

DISTINGUISHABLES AND SEPARABLES

All our philosophical investigations presuppose some kind of initial philosophical position which is merely the conscious or unconscious product of our beliefs and the attitudes that we form in this world. I can, for example, believe that in this world there are many things existing in their own right and that these things have various kinds of characteristics which are dependent for their existence on the things. I can alternatively believe or suppose that Reality is one and indivisible. On the first set of beliefs, I would be able to think of the separation of things and the distinctions among them. On the second assumption, the question of either separation or distinguishing (amongst things) would not even arise. Thus, our philosophical concepts and hypotheses depend on our beliefs or rather on the set of initial beliefs which we take for granted without questioning their validity. Although, theoretically, there is nothing wrong in accepting one indivisible reality, in our practical behaviour, we start with multiplicity of things and further believe or postulate that these things have certain characteristics, that these things act on one another or are acted upon. Again, this may further require us to presuppose concepts like space and time. For, without Space and Time, I might not be able to talk of things and their characteristics and imagine how or where they act. Thus, if in my investigation, I am analysing my experience, I must confess that I am already believing in, assuming a particular kind of picture of Reality. This is a common sense, pluralistic picture. In a way, I start my analysis of experience on the basis of this picture and so I am technically committing the fallacy of *petitio principii*. My only justification for this is that it is inevitable, for no investigation can start without some such assumption. Do we give the name presuppositions to such inevitable beliefs? I think we should make a distinction between initial beliefs and presuppositions. For example, that there is a multiplicity in the universe should not be regarded as a presupposition. It is my belief only. But if such a belief logically requires Space and Time, these should be regarded as presuppositions. It should be necessary to

point out that all our *beliefs and presuppositions* of our investigations are generic in nature unlike the beliefs in ghosts and vampires which are characterised by certain specificness or particularity.

Let us see how the notion of plurality arises in our mind. If the phenomena that we experience were continuous and were not discrete or separated from one another, would we still treat them as many and independently existing? Suppose there is a person with two heads. Shall we regard this person as one or two? It is possible that if such a person has two different thinking or behaviour systems, it would create problems for us. In all likelihood, each of such systems will be determined by some physical structure or pattern, and a certain physical structure and a certain behavioural system will form one nucleus. Thus, if there are two behavioural patterns we would somehow or other demarcate the physical area of the behavioural patterns. The case of an earth-worm with two mouths would be simpler. We do regard it as one being just as we regard a mirror, before it is broken into two, as one thing. If the earth-worm is cut into two, then alone it would be regarded as two. It appears to me that actual separation or dividedness seems to be the basic notion by which plurality of objects is determined. From this basic datum, the notion of divisibility would arise. A stone can be broken into two, a branch of a tree can be broken into two, although neither a stone nor a branch of a tree may actually be broken into two. So from the actual separation or division, we go to the possibility of separation or division. The things which are actually divided or which can be divided give rise to the notion of distinctness which is in fact presupposed by a thing which is capable of being divided into different elements. Very soon however, we find that we come across cases where there is definite distinctness but it is not possible to separate one distinct from another distinct. Such distinctness where the possibility of separating one thing from another is necessarily ruled out is distinguishability qua-distinguishability. The colour and extension of a thing for example, are distinct from each other but one cannot be physically separated from the other. It should be clear that whereas separability gives rise to the notion of plurality, pure distinguishability does not

give rise to any such notion. However, separability and distinguishability play a very important role in our systems of philosophical beliefs.

Traditionally, philosophy, is primarily concerned with the explanation of reality. I believe the word explanation is very important in this context, for it is in relation to this word or the notion of explaining that one can distinguish philosophy from science which too, in some sense, is concerned with *understanding* reality. If we take a stone and divide it into parts, we understand that parts or particles of the stone can be separated, that the stone can be divided; we may also understand whether the stone is a graphite stone or iron ore or a piece of diamond. But if we have to explain what we understand, we require altogether a different kind of activity, a different kind of technique. When we divide a stone we are breaking it literally; when we are explaining (the nature of stone) we are not breaking the stone; we are only breaking, (expressing) the experience into language and concepts. This kind of 'breaking' is communicating, distinguishing, conceptualising. When we explain, we re-arrange our experience in a linguistic form so that it may become meaningful or communicable.

