusively concerned with the search for the Absolute. *Studies in Yoga*, on the other hand, are concerned with the dialectic of will.

Knowing is passive, but willing is active. Non-dualist Vedanta is the way of knowing: its steps are the rejection of illusions; its goal is not to do anything but to know. Yoga is the way of doing: its steps are forms of behavior; its goal is not to know anything but to will. "All spiritual activity is yoga" (I 286), which understands freedom conatively (I 253); willing, for Yoga, is self-conscious subjectivity (I 221). Its positive downward trend is toward *bhoga* (egoistic activity). Its negative upward trend is willing to abstain from egoistic willing, willing to approach and attain *samadhi* (I 224), *inward* willing (I 284). The practice of yoga is spiritual willing, conditioned by knowledge, in the discipline leading to absolute Freedom. It involves knowledge only contingently (I 225); in it both knowing and feeling are "implicit willing" (I 283). Yoga is "spiritual willing for the free being or active quiescence of the spirit" (I 225),¹⁰⁶ the "essential or spiritual form of willing" (I 284). The activity toward *samadhi* is free willing; *samadhi* itself is free being.¹⁰⁷ Yoga as free willing for free being is the conscious activity of the mind to overcome its differentiation into states. The "will to be in the knowing attitude for freedom from knowledge" is the will to contemplate the mystery of the absolute Freedom through which free will itself emerges, the "freedom to create freedom," which is God (I 227).

The realizing of freedom, taken as a knowing process in Vedanta and Sankhya and a feeling process in Vaishnavism, is for Yoga literal willing (I 285). Freedom as a mental state is psychologically intel-

¹⁰⁶ *Free being* and *active quiescence* are paradoxical combinations of contradictory terms.

¹⁰⁷ That is, Freedom, related to willing as Truth to knowing.

ligible only as freedom of the will, and this is yoga (I 287). Yoga philosophy reduces the mystical consciousness of spiritual activity to a *practical* psychology (I 286). Freedom is first known as freedom from evil (I 284), but it is not necessary to begin at the lowest step (I 306). The first two steps constitute the ethical and religious setting of the yoga activity (I 309); the next three are the process of energizing the body as an organ of the spirit; the last three are purely spiritual willing (I 311).¹⁰⁸ In religion freedom from the body may come through grace, but in yoga it must be achieved by the will. The outgoing assertive bodily willing is replaced by ingoing retractive bodily willing leading to tranquil posture, equitable vital flow, and the reversal of sense activity (I 289, 312).

Samadhi, the goal of Yoga, is not *knowing* but "freedom beyond knowledge" (I 304). Conscious awareness of self as free from mind, which is realized by God, is only faith for man (I 322). God is a postulate, not an object, of the yogi's spiritual realization (I 318).¹⁰⁹ He is not known or intuited in *samadhi* (I 320); he is silent, abstaining from revealing himself, as in *pralaya*, the divine sleep where all things cease (I 324). Neither is *samadhi feeling* (I 297). *Samadhi* is the culmination of *willing*, or rather an *alternation* of willing and not-willing, where the willing is the negative willing of withdrawal and the not-willing is contemplation¹¹⁰ of the mystery of absolute Freedom or God (I 227). Yoga realizes freedom of the will as an end or good achieved by right, not as an imperative obeyed by grace, and so is nowise religious but supersedes religion (I 288). It also supersedes ethics, beyond good and evil (I 305).¹¹¹ Relapse from superconscious freedom to knowledge of mind as distinct from self has its full maturation in "the four-fold knowledge of evil, cause of evil, freedom from evil, and means to freedom" (I 304).¹¹² But in the supreme *samadhi*, where the identity of self and mind is taken not as mind but as self (I 296), reality emerges as the "mystery of absolute freedom"

¹⁰⁸ Abstention from vice, practice of virtue, body control, breath control, introversion, concentration, meditation, *samadhi*.

¹⁰⁹ We know that God must exist but not that he does exist (I 320).

¹¹⁰ Not to be confused with intuition. God is "a postulate of the contemplative attitude and not the content of knowledge."

¹¹¹ It may presuppose a moral and religious discipline, and religious activity may be an alternative procedure, coordinate with Yoga procedure, either leading to *samadhi* (I 305).

¹¹² The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. If I interpret this difficult paragraph correctly, it would seem, though the author does not say so, that Buddhism and Yoga propose alternative forms of absolute Freedom.

