

Chapter 1:

S.S. Barlingay's reflections on the concept of Philosophy

1.0. Introduction

The question ' What is Philosophy? ' is a peculiar kind of question for SSB. He has got his own view regarding the nature of philosophy. For him it is a kind of intellectual exercise which takes place all over the world in different time periods irrespective of the geographical limit, race-limit, etc. This is a human *expression* as well as an *endeavor* and has got its own significance in the history of mankind. This activity of producing philosophy is an apex intellectual exercise. For him Philosophy is an action. It is not just contemplation and speculation in air. He does not allow the word ' speculation ' to be applied for this activity since he believes to be an action oriented study in the true sense of the term. For him, it is a worldview expressed by sensible, articulated, neat, sensitive humans in entire human race. He analyses philosophical terms in traditional ways and interprets them in modern idiom with special reference to cultures in and civilizations in the world.

For him philosophy is analysis. But the way he himself conducts analysis of various concepts is unconventional. He calls the model of his analysis '*geni-analysis*' and explains it in detail. The titles of his books contain the terms like ' modern introduction' and 'reunderstanding' which indicate his aim and methodological approach, he was trying to introduce in philosophy, particularly Indian Philosophy, and that was to rejuvenate Indian Philosophy in modern idiom.

In the present chapter we will concentrate on SSB's perception and pursuit of the question "What is Philosophy?"¹ And also look into the nature of the treatment he has given to this question, the ways he deals with it. We shall look into his efforts of

¹In his pursuit of the question 'What is Philosophy?' SSB could have been influenced by Gilbert Ryle's perspective. It so happened that there was lecture series at the time SSB stayed in London. Thomson used to lecture on predicate logic, Dick on Axiomatic theory, Dummett on the Theory of sets, Lemmon on modal Logic, Hao Wang on many valued logic and Neil on intuitionistic logic. These lectures were held in different colleges in Oxford. In addition, Price gave two course of lectures on Locke and Hume. Gilbert Ryle also gave a course of lectures on "what is philosophy?" SSB had attended all these lectures and was immensely profited.- *Confessions and Commitments*, "My intellectual Development" p. 20

bringing to our notice, the misconceptions of philosophy, the labor he takes to explain the relationship between philosophy and action, the way he tries to bridge the gap between theory and praxis and other problems related to it. It is necessary to understand his conception of philosophy in order to understand and evaluate his philosophical views on various issues in the thesis.

"What is philosophy? Ryle once said that in the 20th century for the first time after Plato and Aristotle, philosophy became self-conscious, and asked the question, "What is philosophy itself?"² SSB desired that the modern scholars of Indian philosophy should have become self conscious in a similar way. He says, "Our philosophers should have asked the question, what philosophy was before thinking about the philosophy of Carvaka. They should not have simply assumed that the philosophy of Carvaka was materialistic."³ SSB did not accept the traditional view of the scholars of Indian philosophy. He wanted that Indian philosophy should have become self conscious. An outcome of this was his *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*'. A more relevant point is that SSB was essentially self-conscious philosopher. When a philosopher pursues the question, "What is philosophy?" he becomes a metaphilosopher. SSB was a philosopher and a metaphilosopher at the same time.

Survey of the literature of SSB

SSB talked about the nature of philosophy or the concept of philosophy on various occasions and in various places in his writings. In *A critical Survey of Western Philosophy* which he co-authored with Prof. Padma B. Kulkarni, he entitled first chapter of it as ' The concept of philosophy '. He also discusses the question in the summary of the work. Both these sections of the work show the impact of SSB prominently. His monograph '*Confessions and Commitments*' is an important witness to his pursuit of this question. Similarly he discusses the issue in "The Threshold" of *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy* and in the first chapter as well as "Concepts in the philosophy of Indian Origin" from the same anthology. He refers to the concept of philosophy in the *Prologue* of the work '*A Modern Introduction to Indian Ethics*', the articles "Awareness", "One World", "Language and the World", "Experience and

²*Confessions and Commitments*, "Indian Philosophy: Retrospect and Prospect" p.70

³*Ibid.*, p.70

Reflections", "Critique of Pure Belief ", and "Value, Values and Value Systems" from the anthology *Beliefs, Reasons and Reflections*. Apart from these many other sporadic references to the concept of philosophy are scattered in his literature.

1.1 Misconceptions of philosophy SSB deals with

One way of approaching SSB's conception of philosophy is to understand what he says about misconceptions of philosophy, that is, what philosophy is not, or philosophy should not be according to him. SSB explicates the misconceptions of philosophy in western context, as well as in the context of Indian Philosophy. So, we can say that SSB conveys to us two types of misconceptions of philosophy, that is one with regard to the philosophy of western origin, and the other is with regard to that of Indian origin. He also tries to correct both these misconceptions, and presents what for him is the right conception.

(A) Misconceptions of philosophy in Western context.

In his (co-authored) critical survey of western philosophy SSB asks how misconceptions arise about the nature of philosophy. SSB brings to our notice that these misconceptions arise out of wrong perceptions of man of each age about the world, the causal explanations and interpretations man has made. Ages have passed, hence misconceptions also are ample, proposed and inflicted by individual philosophers and/or schools which they claim they belong to. But it seems that these different misconceptions have to be accounted for not in absolutist way, but in a relative or dialectical way since these conceptions, though misconceptions, have played role of paradigms in the further development of concept of philosophy in history of philosophy. SSB rightly notes, that "we cannot assert in an Aristotelian strain that there is only one true conception of philosophy whereas misconceptions are infinite, for each age and each thinker has offered a new conception of philosophy which cannot be brushed aside by merely calling it a misconception."⁴

What is the nature of such a misconceptions ? SSB describes that the difficulty starts with the definition of philosophy itself. He says " 'What is philosophy' is a

⁴A *Critical Survey of Western Philosophy*. P. 02

question, no more and no less difficult than Pilate's⁵ question: "What is truth?" In fact the two questions are identified by Plato. To Glaucon's⁶ question: 'Who then are the true philosophers', Socrates answers: 'Those who are lovers of the vision of truth. They are lovers of knowledge and lovers of wisdom. A philosopher is a friend of justice, courage, temperance and philosophy is a blameless study'. Here philosophy is accorded a high status. With this status in mind Xenophanes had remarked in a complaining tone that it was strange if a gymnast was more honored than a philosopher. A philosopher deserves a place of honour in society and philosophy is the highest mission in life." ⁷

This is the first esteemed concept of philosophy in Greek world, but SSB gives few instances about how philosophy is ridiculed, since its inception itself, in ancient times.

First instance is from Greek philosophy, who has tried to articulate the notion itself. In a dialogue by Plato, 'Clouds', Aristophanes introduces philosopher as a man 'going about and saying that he walks in air, and talking a good deal of nonsense'. The charges leveled against Socrates by Miletus were that he speculated about the heaven above and searched into the earth beneath, and made the worse appear the better. SSB says that these are characteristic caricatures of a philosopher.