But many a time, philosophers have treated this process of explaining on a par with a physical process. In a physical process, just as one can break, divide something into parts, in the same way, one can also join the parts. In philosophical analysis one can break the experience (into concepts). But the broken elements are not just physical units which can be reassembled. A flower is not made of fragrance, softness, a particular shape, a particular colour etc., just as it is made of petals, stem, pollens etc.. The philosophically analysed 'units' are distinguishable; they cannot be physically separated; they are characteristics, not things (or parts of a thing). And so they cannot be reunited in the way physical elements (e.g. mercury) can sometimes be reunited. Nevertheless, in their enthusiasm, philosophers, try to reconstruct or synthesise the world. Such an approach does not take into consideration the limitations of philosophers. Moreover, in so doing, the philosopher hypostatizes i.e. unconsciously regards characteristics as things. Sometimes the characteristics are not even objective characteristics (as for example when we say the

flower is pleasant). Sometimes in our eagerness to reconstruct reality, we speculate too, and this leads to some kind of anthropomorphism, as for example, when we say that the stone must be having pain, or when we say that God's form is like that of a man. Sometimes the different orders of the concepts are also confused, which leads to what Ryle calls category mistakes or what Śaṅkara would regard as Adhyāsa. However, my point is that all these errors arise out of the basic confusion of not distinguishing between pure distinguishables and separables. When I talk of two things or two parts of a thing, I talk of two separables. When I talk of two characteristics, I talk of only distinguishables. It is possible that I might talk of two characteristics of two different things. In such a case, the characteristics may appear as separables. But it is not by virtue of their being characteristics that they are separables. It is by virtue of the separateness of things to which the characteristics belong that they are separables.

Let us follow the distinction between *separability* and *distinguishability* qua distinguishability more closely. When some things are not only distinguished as different but can also be separated or divided, I call them separables. When they are purely distinguished but cannot be divided or separated, I call them distinguishables. I believe this is a very fundamental distinction and ignoring it, leads to several philosophical muddles. I believe this was the distinction which Vaiśeṣikas first introduced when they made a distinction between Saṃyoga and Samavāya, although I am not sure whether the Vaiśeṣikas were aware of all the implications of this distinction. One can easily see that *separation* properly applies to things in the physical world. I can separate one thing from another thing; I can physically separate one table from another table or a chair, or I can separate one piece of furniture from another piece of furniture. I can cut a piece of stone, a piece of metal or a piece of wood or a thing similar to it and separate the two pieces. I can also separate one heap from another heap. But I cannot separate the colour of the table or the weight of the table from the table, although I can distinguish the two. I cannot separate the mangoeness of the mango tree from the treeness of the mangoetree, although I can say that a class of mangoetrees is a proper subclass of trees and thus distinguish between the two. I can distinguish between emotions and

expressions of emotions but it is doubtful whether one can actually separate them. Similarly, I can distinguish between the earlier moments of time and the later moments of time or the past moments of time and the present or future moments of time. We can distinguish between these moments in the sense that they are different (or we know that they are different). But we cannot separate them. According to me, even when two moments are not temporally contiguous, they are not separate. In order to be separate, there must be a possibility of their existing together *in their own right* although at different positions in space. When we talk of moments of time, this kind of divisibility is absent.¹ The two moments of time do not co-exist, although philosophers have talked of the divisibility or even infinite divisibility of time. The moments of time only succeed one another. When two things are separate, they can also be brought together; that is, they can exist in close proximity, they can touch each other, there can be contact between them. The space between them is logically reducible to zero distance. In short, theoretically it should be possible to adjust the distance between two things which are separate. That is, it should be possible to say that such things are reversible.