(I 324), where *samadhi* can only be described as "the activity of changeless self-reproduction" (I 225, 258). This is absolute activity, will, freedom, or subject—the opposite of passivity, knowledge, truth, or object.

Freedom in the sense of indeterminism is considered in the paper (date unknown) "Reality of the Future." The future is contingent and undetermined, not what will be but what can be, inferred as what will be if nothing interferes (II 273). It is real to us in two ways—by will and by faith, which are antithetical attitudes (II 274). Faith can be reduced to ideal willing, or will to faith that "my will is coming," but neither reduction is justified (II 277). When the objective means seem unpredictable, faith lets us believe that the end will come nevertheless. But if will does not give place to faith, it may persist as a demonic (*asurika*) aspiration to make history by exploiting objects as means, as in hypnotism (II 278). Will and faith are alternative attitudes toward the undetermined, and their dualism cannot be overcome (II 274).

Absolute Feeling

The process of feeling which leads to the Absolute as Value is discussed in two essays, "Artistic Enjoyment" and "The Beautiful and the Ugly," written in 1925 and published together in *Studies in Philosophy* under the title "The Concept of *Rasa*." *Rasa* (flavor) means either aesthetic enjoyment or that which is aesthetically enjoyed (I 349). The first of the two essays develops the dialectic of feeling on four levels.

(1) *Primary feeling* is direct feeling of an object, enjoying it. The contrast of subject and object characteristic of knowing and willing is obscured. The subject affects the object and is affected by it. The object appears not as mere fact but as having a value, while the subject feels attracted into the object rather than detached from it (I 350). This confused unity has alternative directions: in the objective, self-feeling lapses and object alone is perceived with its value; in the subjective, object becomes indefinite while subject retains its feeling attitude (I 355) and absorbs the object (I 356).

(2) *Sympathetic feeling* is feeling of feeling. Its object is another person's feeling. Sympathy is not a duplicate of the other person's feeling. In sympathizing with a child enjoying his toy I am not interested in the toy but in his enjoyment. "Sympathy with joy is also joy but it is freer than the primary joy." I do not lose the sense of distinction between my feeling and the child's as he loses the distinc-

tion between his feeling and its object (I 350).¹¹³ Sympathy also has alternative forms: in projective sympathy, I feel out toward the other person; in assimilative sympathy, I draw him into myself (I 356).

(3) *Contemplative feeling* is sympathy with sympathy. Three persons are involved. When I enjoy contemplating an old man watching his grandchild playing with a toy, the child's joy in the toy, the grandfather's sympathetic joy, and my contemplative joy are on different levels. I am interested in the child's feeling reflected in the grandfather's as an eternal emotion or value. I no longer feel the distinction between my feeling and the child's; I become impersonal (I 353). The expression of the object is detached from the particularity of fact as an eternal value. Beauty is such an eternal value, seen not as a quality of the object or another object beside it but as the reality to which the object itself is somehow adjectival (I 352). All feeling involves identification of subject and object, but in contemplative feeling both identity and difference are explicit. Subject merges into object and object is dissolved in subject (I 359).

(4) *Artistic enjoyment* is sympathy with sympathy when one or both of the persons sympathized with is imaginary (I 353). Feeling depicted in art is contemplated as sympathized with by the Heart Universal, the felt person in general, in which the person contemplating the feeling merges his personal heart. In the enjoyment of the beauty of a natural object, the third person, who feels the object, is someone in general (I 354). The beauty of an object involves expression, detachment from the object, and eternity—projections respectively of primary, sympathetic, and contemplative feeling; though the feelings of the three persons may be different emotional levels in the same individual (I 355). Artistic enjoyment has alternative directions. In the projective or dynamically creative direction, the feeling becomes objective yet without getting entangled in fact, transfiguring fact into value—freedom in spite of enjoying contact. In the assimilative, abstractive, or contemplative direction, the feeling is subjective detachment in which the value of the object is abstracted and reposedly enjoyed—enjoyment of reality in spite of detachment (I 357). In either case the enjoyer identifies himself with the eternal value (I 356). This artistic or aesthetic enjoyment is the highest feeling, realization of eternal value, "identification with the aesthetic essence without loss of freedom" (I 355).