He goes further telling that, the joke cut at the cost of Thales (Plato has recorded it in Theaetetus) belongs to the same category. When a maid-servant quipped, that Thales was so eager to know what was going on in heaven that he could not see what was in front of his feet. Unfortunately Thales gave a good opportunity to such a joke by really falling into a well and being absorbed in water. This shows that a philosopher (in this case Thales) is not a man of wisdom but a dreamer or a star-

⁵**Pontius Pilate** was the fifth Prefect of the Roman province of Judaea from AD 26–36. He is best known as the judge at Jesus' trial and the man who authorized the Crucifixion.: *From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

⁶**Glaucon** (born circa 445 BC) son of Ariston, was the philosopher Plato's older brother and was amongst the inner circle of Socrates' young affluent students. He is primarily known as a major conversant with Socrates in *Republic*, and the interlocutor during the *Allegory of the Cave*. He is also referenced briefly in the beginnings of two dialogues of Plato, *Parmenides* and *Symposium*. *From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

⁷*A Critical Survey of Western Philosophy*, p. 01

gazer."⁸ (SSB himself cuts a joke by noting that the element which according to Thales was the stuff of the world, the water, in which he fell down, is a different matter.) This is second misconception SSB presents to us.

The third instance is from Shakespeare's literature, where according to SSB philosophy is not accorded the status as mission of life or love of wisdom. Shakespeare's Hamlet remarks: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in our philosophy".⁹ SSB brings to our notice that Hamlet's expression reflects a peculiar view regarding philosophy—a subject dealing with abstract notions rather than hard realities and neglecting many things which in fact, deserve attention. This is one of the major misconceptions philosopher at this time had proposed. People in this way made fun of philosophy as dealing with ideas that are vapory, vague, ambiguous, or as having turned its back on the day-to-day world and its problems. Even the playwright like Shakespeare tempted to condemn philosophy, is no good sign for philosophy to flourish in society.

In continuation with this present point of discussion let us see how SSB observes that in the days of Kant even, serious misconceptions had arisen which affected the maestro philosopher like Kant! This will explain the nature of tragedy of philosophy and philosopher too. Philosophy is never alienated from life; it is theorization of what man does. In his article "Experience and Reflection - Science, Philosophy and Social Life", SSB brings to our notice this tragedy. He says that, this very image of philosophy as theorization of what man does, had lost sight of Kant. He says, "Philosophy, in fact, would be theorization of what man does, for man is nothing but a gestalt of his actions. Self conscious actions and a critique of his actions. Philosophy in this understanding would be a total reflection on man's praxis. Since man himself is a gestalt of thought and action, the philosophical activity would form an essential moment of actualization of man's nature. In this manner, philosophy would be an essential part of training for life. Unfortunately, this image of philosophy is lost sight of Kant, in his preface to *Critique of Pure Reason*, while talking of philosophy as the queen of sciences, Kant said, "now it is the fashion of the time to heap contempt and scorn upon her." The state of affairs vis-à-vis philosophy,

⁸ Ibid. p.01

⁹Ibid. p. 01

particularly in India today, is not very different from the one described by Kant. What are the reasons for such a state of philosophy? "¹⁰ With this question SSB goes further explaining how such misconceptions arise and he puts forward his conception of philosophy (which is discussed later in the section called SSB's independent ideas regarding philosophy.) Now let us see what according to SSB are the misconceptions or misunderstandings about Indian philosophy in the minds of westerners and a few Indian thinkers as well.

(B) Misconceptions about the nature of Indian Philosophy

Even in the case of Indian philosophy (we shall use this term ' Indian philosophy' at present for the sake of convenience, though we do honor SSB's negative remark on the concept of ' Indian philosophy' as well as his analysis of this term) there are misconceptions, says SSB. Wrong perception and misinterpretation of Indian philosophy at large, by the western scholars is the basic reason of a few misconceptions about Indian philosophy which are observed during the last two centuries. These misconceptions arose out of misunderstandings about the nature of Indian philosophy and confusions between the concept of religion and concept of philosophy with respect to the multi-religious culture in India.

First misconception about the so-called Indian philosophy is suggested by the expression 'Indian philosophy' itself. SSB points out that the very title ' Indian Philosophy' is misleading and confusing one. At the very beginning of "The Threshold" of the work, *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy* he says, "To me philosophy is philosophizing. It is neither Indian nor non-Indian. It is not determined by geographical boundaries. The expression, Indian philosophy, is an instance of transferred epithet. It is philosophy, propounded by Indian philosophers."¹¹

The misconception behind the nomenclature Indian philosophy according to SSB is that Indian philosophy is fundamentally or essentially different from western philosophy. "In what sense can philosophy be Indian? The question may suggest that the so-called Indian philosophy is fundamentally different from other brands of philosophy, for example, from Western philosophy. I have no doubt that some people

¹⁰*Beliefs ,Reasons and Reflections* : " Experience and Reflection - Science, Philosophy and Social Life", p.201- 202

¹¹*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, " The Threshold ", p.01

seriously think so; but if what they seriously think is also seriously taken note of, then it will mean that, just as some kinds of plants grow in tropical regions and not elsewhere, similarly some kinds of philosophy grow in particular regions. This may further mean that there are types of philosophy such that one is totally different from the other; that each type makes on organic whole; that, even if in a type we may be able to distinguish the parts, the parts together form a whole; and that the commonness of parts between one type and another type cannot be treated together on the basis of one commonness. This may also mean that each type is like a seed; that it grows not only in a particular atmosphere but also in a particular ethnological pattern. Indians being of Aryan race, the Indian type belongs to Aryan pattern and, in a similar way the Greek, the Barbarian, the Roman, the Anglo-Saxon and the Mongolian patterns can be distinguished. Carried further, it signifies that, if there is *caturvarnya vyavastha*, then there will be one particular type of philosophy and way of life, integral and prescribable to each *varna*, which is sometimes very seriously thought of by those who talk of *svadharma*. It also implies that philosophy by its nature must be pluralistic, i.e., there would and ought to be varieties of philosophy from the point of view of the need and aptitude of the units in human society... .."¹² SSB explains in details what could be the consequences of such (mis) understandings, in the following pages in this article "Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy".

The second misconception about the so called Indian philosophy is that it is a kind of 'System'. Hence the orthodox and non-orthodox schools of Indian philosophical thoughts are labeled as ' systems'. For him, these are not systems, but ways of knowing.