But let us now come to 'objects' which are only distinguishable but not separable. Can there be any 'distance' between 'such objects'? Can each of such objects have independent existence? What will be the relation between them? Can we adjust the distance between them? Can we say that it is reversible? The answers to these questions seem to be negative. In other words, where objects can be distinguished but not separated—we cannot talk of them (the pure distinguishables) as existing by themselves. We can for example, distinguish between a logical substance and quality. But it will be incorrect to say that a pure substance exists by itself or a pure quality exists by itself. The first mistake was committed by Nyāya logicians who said that in the first instance of its existence (the produced) Dravya existed by itself without any quality.² The second mistake was committed by a few sensum philosophers who thought of sense data or qualities as existing by themselves. It merely means that both these types of philosophers regarded some of the pure distinguishables as separables. That is, the Nyāya logicians regarded the substance and some sensum philosophers regarded the sense data or qualities as things.

This was also the mistake of the Platonists who thought that universals were not only distinguishable from the particulars in which they existed, but that they could also be separated from the particulars, that they had a separate and distinct existence. In regarding sense data, qualities and universals or even classes as separables, the philosophers were believing or at least logically assuming, that qualities and universals and sense data and classes were existing in their own right. They thus thought that the qualities and substances or universals and particulars were related by the same kind of relations by which two things could be related. If two things were in some kind of physical space, then qualities and substances and universals and particulars were in some kind of mental or logical space, and they were related by the same kind of relations by which two separable objects could be related. In so doing, it appears that they were committing two kinds of mistakes, though these two kinds could be intimately related to each other.

First, two separables belong to the same 'category', and this category is the category of things (or loosely, substance). Two distinguishables which cannot be separated may belong to the same or different categories. But even if two distinguishables belong to one category, there is some uniqueness about each distinguishable. It cannot be thought of as having a separate, independent existence. So in treating pure distinguishables as separables we are (1) either mistaking objects belonging to different categories as belonging to the same category. or (2) we are treating distinguishables as things i.e. we are hypostatizing the distinguishables.

Amongst the distinguishables, there are different types. Thus the concept of the distinguishable qua distinguishable seems to be applicable even in the situation of knowledge. The knower and the known in the strict sense, are only distinguishable, but are not separable as knower and known. I am aware that this statement will be disputed, for certainly, the particular object that is known and the particular knower that knows the object exist as independent objects. But to exist as an independent object is quite a different thing from remaining unrelated (or related) in the knowledge situation. The same objects may play two different roles, one in ontology and the other in epistemology. In fact, my point is that we should distinguish between absolute terms and relational

terms. Relational terms are only distinguishable as relational terms, although their denotation may exist independently and therefore, may be separable. Some one, say, X, may be a mother and some other say, Y, may be a son. The role of a mother and a son is different from the role of woman and a boy. If these two roles are confused, one is likely to regard either (1) the relational terms as absolute terms or (2) the absolute terms as relational terms. Śankara, for example, has used the terms 'Viṣaya' and 'Viṣayī'. These are relational terms. They are related to each other and one cannot properly call some one as Viṣayī or something as 'Viṣaya', unless they refer to a common context. So even if in ontology, there is a possibility of a person corresponding to 'Viṣayī' and a thing corresponding to 'Viṣaya' as existing independently, in the realm of knowledge they are only distinguishables. Of course, distinguishables in respect of the knowledge situation and distinguishables on account of abstraction of a thing should not be regarded on par.

A common phenomenon that we see is the distinction between things and beings. Beings are distinguished from things on account of the fact that beings have characteristics, like automatic movement feelings, willing, reasoning etc. In short, beings are supposed to be 'conscious' as against things which are regarded as 'unconscious'. And even if someone regards things 'as having consciousness', my basic distinction is not affected, as the consciousness of things will have to be distinguished from the consciousness of beings. Again, some beings are not only conscious but they are self-conscious. However, beings have not only the characteristics pointed out by consciousness, but they have also the characteristics of things which are indicated by their bodies. So the principle of division would not be whether the substance has extension or it is extensionless.³ Of course, one can certainly distinguish, a spatial characteristic like extension from the characteristic like consciousness. But, can one separate consciousness from the body? The usual argument is that there is a time when the body exists and consciousness does not. From this people conclude that body and consciousness are separables. Even the Vaiśeṣikas, who were the pioneers in making the distinction between separables and distinguishables qua distinguishables, regard consciousness as a separable object and call it Ātman. If our argument is properly understood