Non-Indians, generally impressed by the beauty and refinement of Indian art, are sometimes perplexed by the striking ugliness of

¹¹³ For the child read of distinction (I 350, 5th line from bottom).

some works, even representations of deity. The aesthetic value of ugliness is discussed in the essay "The Beautiful and the Ugly." Beauty is objective: "the aesthetic attitude does not create but only discovers beauty or ugliness" (I 358). It is also subjective: "what particular symmetrical form is beautiful depends on the intuition of the artist." In Indian art, which "is prevaillingly abstractive or contemplative in character and not dynamically creative," the aesthetic essence is conceived as a subjective absolute or *rasa* rather than an objective absolute or beauty (I 357).¹¹⁴ Even when discovered, the aesthetic quality is discovered not by cognition but by feeling, which implies identification of subject and object (I 358). But their distinction is also felt—not at all in primary feeling, explicitly in sympathetic feeling, merged with identity in contemplative feeling. Where enjoyment, the feeling of identity, is subordinate to pain, the feeling of difference, a feeling of ugliness emerges (I 359). It is a power, not necessarily actualized, of the artistic spirit to transmute painful feelings into enjoyment (I 360). *Aesthetic effort* deepens the feeling of ugliness into enjoyment and so realizes the ugly, in the perspective of its infinite setting, as beautiful (I 362). The emergence of Beauty from the ugly, Bhattacharyya remarks, does credit both to Indian art itself and to its theory (I 363).

Value, the content of feeling, is analyzed in the article "The Concept of Value" published in 1934. The analysis reflects the influence, but nowise a mere following, of Kant:¹¹⁵ "the feeling that I reflectively feel is not taken as any one's feeling in particular: it is unappropriated or impersonalised rather than universalised" (II 287). Unlike known object, which is completely distinct from the knowing, felt value is only imperfectly distinct from the feeling (II 285) and cannot be spoken without reference to the feeling. The value is identified with the object, although the object is not identified with the value. Speaking of a value in an object indicates the objectivity of value resulting from the impersonalization of the feeling (II 288). Value is objective, independent of valuation (II 290); the object *is* beautiful, not merely to me (II 287). But it is not an adjective of the object (II 289)—although by a necessary illusion it is spoken of as if it were. Expression of felt character (It is a cool breeze) leads to expression of feeling

¹¹⁴ Compare P. J. Chaudhury, *Studies in Aesthetics* (Calcutta, 1964), 23: "Indian aestheticians do not consider beauty as an objective reality so much. They deal with the perception of the beautiful which is an enjoyed characteristic like taste or flavour (*rasa*) rather than a substantive entity."

¹¹⁵ *Studies in Kant* were published the following year.

(How cool is the breeze!) and this in turn to expression of feeling of feeling (How I enjoy the cool breeze!). In *feeling of feeling* the value is completely freed from the object and becomes absolute (II 291).

Coordinate with the value of a known content is that of a willed content (II 285). Willing as such is not value (II 293); to say, "We should act thus," is only an imperative. But to exclaim, "*How* we should act thus!" is to *feel* the sacredness of the ought (II 292). Sacredness is the holiness of an impersonal will felt to be embodied in the object, as beauty is an impersonal joy embodied in it (II 293). The value of an act depends on the moral value of the ideal impersonal willing which determines it, and the judgment on it is aesthetic relative to the judgment on that ideal willing (II 294). What is eternally willed is goodness or freedom (II 295), which is *felt* "as negation of the objectivity of the subject and yet as its constitutive reality" (II 297). Feeling or valuation is thus a process intermediate between knowing and willing (II 298).

This distinction between value of a known object and value of a willed act suggests an answer to the question raised above whether absolute feeling should not be called Love rather than Value. The content of feeling in general is value, but it has alternative modes. The value of known object is beauty; that of willed act is love. We might say that love is the subjective, beauty the objective, aspect of that value which is felt by union of subject and object, and that absolute Value is an alternation of absolute Beauty and absolute Love.¹¹⁶

CONCLUSION

A fourth phase of K. C. Bhattacharyya's thought is constituted by speculations between his final retirement in 1937 and his death in 1949. With failing eyesight but unailing mind, he developed especially the abstract logical aspect of the dialectic of alternation. These speculations survive, probably not permanently, in a mass of written fragments, never edited (I x), and in the recollections, never reduced to writing, of conversations with his sons Gopinath, the edi-