The next misconception about the so called Indian philosophy is created mainly by western mind. For the western mind Indian Philosophy appears more religious, for at a certain stage it looks dogmatic. This misconception implies that Indian philosophy is not philosophy in true sense of the term. SSB disagrees with it. He says," Philosophical questions of real importance were, indeed, asked in ancient India and the answers suggested by the philosophers then are still worthy of our consideration."¹³ Of course, this misconception is not baseless. According to SSB,

¹²*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy" p. 15

¹³*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "The Theory of Meaning in Indian Grammar

theosophists, yogis and religion preachers are mostly responsible for the misconception, that all Indian philosophy is mystical, theological, religious and idealistic. SSB agrees that a philosophy of this nature did exist and dominated India. "It is certainly the case that it completely overshadowed analytical philosophy, misrepresented its technical terms, and imposed its own interpretations."¹⁴ At the same time he notices that even philosophy and religion were mixed in Europe also, for a long time. "But", according to him, "in Europe and particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, the separation of philosophy from theology and religion took place for quite some time. (Unfortunately) in India they still continue to be interdependent."¹⁵

What could be the reasons why western thinkers developed this misconception about Indian philosophy? SSB thinks it possible that the problems dealt by Indian philosophers might have been misunderstood by western scholars on account of the different cultural background, in spite of their mature philosophical understanding. It could be also possible according to SSB that these scholars might be interpreting the problems on the basis of the trends current during their times. SSB seems to associate this misconception with the hegemonic approach of western thinkers and colonial mentality of Indians. About western scholars he says, "When 'Indian' philosophy went in the hands of such scholars, they looked at the Indian thinkers and their thought with patronizing spirit."¹⁶ Unfortunately Indian scholars also thought in accordance with it. SSB holds that, it may be due to the slavery in every walk of life in pre-independence of India.

As a part of the misconception that the so- called 'Indian' philosophy is not proper philosophy, it was held that Indian thinkers right from the ancient times had not thought of and even were not aware of the problems of language and analysis of concepts, either philosophically or linguistically. SSB piercingly brings to our notice that this is false, misleading and misdirected understanding. He clarifies, "It was really unfortunate for Indian philosophy that the theory of meaning proposed by the grammarians was thoroughly misunderstood and subjected to severe criticism and was ultimately discarded under the influence of *Mimamsa* and *Vedanta*. For it appears that

System" p.105

¹⁴Ibid., p.105

¹⁵*Confessions and Commitments* : "Indian Philosophy: Retrospect and prospect" p.69

¹⁶*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "The Threshold" p. 01

the grammarians made a substantial contribution to the theory of meaning, though naturally one cannot be sure whether they conclusively settled the issue."¹⁷ SSB agrees that conceptual analysis of philosophy of language was not regarded as an independent discipline in India. But this does not mean that Indian philosophers did not pay any heed to, for example, the analysis of concepts. He says, "It would also not be correct to say that they did not take into consideration the analysis of language in their *Bhashyas*. All Indian philosophers in general and Kashmiri Saiva philosophers in particular, talked of four kinds of language... .. The *Paratrimika* a work in Kashmiri Saivism is a thesis on Para language, though there may be some difficulty in understanding it today; and people may think that it is mystical." ¹⁸

SSB deals with such misconceptions and tries to clear them in his anthology *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy* and in his articles for instance "Indian Philosophy: Retrospect and prospect".

In the above views expressed by SSB we find that SSB was one of those philosophers who were against the so-called Spiritualist, Moksa centric, mystical and religion – oriented images of Indian philosophy and who wanted that the so-called 'Indian' philosophy or the philosophy of Indian origin be studied and lively discussed in the same sense and the same way as western philosophy. Other major Indian philosophers who held similar views were Professor Rajendra Prasad and Professor Daya Krishna. The philosophers like B.K. Matilal and J.N..Mohanty who were of Indian origin but flourished in western countries also represented this view. All of them shared a kind of comparative and critical approach to Indian philosophy and also sought the core of Indian philosophy in its conceptual, analytical and critical aspects. Of course all of them did not interpret Indian philosophy in the same way. There are significant differences among them. The discussion of these differences however falls outside the limited scope of this thesis.

1.2 SSB on the nature of philosophy in western context

¹⁷*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "The Theory of Meaning in Indian Grammar System", p.116

¹⁸*Confessions and Commitments*: "Indian Philosophy: Retrospect and prospect " p.68

For SSB philosophical doctrines are immortal and they are born again and again like a phoenix that rises from its own ashes.¹⁹ 'What is philosophy?' is such a phoenix type of philosophical problem, that has been raised time to time by sensitive philosophers. He opines that 'What is philosophy' is a question, no more and no less difficult than Pilate's question: 'What is truth?'. And he goes further to analyze this issue with respect to the definition of man as *curious animal*. This is in tune with Plato's theory of philosophy that begins in wonder. SSB points out that curiosity shows its effect from childhood itself by the question 'What is this?'. It again is a typical perennial enquiry of man from childhood to grown-ups from every part of the world transcending space and time giving the status of immemorial question to the said question. Though question such as this, is asked by humans, SSB classifies at least four types of questioners:

- (1) a common man
- (2) an artist
- (3) a scientist and
- (4) a philosopher.

Each one of them expresses their curiosity and asks the question in his / her own way. The question which philosophers have asked about the world, has taken two forms according to SSB.

1. Who has created the world?
2. What is this World?

The first question arises out of 'taken for granted feel' or general idea of causality in human mind and the second comes only out of mere curiosity. The second leads man to assume the independent existence of the world and compels him for further inquiry that results into Epistemology and Physics of the World. He articulates this problem into two sub-questions namely '*What a thing is*' and '*What a thing does*'. The first seeks the structure and second seeks the function of a thing. Then he comes to distinguish between Science and Philosophy.

• **Science and Philosophy**

¹⁹A *Critical Survey of Western Philosophy*, "Preface", p. v.

What is the relationship between Science and philosophy? This is one more perennial issue in the philosophical discourse. The question 'how' is monopolized for science whereas philosophy tries to answer the question 'why', hence it is said that both of them contrast each other. SSB puts it that these disciplines are not at all contrasted, rather complimentary to each other. According to him, these two are different approaches but not antagonistic. When it uses concepts like ether for explaining phenomena, science can note differences between them, for example science uses fictions which are unverifiable and make them starting points for further deductions; so are used by philosophy. Second, it is wrong to suppose that science alone is critical and philosophy speculative. Science is as speculative as philosophy is critical. Philosophers have been critical of their basic concepts as well as their methods. Third, flashes of insight not yet supported by rational explanation have been present in both and the use of logic to define these insights has been absent from neither. "A host of mathematical philosophers from Descartes to the present day have not turned philosophy into science any more than speculations about atomic structure have turned science into philosophy. It is rather the descriptive attitude of science and the evaluative attitude of philosophy that should distinguish them. This distinction does not presume a divorce of fact from value."²⁰ Intuition in the sense of immediate grasping of truth or receiving illumination on a problem is inevitable in all knowledge. This is applicable to both the fields. Philosophy, in a pertinent sense of the term plays the role of meta-science.