then it would follow that there is no time when consciousness and 'body' exist separately. It may be that consciousness and 'body', co-exist for some duration and after a certain point, consciousness simply ceases to exist. So, when they exist together they are inseparable and after that only one exists and the other does not. From these facts, it should never be concluded that both of them have separate existence, even after one of them has ceased to exist. The situation is very similar to a thing with a particular colour e.g., a green leaf. If the greenness of the leaf is taken away by some chemical, does it mean that greenness and the leaf exist *separately*? The separate existence argument is the result of confusing distinguishability qua distinguishability with separability. When the body is with consciousness, the 'body' is different from things like stones. It is only a distinguishable. When the consciousness is extinct, the 'body' behaves differently, like a thing (although in a very crude sense of the term).

I have argued above that when a person dies, consciousness simply ceases to exist. Had it been separable one would have to think of consciousness and its material counterpart generally called the body, to co-exist separately. Now, one may say that their separate existence cannot be disproved. This is true. But let us try to understand the problem in a larger context. Let us take the case of a tree. As an organic thing, its status is different from that of an inorganic one. If the tree dies, that is, becomes dry, we will, of course, say that it is no more living. Shall we say that consciousness or the 'soul' of the tree and its material counterpart co-exist although separately? And what happens if one branch of the tree dies? Does it mean that the consciousness of the tree has withdrawn from one part of the tree and is concentrating on the remaining part? or does it mean that part of the 'consciousness' alone exists separately from the tree? If we accept the first alternative that consciousness can cease to exist from one part alone, then it is possible that it ceases to exist from all the parts. This means that consciousness and body are simply distinguishables and are not separables. On the other hand, if we say the dead part separately exists from the 'conscious' part, then we will have to think that conscious is separable into parts such that one part lives independently and in its own right and the other part lives along with the remaining tree. Or we will have to think that

although consciousness itself cannot be completely separated, a part of the consciousness, although continuous with the total consciousness, can exist independently of the tree. I think some kind of absurdity is involved in these positions. A more legitimate hypothesis, though speculative, would be to regard consciousness as only distinguishable and not separable from the 'body'.

We have seen that two separables as well as two distinguishables are different from each other. But in the case of distinguishables, the difference is either because of the difference in quality or because of a category difference. For example, a particular colour may be distinguished from another quality, say, smoothness, or it may be distinguished from the thing which has that colour. Such is not the case when we talk of separables. The separables must primarily belong to the same category and further we believe that this category must be substance which we again presuppose, is capable of *existing* by itself. It is our belief that only things have this capacity i.e. the capacity of existing by themselves, although in philosophical language, we do say that the category of substance exists by itself and all other categories depend on the category of substance. It must however, be said that the category of substance is as much an abstraction as any other category. And if we say that the category of substance exists by itself we are equating substance with a thing i.e. although we talk of a substance, we really mean by it a thing as we understand in our ordinary language. So we ought to have really distinguished between substance as a thing and substance as a category.⁴ It is not an abstract substance which is separable from another abstract substance. It is a concrete thing which is separable from another concrete thing. Such a belief about things presuppose a certain conception of the nature of the thing. One cannot say that the above description of a thing would fit a geometrical point, for example. It appears to me that such a description of a thing primarily presupposes the spatial characteristics of a thing. It is by virtue of these spatial characteristics that we are able to separate one thing from another. It is true that we do extend the use of the term 'thing' to non-spatial objects also; for example, we do talk of two societies or two minds. But when we extend our use of things to minds or societies, if we carefully look to our use of the

words, we would see that in our use of the words we are actually presupposing some kind of metaphorical *space*. This is so even when we talk of separability in time. As Bergson would put it, unless we talk of time in some spatial way, it would not be possible for us to talk of separability in time. In fact, even the problem of infinite divisibility of time requires us to think of time as a length, even to think of non-existing future time as existing simultaneously with the present time.