¹¹⁶ Analogous distinctions between Truth as reflection of outer reality or assertion of inner reality and Freedom as detachment or creation might generate a system of six alternative forms of the Absolute, three objective and three subjective.

tor of his works, and Kalidas, whose sympathy with his father's philosophical thought makes him his intellectual heir.¹¹⁷ Philosophical reflection, he said, begins with the existence of what is given in experience. By logic we discover interpretations of the given recognized as possibilities, and from these other possibilities are derived. In the realm of possibility, which is the domain of logic, there is no affirmation. The basic logical category is negation, including double, triple, and quadruple negation, by which novel possibilities are developed, equally possible but incompatible. Any possibility may become actual, but conflict among actuals is resolved by recognizing them as alternatively actual. Possibility and actuality are themselves alternative attitudes. Underlying such dialectic is the linguistic analysis of the common structure of all possibilities, a study which analyzes the "mere forms" of semantic thought and the "pure forms" of syntactic thought. Both the logical and the linguistic analyses were elaborated in an involved dialectic, but neither was systematized.

Neo-Vedanta search for the Absolute is continued in Kalidas Bhattacharyya's book *Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy*,¹¹⁸ the lucid style of which is a refreshing contrast to that of his father's works. His philosophical thought is a continuation of his father's philosophy, but it is developed in an original way, and his epistemological subjectivism is opposed to his father's realism. The logic of alternation provides the structure of his thought. When one alternative is asserted as actual, the other alternatives are rejected or ignored or subordinated or included, and by the dialectic resulting from these processes the chosen alternative is developed to its logical conclusion. The central problem of philosophy, he says, is how knowledge of object is possible, since knowledge, the subjective feeling of an object, and object, known as not itself knowledge, are so opposed in nature that their conjunction seems contradictory. Alternative attitudes offer alternative solutions. A philosopher does not become

¹¹⁷ For Kalidas Bhattacharyya's recollection of these conversations five years after his father's death see my article "Contemporary Vedanta Philosophy" (*Rev. of Met.*, 9 (1955-56), 494-96).

¹¹⁸ Calcutta, Das Gupta, 1953, 366 pp. The logic of alternation is applied to various problems of psychology, logic, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, and politics in an earlier book *Object Content and Relation* (Calcutta, Das Gupta, n.d., 160 pp.) and several articles in *Calcutta Review*, *Entretiens*, *K. C. Bhattacharyya Memorial Volume*, *Our Heritage*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophy East and West*, *Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress*, *The Mother*, and *Visvabharati Quarterly*. Analysis of these works is beyond the scope of the present article.

an idealist or realist through arguments, but "at the very start, according as he begins with the subjective or the objective attitude; he only interprets phenomena from the standpoint he has already assumed."¹¹⁹ If we assume the *subjective attitude*, we have *knowing*, in which the subject determines or creates its object. If we assume the *objective attitude*, we have *feeling*, in which the object is felt with immediate certainty. If we assume the *dialectical attitude*, we have *willing*, in which a dialectical synthesis of subject and object is attained. In the first case knowing *subordinates* feeling; in the second feeling *rejects* knowing; in the third willing while subjective *incorporates* the objective. The alternative philosophies are equally correct but incompatible. Knowing, feeling, and willing tolerate each other in practical life, but in reflection each demands to be absolute—pure subjectivity as absolute knowing or Truth, pure object as absolute feeling or Beauty, dialectical synthesis as absolute willing or Goodness. The ultimate problem of philosophy is the status of alternation itself. For Buddhism there is no reality but only alternative philosophies; for Jainism reality itself is alternative; for Vedanta there is one reality but alternative standpoints from which it can be viewed. The alternation of these alternative theories of alternation is the last word of the philosophy of alternative standpoints.

While Kalidas Bhattacharyya's administrative duties as chairman, dean and vice-chancellor at Visvabharati University have interfered with his philosophical publication, his recent philosophical speculation has involved further development of the concept of alternation. Besides the alternation of knowing, feeling, and willing, he says,¹²⁰ there is a cross alternation in which each may be alternatively considered in terms of either of the others. Besides pure knowing, which is purely subjective, there is knowing of objects, which is knowing in terms of feeling. Besides pure feeling, which is purely objective, there is feeling of self, which is feeling in terms of knowing. The concept of coincidence must be joined to that of alternation: the line dividing adjacent squares belongs alternatively and entirely to either because the squares coincide on one side. Alternatives diverge, but there is a sense in which they converge also.