- **Philosophy as Meta- Science**

SSB underlines that science, as is well known, takes for granted certain postulates. Philosophy takes them up and examines them. In this sense the postulates of sciences are the problems of philosophy. It tries to know the deeper significance of these postulates. It is stated that whereas science is said to be a positive description of a *part* of reality, philosophy is a critical interpretation of *the whole* of reality. But philosophy is not merely completely unified science as

²⁰A *Critical Survey of Western Philosophy*, "The Concept of Philosophy", p.04

Spencer said, for it cannot leave out practical life. It must be remembered that a gifted and thorough- going scientist, in trying to understand the meaning of the basic concepts of his science turns to the old phrase, a science of sciences. It is rather a meta-science. In calling philosophy a science of sciences or meta-science, it is obviously recognized as a different-order-body of knowledge. Thus it may cover perhaps the same subject matter but from a different angle or level.

- **Stages of Philosophizing in western philosophy**

SSB shows that it is very difficult to pinpoint a person from whom or a doctrine from which philosophy began in west, though the world is an old place and philosophy hoary with age and philosophy as a self - conscious enquiry is a later development.

In the "Preface" of his *A Critical Survey of Western Philosophy* SSB makes a survey of the transformation in the in the conception of philosophy that took place in the history of western philosophy. He marks the transition from Unconscious philosophizing to conscious philosophizing in the early Greek period, clear and articulate conception of philosophy presented by Plato and Aristotle, the medieval conceptions of philosophy with the changing degree of importance attached to reasoning as against religious faith, and the modern conceptions of philosophy dominated by scientific spirit and a bold intellectualism. He observes that in the modern period which marks the philosophical thought from Bacon to Kant presents philosophy as beginning from epistemology. He attaches special importance to modern period because according to him later doctrines like phenomenism and logical atomism, positivism or analysis owe their origin to the teachings of these philosophers. Thus for example, phenomenism can look back to Berkeley and logical positivism to Hume. It is, therefore, worthwhile to consider the beginning and growth of the epistemological trends in this period.²¹

²¹*A Critical Survey of Western Philosophy*, "preface", p. v

Again among the philosophers of modern period, SSB attaches special importance to Kant. In fact his critical survey stops at Kant. While explaining it SSB says "There is reason why we can stop at Kant. In Kant are found rationalism and empiricism, idealism and realism. In a sense all previous philosophies merge in him. It by no means implies that this is an end of the philosophic pursuit. Philosophical doctrines are immortal and they are born again and again like a phoenix that rises from its own ashes. Kant's Philosophy proved to be a veritable watershed from which numerous currents originated. He built no system but threw out suggestions for philosophers to develop. Philosophy after him bears a stamp of having passed through the check posts of Kantian concepts." ²²

Though the *A Critical Survey of Western Philosophy* is a collaborative work, I have considered the views expressed in it for understanding of SSB's philosophy with the understanding that the views must have been shared by him commonly, with the other author, Dr. Padma Kulkarni. The work is a comprehensive survey of important philosophical doctrines developed during a period which displayed a lively interest in the problem of knowledge. This book brings out the primacy of epistemological ideas in eight prominent thinkers and approaches their metaphysical, ethical or religious views through the labyrinth of epistemology.²³

1.3 SSB on the nature of philosophy in Indian context

As it is already stated, "What is philosophy?" is one of the most puzzling and confusing perennial problems since it has been answered individually and collectively throughout the history of philosophy. SSB raises this problem in the context of western philosophy, Indian philosophy and also context freely. We have seen how he deals with this problem in the context of western philosophy. Now we will consider his treatment of the problem in the context of Indian philosophy. His attempt to answer this question leads us to his main project of '*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*'.

In addition to this, his three 'Modern Introductions' to different areas in Indian philosophy also throw light on the conception of philosophy he has in the context of

²²Ibid., p. vi

²³*A Critical Survey of Western Philosophy*, "jacket"

Indian philosophy.²⁴ And one can add SSB's another work *Poverty, Power and Progress* to this list since the articles included in this anthology are mainly concerned with Indian context and have the potential of universal applicability explaining his concept of philosophy at large.

Hence the five works, which throw light on his conception of philosophy in the Indian context, are as follows:

1. *A Modern Introduction to Indian Logic* (1965)
2. *Poverty, Power, Progress*. (1983)
3. *A Modern Introduction to Indian Ethics* (1997)
4. *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy* (1998)
5. *A Modern Introduction to Indian Aesthetic Theory : The Development from Bharat to Jaggannath* (2007)

We shall deal with each of the works independently in relevant chapters. At present we will look into the matter of SSB's treatment of the concept of philosophy or the way he uses the term philosophy in his discourse.

We have seen before how treating the so-called Indian Philosophy as essentially different from western philosophy is itself a misconception according to SSB. So the question arises how we can use the expression Indian Philosophy meaningfully.

His basic approach to Indian philosophy is presented in his paper 'Reunderstanding Indian philosophy', which was first presented to the Andhra University Seminar at Waltair and later, in a revised form with some additions and deletions in *Discovery of India* series in Nehru Centre, Bombay. Later on with the inspiration by of Professor D. P. Chattopadhyaya it got published by JICPR. While explaining his conception of Indian philosophy in this paper, SSB says, when we talk of Indian or Western or any philosophy, we may think of cultural patterns of the

²⁴ 1ãÆã.ÔãìÀñªÆ °ããÀããËãØãñ ¾ãããÞãñ ããìãÞããÀããìãìã, "1ãÆã.ÔãìÀñªÆ °ããÀããËãØãñ ¾ãããÞãñ ããÞããìã¶ãããìãìã", jãù. Ôãì¼ããÖãÞãããªÆ ¼ãñËãŠñ, 1ãÀã½ãìãÃ, Çãã; 20 ,ãããŠ

3-4, ¶ããñìÖñããÀ - 1ãŠñªÆìããÀãè 1999 page70-71 Dr. S.E. Bhelke draws our attention to the

significance of these three Modern Introductions and compares their place with the place in SSB's philosophy of the three critiques in Kant's philosophy.

philosophy instead of the logical patterns; and it is also possible to think that there could be varieties of philosophy even in one cultural pattern and similarities of philosophy in different cultural patterns, because no two men might be alike in the same cultural pattern, while two men of different cultures could be alike in thinking and may have common sympathy and understanding.²⁵ In fact this common sympathy is the hope for ' One World ' as he puts it in some other writings. In brief cultural dimension of philosophy may give rise to humanism as well.

SSB further clarifies that by the term Indian Philosophy; he means the philosophy expounded by Indian philosophers. When 'Indian' is an adjective of philosophy, not of philosophers, then according to him, the term ' Indian philosophy' but would be a case of transferred epithet in as much as it would qualify the writers and not their thought. "I have a feeling that, when we talk of Indian philosophy; we have largely such usage in our mind, though other usages need not be completely ignored. I have also a feeling that, when one talks of Indian philosophy, one uses it in the sense of some assorted accumulation of various individual, cultural thought also."