But this raises two kinds of problems. (1) How are we to decide that such and such is the meaning of existence (and a thing)? For the kind of a thing that we have taken for granted in the above discussion is the macroscopic thing. How are we to suppose that by a thing we mean something like a table and not a molecule or an atom or an electron? How are we to apply the criterion of spatial characteristics at the microscopic level. And (2) How are we to decide about the spatial characteristics of a thing? Does this mean that the concept of separability applies strictly only to macro-physical objects? Do we think of the microscopic world of atoms, or electrons and protons as non-spatial? This is a mistake committed by many. But again, the question may arise: How do you distinguish between a thing that is actually in space and a thing that is merely imagined? Is not an imagined thing imagined with spatial properties? Is it not the case that whenever you imagine a thing you imagine it in space, in physical space. Here strictly we do not have any criterion by which we can distinguish the space in imagination from physical space. But we believe and presuppose that physical space is prior to imagined space and it is only on the basis of this belief that we work out our theory of space.

But now imagine that the characteristics which are true of separables are applied to pure distinguishables. If this is done, we would immediately think that the 'things' which belong to different categories belong to only one category; that although the distinguishables as such do not exist, on account of our mistaking them for separables we would require them to have thingness and spatial characteristics. We would regard pure abstractions as reals. We would regard qualities, actions, classes and universals as things and even non-existence would be thought of as having existence. We would begin to think that these distinguishables are in space,

that they can be related to each other (externally) by the relation of *physical contact*. In short, we would be creating a pluralistic universe of pseudo-existents. One category would be mistaken for another category, an element in the knowing situation would also be mistaken for a being situation.⁵ In other words, as soon as we mistake distinguishables for separables, we would reduce all categories to things (or substances) and this would be a fallacy, for we would regard a real thing and a pseudo thing on par.

Can we, in our analysis, ignore the factor of time altogether and restrict our analysis only to spatial characteristics? I should confess that this will not be possible. All our experience is characterised by spatio-temporal characteristics. In human life too, as elsewhere, both these characteristics, the characteristic of space and the characteristic of time, are present. One cannot isolate spatial characteristics alone from the temporal ones. Space and time are distinguishables only, not separables. Let us understand the peculiarities of temporal characteristics. To begin, with, we may say that time is concerned with the basic concept of duration or persistence. Where, in experience, do we find this duration? Where can this *duration* be verified? As regards the answer to the first question, one may not be certain. For it is very often said that things endure in time. But without doubt *persistence* is verified on the basis of human existence alone. The duration of things is verified only by contrasting it, measuring it against human existence or of human life. Awareness of duration in human beings is itself the *source* of the concept of duration. Persistence and 'life' thus overlap each other and the end of life, also becomes the end of persistence. If there is *X length* of life one cannot break this length into two parts, say, A and B. The 'first' break signifies the end of life and duration.⁶ In this respect, life or existence in time, is to be contrasted with existence in space. Existence in space consists of extension and parts and even if the existence is negated, the parts as parts, continue to be there. In fact, a thing in space can be destroyed by breaking it.⁷ A temporal existence, as I have suggested above, cannot be broken into two temporal segments. The end of temporal existence is signified by the end itself. No part of temporal existence remains beyond this end—moment. I, therefore, think that finally the basic concept of measurement of time is supplied by man's own life or

experience. The clocks and the movements of the earth and the sun etc., are finally measured in terms of human life or experience. It is human life or experience which gives the awareness of duration. You must measure duration by duration and unless there is awareness of duration, duration could not be measured. I, therefore, venture to say that the concept of time—not time—itsself arises from human life. Life and time are inseparable, one of the important distinctions between them being that life is finite, it comes to an end some time. But although one particular life ceases another life is continuing. This gives rise to infinite temporal continuity. And that is time.