The neo-Vedanta of K. C. Bhattacharyya and his son, based on the tradition of non-dualist Vedanta, strongly influenced by German idealism, having its literary expression in English, is a philosophy of universal appeal independent of any cultural context. Like classical

¹¹⁹ *Object Content and Relation*, 141.

¹²⁰ In a conversation March 26, 1961.

Vedanta it is not a theory or system but a way of thinking capable of indefinite development and application. Its most significant features are the logical method of alternation and the metaphysical doctrine of alternative absolutes.

Logically alternation is exclusive disjunction (p or q but not both). Contemporary symbolic logic is usually developed in terms of negation (not p), conjunction (p and q), and inclusive disjunction (p or q or both); exclusive disjunction plays a minor role in the abstract systematization. In life, however, it plays a major role. Such questions as "Tea or coffee?" "Shall I marry Tom or Dick?" are not ordinarily answered by "both." Life consists largely of situations in which exclusive alternatives are presented for choice. All are possible; one is to be actual. The problems may be trivial, as which stairs shall I go up. They may be important, involving an irrevocable choice of spouse, vocation, or religion. They may not be simple; when one potentiality is actualized, the others may be rejected or ignored or subordinated or included, depending on the whole situation. It is by choice among exclusive alternatives that we conduct our lives and make ourselves what we become. But alternation, so obviously important in practice, is also important in theory. Even in so abstract a realm as that of mathematics an equation may have alternative roots. In concrete reality alternation is commonplace, not only because the contingent truth is dependent on determining factors but also because, besides truth, other values, moral and aesthetic, are also possible. The neo-Vedanta logic of alternation is an attempt to systematize abstractly the structure of valid thought which is applicable to concrete reality.

Metaphysically the doctrine of alternative absolutes or alternative forms of the Absolute or the Absolute as Alternation is an original approach to the perennial central problem of philosophy. On the one hand, it avoids the pluralism or relativism which results from abandoning this problem as insoluble. On the other hand, it avoids the monism or abstractionism which results from a too facile solution. Based on the psychological distinction of the knowing, willing, and feeling functions of the Self and the epistemological distinction of objective, subjective, and dialectical attitudes correlated with them (although how correlated remains controversial), this doctrine dares to contemplate even the Absolute in terms of exclusive disjunction. Practically, its applications are beneficent. In religion and in politics¹²¹ it supports, as against either dogmatism or liberalism, a policy

¹²¹ "There are then three alternative ideals of life—duty, right and love,"

of coexistence which tolerates alternative principles without compromising one's own. Theoretically, one form of the Absolute is distinguished from another but nowise relative to the other. The Absolute, first recognized as the Indefinite underlying the manifold of definite objects, then as the Subject with which the Indefinite is identified, finally as the Alternation emerging from the Subject's incompatible functions, is spoken (alternatively contemplated, asserted, or enjoyed) in a symbol which refuses to deny the richness of its meaning by claiming a transcendent consistency beyond the actual consistency of each form. The Self finds its absoluteness in alternative ways—by denying itself, by denying the not-self, or by denying their separation. The Absolute is Truth, or Freedom, or Love, and the important word is *or*.

Neo-Vedanta, a fruit of the Indian philosophical renaissance of the twentieth century, is a mature philosophy. The youthful philosophical enthusiasm which pursues the metaphysical will-o'-the-wisp of an Absolute which has everything issues too often in an uncritical satisfaction that this has been attained or an overcritical rejection of metaphysics as futile. Neo-Vedanta is existentially oriented but phenomenologically grounded in experience. It seeks the Absolute not through a monistic category of understanding but through an analysis of the cognitive, conative, and emotional aspects of experience, and it recognizes that this can be done in different ways. As a way of thinking its accomplishments are impressive and its possibilities unlimited. "In a great and tangled movement of men and their ideas, the world is making itself over . . . and we have to reach for ideas big enough to grasp the magnitude of what is taking place."¹²² The Absolute as Alternation is an idea at once profound and comprehensive, and peculiarly relevant in a world which is many in concerns and ideologies but one in a no longer divisible destiny.

says Kalidas Bhattacharyya, "Alternative Forms of Politics," *Calcutta Review*, 3rd Series, 86 (1943), 37.

¹²² H. R. Isaacs, quoted in *A.A.U.P. Bulletin*, 52 (1966), 52.