²⁶ However, having explained the concept of Indian philosophy, in this way, SSB ultimately wants us to keep the question open. He says, " I feel that, although I have tried to clarify several possible usages about Indian philosophy, it is much better to keep the matter open and should not postulate that Indian philosophy means this and not that, because the term Indian philosophy is vague and its use is ambiguous and open."²⁷

1.4 SSB's independent ideas regarding philosophy.

(A) Philosophy as an activity

For him the term philosophy is substantive used for philosophizing. "According to me, philosophy is a substantive used for philosophizing. Philosophy is philosophizing. Basically it is some kind of doing, or action. I, therefore, regard philosophy as a movement. It is basically a thinking continuum."²⁸

²⁵*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy" p.16

²⁶*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy" p.16

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.16

²⁸*Confessions and Commitments: "Indian Philosophy: Retrospect and prospect"* p.49

What is philosophizing? He answers, "Any attempt at philosophizing is man's attempt at understanding reality or the world. This makes it epistemic. Understanding the world may also mean understanding one's own self and understanding other individuals. It may also refer to the norms for understanding and norms for the behaviour. Most probably time would not interfere with this concept of philosophy, although time may bring about a greater development or depth-dimension to this concept of philosophy."²⁹ SSB emphasizes that essentially, man's concept of philosophy arises by way of introspection or retrospection on his experience which he gradually acquires through experiencing, and human history tells us that this human experience develops from crude experience to a less crude experience. "Basically, the crudity or rawness of human experience must remain as it is, although this experience could be chiseled and polished in the course of development. I, therefore, feel that all the Indian philosophical systems must be understood against the anthropological background, and their basic nature must be epistemological."³⁰

What does SSB mean when he kept saying that philosophy is a movement ? Generally when philosophy is regarded as an activity, it is in the sense of activity of philosophical/ conceptual/ linguistic analysis. One can say, however, that when SSB calls philosophy as an activity or movement, it is in the wider sense. As philosophizing it is thinking or intellectual activity, but this is one part of it. According to him philosophy should have as interactive relation with life.

"Philosophy", he says, "in fact, would be theorization of what man does, for man in nothing but a gestalt of his actions, selfconscious actions and a critique of his actions. Philosophy in this understanding would be a total reflection on man's praxis. Since man himself is a gestalt of thought and action, the philosophical activity would form an essential moment of actualization of man's nature. In this manner, philosophy would be an essential part of training for life."³¹ SSB's philosophy can be regarded as an example of this / his conception of philosophy. He proclaims, "My philosophy was the abstraction of my experience and the activities that I undertook from time to time and my activities were the manifestations of my thought, my philosophy. This was, I

²⁹*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy" p.17

³⁰*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, The Threshold, p.17

³¹*Beliefs ,Reasons and Reflections* : " Experience and Reflection - Science, Philosophy and Social Life", p. 201- 202

think quite consistent with my attitude as to how philosophy which is a movement should be done. For me, man is the centre of the philosophic world; philosophy is basically anthropocentric."³²

(B) Philosophy as an anthropocentric/cultural inquiry

In an important article 'Some Thoughts on the Beginnings of Religion, Philosophy and Culture in the Indian Context' (included in *Reunderstanding Indian philosophy*) SSB explains how culture becomes a necessary prerequisite of philosophy and how philosophy is essentially anthropocentric. While discussing the problem "what is a culture" as a philosophic problem, SSB observes, "The process of raising a philosophic problem and in the efforts in trying to get the probable solutions for, the inquiry may take more technical form and will concern the inquirer himself. When such an inquirer becomes the object of inquiry, it turns into universal object to be inquired since it has the every potentiality to be universal object. Then the issue of the communication between the inquirers himself and others, stands significant. This situation leads us to the concern of human attitudes like happiness, sorrow or wonder etc. This humane side of the problem makes the problem truly philosophical."³³ It means, that, when the enquirer brings 'himself' in the realm of inquiry, i.e. begins to talk of his own self or 'I', the misery and happiness also reach a different dimension. He says, "to know that there is misery is different from becoming aware of others' misery. To be happy is to be quite different from being aware of the happiness."³⁴

This epistemological issue turns into axiological problem and gives rise to the ethical considerations. The issue turns out to be the foundation of culture since culture takes in to account the existence of others (inclusive of other sentient beings) including their forms of life. The whole thing becomes as if the epistemology of culture. This can be regarded as epistemology of culture. According to SSB, such an epistemological-cultural inquiry becomes anthropocentric and finally becomes 'I' centric. But the I-centered inquiry has again two aspects. When one is completely self-centered it loses its validity, loses its objectivity as well as its moral content. On

³²*Confessions and Commitments* : "My Intellectual Development" p.30

³³*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "Some Thoughts on the Beginnings of Religion, Philosophy and Culture in the Indian Context" p.50-51

³⁴*Ibid.*, p.50

the other hand the I-centered inquiry, according to him, can also to be indifferent to 'I', i.e. it can look to any I, a common I, with the same interest or disinterest. At this level the experience does not become selfish, but it assumes a kind of objectivity. He illustrates, "I see a certain person, X, in misery. I describe it as 'X' is in misery'. But when this third person inquiry becomes a first person inquiry it does not become a paraphrase of 'X' is in misery', X's misery becomes my misery and when it becomes my misery, my misery transforms itself into compassion (*Karunya*). The experience of compassion, however, is not just a selfish experience; it is also an objective experience."³⁵

SSB says that in the philosophy of Indian origin such attitudes are also reflected upon. "Personhood and I, therefore, assume a central role in philosophies of Indian origin, whether it is Buddhist, Jain or the traditional Hindu. Like all philosophies, therefore, Indian philosophy is also basically anthropocentric and I-Centric."