Time and space are distinguishable. But they are not separable. In our experience we do not come across any pure temporal or pure spatial existence. This can be either on account of the fact that it is impossible for space and time to exist independently or it may be on account of the fact that the medium of all our experience is inseparable from human beings and the temporal nature of human beings modifies the nature of experience. Whatever it may be, whenever we think of a thing we always conceive of it as having spatio-temporal properties. Space and time, so to say, are the scaffoldings or frame in which we put all our perceptible experience. Space and time supply the *forms of things*.

It is indeed true that we conceive of space and time in relation to things. This is how they are called forms of intuition by Kant. They do not appear to be things in the sense things are regarded as things. But how are we to conceive of *empty space* and *empty time*? I believe that the limited notions of space and time carry us beyond the limitedness and we begin to think of unlimited space and unlimited time in which the 'limited space' and 'limited time' of our primary experience are '*parts*' or constituents. We believe that it is all one space and one time (which can be divided). If something is supposed to have parts, the next step would lead us to the belief that it is a thing or rather a composite thing having parts. Perhaps for some such reason, the Vaiśeṣikas thought of space and time as independent things or substances. I, however, want to argue that isolated space or isolated time could not be regarded as things, even as the form of things. For ultimately the thing is mingled with the spatio-temporal properties. Space, Time and 'Thing' permeate one

another. Simple space or simple time would give us distinguishables but not separables. Even space and time jointly or separately cannot give us separability. For it is only the thing in space and time which can be separated, neither space nor time. It is because space or time cannot be separated but only distinguished as different spaces or times in relation to things that things can be separated in space and time. Thus although we presuppose space and time, they are not separable from things. Space and time are only distinguishable from things.

Ever since the days of Plato in the West and the Vaiśeṣikas in the East, people have been thinking of universals. Universals are supposed to be some common element possessed by (all) particulars. But I think this is an over-simplification. The problem of universals cannot be understood in this way. Let us take the case of an animal, say, cow. On account of certain similar properties found in different cows we may distinguish *a universal cow* from particular cows. But in this search for universality, we may distinguish two different kinds. We may for example, talk of cowness as some common characteristic possessed by all cows. This characteristic evidently does not have parts like legs, head, etc. But when I know something as a cow but do not remember whether it is my cow or somebody else's, I am not talking of cowness. I am very much talking of a concrete animal cow, although I am not talking of this cow or that cow. It means that when I talk of *cowness*, I am not talking of a thing, but when I talk of a cow, I am talking of a thing having spatio-temporal characteristics. What I am eliminating are the specific qualities which go with a particular cow. Thus, to regard *cowness* and cow on par should not be justified. Although one is likely to say that in both these cases abstraction or universalization is involved, I think the two operations are significantly different. When one talks of a cow (though not a particular cow) one is generalizing; when one talks of cowness, one is abstracting. For example, it would be possible for us to count different cows without *recognizing* each cow. It would not be possible for us to count cownesses. The Nyāya philosophers of India have distinguished between special (Viśeṣa guṇa) and general quality (Sāmānya guṇa). When you know *something* with Sāmānya guṇa alone you would, for example, get a general cow.

The distinction between a general cow and cowness is very similar to the grammatical distinction between a *common noun* and an *abstract noun*. A common noun may have a bearer in space and time. The abstract noun does not have any bearer. It appears to me that this distinction was at least vaguely present in the mind of Aristotle who distinguished between form and Idea. Similarly, the early Nyāya philosophers distinguished between *Jāti* and *Ākṛti*; *Jāti* corresponding to abstract characteristic or abstraction and *Ākṛti* corresponding to a general thing. If we apply our distinction of separability and distinguishability to phenomena, it should be clear that the possibility of separability arises properly in the context of *Ākṛti*. It is only the *Ākṛti* which gives the thing the potentiality for separation. *Jāti*s can only be distinguished, but not separated. I think it was this distinction operating in the process of universalizing and abstracting, that was overlooked by G. E. Moore when he thought that there are some concepts which are complex and there are some concepts which are simple and further thought that horse was a complex concept and good or yellow was a simple one.