This I-Centric phenomenon gives rise to the concept of one world. Hence not only Indian philosophy but Philosophy at large (since he believes that philosophy is one and the same intellectual activity having no geo-boundaries) should be looked at in its dynamic and anthropological form. "Philosophy has gradually developed and has become more complex. Philosophy of the industrial man will not be the same as that of the cave man; likewise, philosophy of the nomad will not be the same as that of one who has started cultivating agriculture. For philosophy is essentially a cultural discipline and as culture grows or at least assumes different forms, philosophy also assumes different structures and begins to perform roles."³⁶

We shall see that SSB distinguishes between two concepts of the world, the concept of cosmocentric world and the concept of anthropocentric world. For SSB culture is anthropocentric historicity of human being. Man being the anthropos, he creates his world that is anthropocentric world which is of the form of culture, where religion plays the important part. Considering this nature of philosophy and culture, he accepts few presuppositions as his concept of philosophisation. This is the foundation for his concept of philosophy and which therefore becomes the perspective

³⁵Ibid., p.50

³⁶*Re-understanding Indian Philosophy*, "Some Thoughts on the Beginnings of Religion, Philosophy and Culture in the Indian Context" p.50-51

of how he looks at the culture. He says that, "(1) Man is the centre of all scientific, artistic and philosophical activities. (2) Philosophy is, therefore, basically anthropocentric, although it still points to the world which is cosmocentric. The anthropocentric world is certainly cosmogenic. This distinction makes man the author of knowing etc. (3) Man does not merely stop at knowing the world; he also creates the world, the world of science, civilization and culture. This is the anthropocentric world." ³⁷

We may raise a question: what is the nature of philosophy as cultural activity? According to SSB, "any attempt at philosophizing is man's attempt at understanding reality or the world.... Understanding the world may also mean understanding one's own self and understanding other individuals. It may also refer to the norms for understanding and norms for the behaviour. Most probably time would not interfere with this concept of philosophy, although time may bring about a greater development or depth-dimension to this concept of philosophy. Essentially, man's concept of philosophy would arise by way of introspection or retrospection on his experience which he has gradually acquired through experiencing, and human history would tell us that this human experience develops from crude experience to a less crude experience." ³⁸

(C) Against incommensurability in Philosophy

In this way one's philosophy would be closely connected with one's cultural background. This makes a room for the varieties of philosophizing such as Indian and western. SSB makes it clear that 'Indian' and 'Western' are not two different logical patterns of philosophy, but they are only cultural patterns.

"What we call philosophy may be regard as merely the manifestation or abstraction of the cultural patterns".³⁹ But SSB is also suggesting that these cultural differences should not be stretched too far. Here SSB is against incommensurability between different philosophies. He denies the view that philosophies are watertight compartments, that is, there cannot be any communication between philosophy of one pattern and that of another pattern.

³⁷ *Confessions and Commitments* : "My Philosophical Commitments", p.45

³⁸ *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, " Re-understanding Indian Philosophy," p.17

³⁹ *Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "The Threshold", p.16

When SSB says that the geographical divisions in philosophy such as Indian, Western, and Chinese have no logical significance, he is expressing his opposition to the idea of incommensurability between or among different philosophical traditions. On the other hand SSB regards philosophy itself as a cultural phenomenon. Now question will arise – Will there be incommensurability among philosophies because of the different cultural set-ups in which they arise? On this, it can be claimed; SSB would deny incommensurability among different cultures as well. European and Western thinkers had thought and think till today that there is no comparison possible between Greek-western philosophy and any other philosophy, for the present matter, Indian philosophy. This is the idea of incommensurability⁴⁰ suggested by the some westerners. This solipsistic attitude towards philosophy makes no dialogue and therefore development possible. Therefore SSB is trying to build a bridge between philosophies in the world. In a way he is trying to establish cross-cultural dialogue in philosophy. The way he defines the concept of philosophy, also his efforts. For SSB philosophy is one and the same body of knowledge all over the world.⁴¹

That is how SSB links philosophy to culture and civilization and defines philosophy as anthropocentric and cultural activity which is a common property and an expression of human being as such. He therefore, articulates philosophical divisions in terms of cultural patterns and also strongly holds the view that communication is the basic element of any philosophical intercourse.

⁴⁰In 1962, Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend both independently introduced the idea of incommensurability to the philosophy of science. In both cases the concept came from mathematics and in its original sense is defined as the absence of a common unit of measurement that would allow a direct and exact measurement of two variables, such as the prediction of the diagonal of a square from the relationship of its sides. The central idea of this mathematical concept is not the impossibility of comparison but the absence of a common factor that can be expressed. This is the first meaning of the principle of incommensurability with reference to natural sciences. The second is that, incommensurability idea suggests that it is possible to see the world in multiple ways, but that there is not a fair method to see which way is right. Some people think that it is possible that scientific traditions (called *paradigms*) can be incommensurable: it is not really possible to say which one is right. This idea has been defended by Thomas Kuhn. He wrote: *when paradigms change, the world changes with them*. While Paul Feyerabend said that incommensurability was possible in scientific topics. He wrote that it is important to remember this, because it means that it is possible to say things that are not scientific, but also not wrong. : *Stanford Encyclopedia Philosophy, Internet edition, Stanford University, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

⁴¹*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*. "The threshold' p. 11

SSB points out that there could be varieties of philosophy even in one cultural pattern and similarities of philosophy in different cultural patterns, because no two men might be alike in the same cultural pattern, while two men of different cultures could be alike in thinking and may have common sympathy and understanding. He explains this point with reference to the difference between British philosophy and continental philosophy. British philosophy is empiricist, whereas the continental philosophy is otherwise; that by and large the continental philosophers accept innate ideas, whereas the British philosophers would not believe them. But even amongst the continental philosophers there may be critical thinkers like Kant, who may accept something of the empiricist tradition and may build a structure of critical philosophy on the same.⁴²

(D)Is philosophy system building?

We have seen that according to SSB philosophy is philosophizing. One would naturally expect that this philosophizing should be logically sound and SSB too talks of logical patterns of philosophy. One would also expect that in philosophy that there should be systematization or system building. In Indian philosophy there are many darsanas and darsanas are understood as philosophical systems. In the western philosophy also philosophers have attempted to construct systems. SSB's view about this system building activity, however, is unconventional.

SSB feels that philosophy should not be regarded as a system like rationalism, empiricism, materialism, idealism, praxis, pragmatism, etc. Philosophical thinking is a reflection on what happens in the world. Philosophy, therefore, belongs to the second order. SSB explains the anthropological situation in which philosophy plays the role of reflection and critique. "At some stage, the consciousness of the beings develops into self-consciousness and the beings start reflecting on their behaviour. This reflection is responsible for combinations of beings into society, but it is also reasonable for separation of one group from the other. Self consciousness gives us insight in understanding; but it is also at the back of alienation. The capacity to reflect gives us different anthropological stages. These different anthropological stages retain something of the earlier anthropological state as well as add to them

⁴²Ibid., p.16

from time to time. This tendency to add gives us the capacity to systematize our thought which is in the nature of reflection. This, according to me, leads to theories and philosophical systems. But the scaffold on which these systems are built is basically simple."⁴³

According to SSB philosophy should be a vibrant critique which should be offered after understanding this basic structure. It should not assume the form of rigid systematization. In SSB's own words, "A philosopher has to understand this basic structure and offer a critique of it. According to me, this is more important than following the philosophical systems that emerge from time to time and become rigid in the course of time. I am not committed to such systems."⁴⁴ SSB also says that imagination plays an important role in philosophy as a critique. This gives an additional reason for not regarding philosophy as rigid system.

According to SSB the concept of systematization is an outcome of Hegelian concept of philosophy and Hegel's philosophy. The introduction of Hegelian idealism in India made a great loss to philosophy propounded by ancient Indian thinkers. SSB brings to our notice, " In nineteenth century Hegel and his followers dominated the European philosophical scene and they began to consider philosophy as a system. This affected 'Indian' philosophical horizons also." By referring to the six orthodox and three un-orthodox systems of Indian philosophy many teachers of Indian philosophy claim that to be 'systematic' was a great virtue and achievement of Indian philosophy. SSB claims that it was only the influence of Hegel which has percolated through his European and British followers like Bradley, Bosanquet, Taylor, etc. For some time SSB too thought like these philosophy teachers, but he started asking himself whether it was an achievement to treat philosophy as if it was a system or an organism. SSB's answer was in negative. The main reason was that such a rigid systematization confined philosophy to certain fixed limits and did not allow it to expand, develop or breathe fresh and free air. Philosophy was not a science and SSB claims that even a science should not be regarded as a complete (and a closed) system. He asks, " Could that which was subjected to continuous discoveries and growth, and that in the growth of which 'human reason' played a major role, be regarded as a

⁴³*Confessions and Commitments* : "My Philosophical Development" p.49-50

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.44-51

complete system on any ground?"⁴⁵ SSB suspects that what we called a system might itself be a (rational) human construct. Though Hegel talked of reason, he talked of perfect 'idealised' Reason with capital 'R'. According to SSB 'ideal' and 'real' are not the same but Hegelian dialectics regards the ideal and the real as identical. Belief in complete system presupposes such an identification of ideal with real. SSB is raising a fundamental objection against such identification.

Hence system building is not the proper function of philosophy. What can be the achievement of philosophy then? A philosopher can perhaps give some insights, some flashes of thought in order to understand the world, the human nature and human experience in a better way. This view in fact was SSB's justification of his own philosophizing. He remarks, "The insights and flashes may throw more light on reality than the rigid systematization. Systematization makes philosophy dead; insights keep it alive and make us dive in search of truth. I have, therefore, never attempted to systematize. My thinking is just a case of wild imagination."⁴⁶

Here, however, one supplement to SSB's thought is necessary. Though there cannot be rigid or 'finalist' systematization in philosophy or even in science, provisional systematization, or an approximation towards a system is possible. As SSB rightly distinguishes between the real and the ideal, the ideal system cannot be real, but one can always try to reach the ideal. A scientist may build up a theoretical system but he can also be humble enough not to treat his system as final. In Popper's terminology though a scientist or even a philosopher may not capture the truth, he may approximate the truth, and what he captures may have verisimilitude to truth. In fact in SSB's writings also we sometimes feel that though there is no systematization, there are internally consistent and coherent threads of thought which can be arranged systematically. The core aspects of his philosophy which we shall discuss in the next chapter give such an impression. In this chapter, however, we are discussing only his conception of philosophy.

The above discussion leads us to an interesting issue as to how SSB himself philosophized. What was the way (or ways) of his philosophizing and what was the method he used. So let us come to that issue now.

⁴⁵*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "The Threshold", p.02

⁴⁶*Confessions and Commitments*, "Indian philosophy: Retrospect and Prospect" p.50-

1.5 SSB's Ways of philosophizing

(A) His general approach

While understanding SSB's ways of philosophizing we have to note that SSB was a self-conscious philosopher. He was conscious of what he was doing when he was philosophizing. We have already seen that he did not systematize but expressed flashes and insights in his writing. We also saw that when he regarded philosophy as an activity in wide sense, it was related to active life in an interactive way. That is why he does not like the classification (or rather compartmentalization) that western philosophy does between logic, metaphysics and ethics. In the Prologue to his *A Modern Introduction to Indian Ethics*, he says "The classification that is generally given in western philosophy makes it possible to separate the practical problems from the meta-physical and logical problems. This classification is not adopted in India and I have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to adopt the western classification. Different classifications may be right or correct in their own right. But since I am writing in the Western mould I have to rethink about the Indian metaphysical theories and then to go to some of the problems which may be broadly regarded as enveloping the moral field."⁴⁷

(B)The role of common sense and ordinary language

We also note a few other features of his way of philosophizing. In many of his writings he starts with some assumptions or presuppositions. Let us take a brief account of these presuppositions. In *Confessions and Commitments* he elaborates on his basic principles of thinking or philosophizing. They can be briefly summarized as follows.

- (1) There is world which exists in its own right and having extensions in the past as well as in the future.
- (2) Man is a constituent of this world and is also characterized by the same properties which characterize the world.

⁴⁷*A Modern Introduction to Indian Ethics*, Prologue , p.3-4

- (3) Man has the capacity to 'know the world'. We may also use the words 'feel' and 'believe' in this context. However, man knowing the world means that one part of the world knows another part.
- (4) Man is the centre of all scientific, artistic and philosophical activities.
- (5) Philosophy is, therefore, basically anthropocentric, although it still points to the world which is cosmocentric. The anthropocentric world is certainly cosmogenic. This distinction makes man the author of knowing etc.
- (6) Man is a gestalt of action. There is a difference between movement and action. Movement merely shows a change from one place to another or from one time to another. Action requires consciousness and also decision-making. The decision making shows a development from consciousness to self consciousness. Various activities of man are self-consciousness activities.
- (7) Man does not merely stop at knowing the world, he also creates the world, the world of science, civilization and culture. This is the anthropocentric world. When we say that man is the knower, we also mean that there can be more than one knower. This also leads to the reciprocal relationship between men what A should do to B and what A owes to B. He also thinks of desiring something to himself and he also has to find out his status in the world and his relationship to the world.

The above 'principles' of SSB's philosophizing are a combination of his presupposition and assertions. He makes similar assertions of his presuppositions/ beliefs elsewhere. In "My Philosophical Development" SSB refers to his three beliefs which can be said to constitute his belief system. They are about (1) the 'pre-knowing' situation of knowledge process. (2) Languages built-in human nature (3) universality of any activity. With respect to first two beliefs, one 'knows' the situation intuitively without being aware of the same. Such 'pre-knowing' according to SSB is an indubitable belief and he was committed to such beliefs also. SSB has a similar belief about learning language. According to him all of us learn languages almost in a similar way. And thirdly he believes that our awareness and search for the universality of laws arise out of practical necessity adhering to universal laws is more or less instinctive, and it becomes a universal knowledge when we become self-conscious.

Man, according to him, follows the universal laws either consciously or blindly.⁴⁸

SSB reiterates his position elsewhere too. "I shared the commonsense belief, that things and beings exist in the world, that we communicate with beings and use things. My primitive world of beliefs was a product of these primitive-influences. As I grew up there might have been some sophistication of these beliefs. But in essence these beliefs continue to shape my world of thought even today."⁴⁹

The presuppositions or assertions expressed in the above lists can be given the status of common sense beliefs. By and large they are obviously true or undeniable. SSB develops the edifice of his philosophical views on them. He does not advocate transcendental beliefs like disembodied 'atman' or soul, God or idealistic conception of consciousness. SSB's philosophy in this sense is common sense philosophy. It is important here to see how SSB himself distinguishes between different belief systems.