But I think *universals* can be distinguished in yet *different* ways. For example, when we see some cows, just as we distinguish some common characteristic cowness, similarly we also know *the oneness of each cow*. To say that we distinguish oneness and cowness in exactly the same way does not seem to be correct. For, then we are likely to discover 'oneness' in the search for cowness and vice versa. Again in the compresence of many cows, I do not simply distinguish 'oneness' common to all cows. We are also able to add different cows. We are, for example, able to say that the cows are *ten* in number. Ten is also regarded as an universal. But the concept of ten is not formed in the same way the concept of one is formed. The concept of ten is formed by adding different *ones*. Again, we can talk of cows as a group. When I am talking of *ten*, I am not talking of a collectivity. I am rather talking of some discrete numbers. It is by virtue of this discrete—character of numbers that I am able to count the cows. On the other hand, when I talk of cows it is merely grouping the cows. Now, when I abstract 'one' from a cow it is certainly an abstraction. But it is a different kind of abstraction from the one wherein we talk of cowness, and

abstract it from a cow. All these different kinds of universals are distinguishables. To put them under one category without further distinguishing them would be as much a fallacy as to regard distinguishables as separables.

There is yet another kind of the so called universal represented by values like beautiful and good. Do we get these values in the same way as we get other universals? When one says that something is *beautiful* or something is good, are we discovering either some common property, shared by different things which are either beautiful or good? Are we abstracting goodness and beauty the way we abstract either cowness or the number one? It appears to me that we do not do any of these things. (Again there is likely to be a difference between the way we get *good* and the way we get *beautiful*). To say the least, when we say that something is beautiful, we are passing a *judgment* on something. This cannot be done unless the thing and the one who judges somehow come together. So if good and beautiful are regarded as universals, it will be incorrect to say that all universals are of the same kind. In that case, to say that something is beautiful will be to say that 'beautiful' and the thing that is judged as beautiful are inseparable. But this too, would not be correct. The peculiarity is that the beautiful and the things that are beautiful are not even distinguishable just as the colour of a thing and the thing are distinguishable. '*Beautiful*' is a characteristic of a certain situation in which a thing and the observer are constituents and the opinion or the judgment of the one who judges is somehow super-imposed on the thing.

One of the problems connected with our previous discussion is whether values *exist*. I think this problem is purely a linguistic one. We begin to think that values exist because we are able to say significancy that there are values. But a proposition that there are values and the proposition that values exist are not synonymous. The proposition that there are values is like the propositions, 'there is society', 'there is a technique'; 'this is socialism' etc. We have also seen that in the primary sense, we cannot say that something exists unless the thing has *spatial characteristics*. Let us contrast values with something which either exists or which we think exists. When I try to bring before my mind's eye, the concepts of 'value' or 'beautiful' I do not

succeed as also in the case of 'nothing', in getting anything spatial before me, at least directly. I cannot imagine any spatial picture of these notions. Let us see what happens when we think of ghosts and souls. Do we have mental pictures of souls and ghosts? Do we think of them the way we think of tables and chairs? Let us see how we use these words. It appears to me that although we say that ghosts and souls do not have spatial properties, we do not think of them in any other way except in spatial terms. The soul⁸ is *smaller than the smallest* thing in the world or is *bigger than the biggest* thing in the world. It is plain that in this context 'smallest' and 'biggest' are spatial terms. Similarly, when we say the ghost is coming through the wall, although we do not attribute to the ghost a body like ours, we do attribute to the ghost some body, may be a skeleton body of geometrical length when we think of its transmission. So whether ghosts and souls exist or not, when we attribute existence to them we think of them only in spatial terms. Descartes failed here.⁹ Descartes' concept of extensionless substance has limitations. Although it is true that we cannot measure mind or soul with something that is spatial, the spatial *nucleus* of mind or soul is not negated obviously. This is not the case in regard to values.