He says, that, "The belief systems with which we live and communicate and transact with others or try to educate others is another and the belief system connected with dreams and the supernaturals is still another. That in our life several belief systems arise does not mean that they have the same status. Some belief systems are to be disposed off instantaneously, and some of them are required for our communication with others. If we discard belief system, which lays emphasis on heavens, *karma*, and rebirth, it does not mean that we will have to simultaneously discard all belief systems."⁵⁰

Another feature of SSB's way of philosophizing is that it draws largely on ordinary language. The take off point of his many philosophical writings is common sense usage of the words. He takes up the concepts from ordinary language and then analyses and refines them. In this sense he is an ordinary language philosopher.

But common sense and ordinary language are his points of departure. What he does and how he develops his philosophy over them is an important question. SSB uses the tool like linguistic and conceptual analysis. But he also uses as a different method of analysis which he calls geni-analysis. Secondly he seems to use certain methods of philosophizing which are indicated by some of the titles of his book, noteworthy of which are "Reunderstanding" and "Modern Introductions"

⁴⁸*Confessions and Commitments* : "My Philosophical developments", p. 44

⁴⁹*Theory and Action* (Felicitation Volume),"A word of Gratitude", p.302

⁵⁰*Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy*, "Reunderstanding Indian Philosophy p.34

(c) SSB's methodology: *geni-analysis*

Awareness is one of the major key concepts in SSB's entire philosophy. It is simultaneously a phenomenological and a metaphysical regulative principle. Phenomenologically he describes the structures of awareness, particularly its self-reflective and self-conscious forms. And in this structural analysis, he is concerned with the stages of its development. For him structure is not divorced from genesis, so structured analysis is an account of how structures are formed in the process of development. This method of elucidation he himself calls as "*geni-analysis*".

According to SSB, a philosopher has to understand this basic structure and offer a critique of it. According to him that is more important than following the philosophical systems that emerge from time to time and become rigid in the course of time. He was not committed to such systems. He explains further, "Just as we require imagination for inventing something, similarly for discovering the basic structure and then to have a critique of these structures also we require imagination. Although a philosopher has to be critical, he should not ignore this imagination part, for it is imagination which makes him think. The critical part, of course, makes him discriminate what is to be accepted from imagination and what is to be rejected. It is, again, the imagination which gives us insight and also the flashes. The insights and flashes may throw more light on reality than the rigid systematization."⁵¹

This is the explanation of *geni-analysis* that SSB is offering. *Geni-analysis* is a word coined by SSB himself. It is combination of two words. Genesis and analysis. The term genesis refers to the origin or root. By this SSB probably means historical root. Generally analysis of a concept is done without taking into account the historical origin of the concept. But SSB in his *geni-analysis* tries to go to the genesis of the concept while analysing it. Here he is making use of two tools: imagination and critical method. By imagination he tries to discover the basic structure which gives rise to particular concept or thought and by using the tool of critique, he discriminates and scrutinizes his discovery in terms of correctness and incorrectness. This seems to be the nature of *geni-analysis* as he understands it. As he explains, "Systematization

⁵¹*Confessions and Commitments*, "Indian philosophy: Retrospect and Prospect" p.50-51

makes philosophy dead; insights keep it alive and make us dive in search of truth. I have, therefore, never attempted to systematize my thinking is just a case of wild imagination. But whether My thinking is correct or not, the procedure I have talked about is, I think, correct. This, according to me, is my method of analysis. It is neither conceptual, nor linguistic analysis in the strict sense of the term, although I do not discard the linguistic or conceptual analysis. I call my method of analysis 'geni-analysis' because in my opinion thinking is spread *in time and the element of time or history cannot be completely discarded or ignored in philosophizing.*"⁵²[Italics mine]

(D) Two models of SSB's philosophizing

Having explained SSB's method of 'geni-analysis' let us now consider the specific models used by him in his writings.

Model 1: "Modern Introduction"

His first philosophical work was *A Modern Introduction to Indian logic*. After that he wrote two more Modern Introductions.

1. *A Modern Introduction to Indian Ethics* (1997)
2. *A Modern Introduction to Indian Aesthetic Theory : The Development from Bharat to Jaggannath* (2007)

This repetition of the expression 'modern introduction' suggests his general methodological approach with reference to the different areas of philosophy viz. Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics. We can say that giving a 'modern introduction' to ancient Indian philosophical areas was one of the models used by SSB. He states the rationale for this model in *Confessions and Commitments*:

"I always thought that, while doing Indian philosophy, [1] one must not cause injury to the tradition of the ancient writers whose spirit should be kept living and intact. [2] Nevertheless the ancient thought should be integrated with modern thought and expressed in contemporary idiom. Although it was never my aim to become a scholar of Indian philosophy, I wanted to understand the ancient thought as integrated with the modern."⁵³

⁵²Ibid., 50-51

⁵³Ibid p.28

Model 2: Reunderstanding

It seems that SSB has dual approach to Indian philosophy. There are certain aspects of Indian philosophy with reference to which there was no question of understanding them but that of introducing them in modern idiom, that is, that of making them available for a cross-cultural discourse. And SSB does that by presenting 'Modern Introductions'. In certain areas, however SSB was critical about their received understanding. Hence the question was that of re-understanding them or understanding them critically. According to SSB there are many confusions and misunderstandings about Indian philosophy. For example, he points out, (1) the issues discussed by the ancient and medieval philosophers are essentially abstract and there is nothing 'Indian' about this philosophy exclusively. (2) the understanding of Indian philosophy that has emerged in the past two centuries owes its direction and commitment to indologists of western orientation.

SSB's aim in the anthology is to overview the Indian philosophy as presented by ancient and medieval philosophers and not the 're-routed' interpretation. Hence, he refers to it as a '*Reunderstanding*'.

What was the inspiration behind such a project? It was Emmet in England and T.M.P. Mahadevan in India. During his stay in England, Emmet gave him advice to learn western methods and use these methods for re-understanding Indian philosophy. She advised him to interpret Indian theories with western instruments of analysis.

Second inspiration was from Professor T.M.P. Mahadevan. When Prof. Mahadevan asked him as to what he proposed to do in philosophy, he replied that he would like to apply tools of analysis (which he had studied in England) to what is called Indian philosophy in general and Advaita Vedanta in particular.⁵⁴

Just as SSB presented his studies in Indian philosophy by using logical-analytical tools of western philosophy, similarly, while making a critical survey of western philosophy (in collaboration with Dr. Padma Kulkarni) he looked at western philosophy from the point of view of an Indian thinker. Hence his understanding of western philosophy too can be called as a case of re-understanding.

⁵⁴*Confessions and Commitments*, "My Intellectual Development", p.53

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