Thus far, we have based our analysis on the presupposition that whereas two things (qua things) can be distinguished and separated, two categories can only be distinguished but not separated. But theoretically this distinction does not seem to be a absolute. If two things had infinite magnitude, would this distinction apply? Our analysis applies only in the context of things which have finite spatio-temporal characteristics. By any chance, if we begin to presuppose that there are some things which are all pervading, say for example, the all-pervading God, the notion of separability would be simply inoperative. The notion of separability would also be inoperative, if you somehow believe that space and time, which cannot in any sense be regarded as finite are *things*. If we start with the presupposition that there are things with infinite magnitude, then the criterion of separability (and with it the criterion of spatiality) simply fails. The criterion of distinguishability alone remains. But on this criterion one cannot distinguish between things and categories. Either the things are likely to be mistaken for categories or the categories for things. At least,

in its rudimentary form, we owe the distinction of distinguishability and separability to Vaiśeṣikas. But unfortunately, they are also responsible for its doom. Since they forgot to make a proper distinction between substance as a category and substance as thing, their substances were usually mistaken for things. And amongst such things they included Space, Time, Ākāśa and Ātman. Space Time and Ākāśa are non-separable, distinguishable and all-pervasive. All pervasive things can be distinguished but not separated. So it is easy, though not correct, to regard a thing which is non-separable but distinguishable as all-pervasive. Once Ātman was given the status of a thing, it was thought necessary to regard it as all-pervasive. One cannot separate Space, Time, Ākāśa and Ātman from one another. One cannot separate Space, Time, Ātman and Akāśa by actual division (although conceptually division or distinction of space may be possible). So once our logic proceeds in the above way, at some stage, the separability criterion for their being things is given up, e.g. by the Vaiśeṣikas, and with it the clear line of demarcation between categories and things is also lost. We have seen that the notion of thing and the notion of separability go together. But when this itself is given up, the edifice of philosophical presuppositions tumbles down. Once the presuppositions vanish, what remains is only the 'anarchy of beliefs' and even if one tries to reunite the 'forces of beliefs', in the absence of proper or consistent presuppositions, one is surely rolled down the valley of fallacies. For our initial philosophical position which is formed on account of our practical attitudes, is already cracked and is difficult to repair.

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NOTES

1. I think this should also explain that two events cannot properly be separated, although they may occupy two different positions in time. I think the idea of separability is intimately connected with that of reversibility.

2. In fact it is very clear that when the Nyāya philosophers made a distinction between Dravya and Guṇa, they did not regard it as a purely logical distinction. They did not regard Dravya as abstract. Like Aristotle, they also regarded it as substratum. But they forgot that the pure substratum could not be regarded as existing by itself as it was not a thing.

3. Perhaps the principle on which beings and things can be divided is that whereas a being procreates, a thing does not.

4. In fact it will be interesting to point out that amongst the distinguishables also we are unfortunately inclined to give greater existential *weightage* to some *Continuants*. We have a tendency to think that substance is more *important* than qualities and thus think that the qualities in here in substance. Here we treat the substances as things and unconsciously postulate that they are capable of existing by themselves. I think it is this kind of prejudice which has made the very pregnant notion of Samavāya of the Vaiśeṣikas insignificant. Samavāya should have suggested inseparability where we are able to distinguish. But very soon the notion of pure distinguishability was substituted by that of substratum-superstratum relation. It goes without saying that we are unconsciously treating a substance as a thing.

5. For example a *Know-situation* is merely a special case of an *Is-situation*. The *is-situation* is converted and distinguished into a *knower-known-situation*. As stated earlier, these are simply relational terms. But now we would start thinking that the knower, the logical knower itself is an existing object and thus convert a *subject* into an object. It need not be added that the knower has existence is formed in this way. (In the same way it is possible to mistake something which really exists as only idea).

6. Of course on the hypothesis that there is rebirth several such breaks are allowed !

7. Spatial objects can be divided. But such a division signifies the destruction or death of the objects.

8. Anoranīyān Mahato Mahīyān.

9. His division of substances was based on the principle whether something is spatial or non-spatial. But if spatiality in common to all substances, the division would not be exclusive.