

BOOK REVIEW

Chakraborty, Alpana : *MIND-BODY DUALISM : A Philosophical Investigation*, D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., Now Delhi, 1997, pp. 270. Rs. 300.

Philosophically speaking, mind-body dualism is a matter of truism and a mystery. The truism is that it mainly speaks about the dual nature of two substances, i.e. mind and matter. And their features are distinctively unique from each other. On the other hand, the mystery lies in their interrelationship. The interaction that takes place between the two independent substances. In short, it is mysterious because the solutions are inadequate and thereby the problem persists without resolving the so-called dichotomy. The efforts are mostly taken up in order to resolve the problem, by either advocating the causal autonomy of the mental or by reducing mind causally to the physical states and processes.

In 1989, Colin McGinn, in his paper, "Can We Solve the Mind-Body Problem?" states that, "..... time has come to admit candidly that we cannot resolve the mystery", referring to the reason for "insolubility", and this "insolubility-as reason for it - removes the philosophical problem". (*Mind*, Vol. 98, p. 352). Further he continues by saying that the very attempt of unfolding the mysterious nexus or "psychological nexus" has become an objective mystery. We can resolve it by "appreciating" it. (McGinn : 352-53) The similar thoughts appear in Dr. Alpana Chakraborty's *Mind-Body Dualism : A Philosophical Investigation*. The author "appreciates" the problem of dualism instead of countering it and arguing for a monistic world view. (p. vii) She tries to represent her views systematically in bringing out the "real significance" of the dualism. (p. 32) Moreover, both McGinn and Chakraborty oppose the scientism as an official trend of looking at the problem and solving it. For McGinn, we are yet to have the "explanatory properties --- we need to cultivate the vision of reality (a metaphysics) that is truly independent of our given

cognitive process” (McGinn : p. 365). Thus it is a metaphysical problem. The metaphysics, that is embedded in ‘culture’. Alpana Chakraborty focuses on this central point. That the reality of dual philosophy has been cultivated in the history of human culture. (Introduction, pp. 9-27) As a result, Chakraborty systematically unfolds the problem of dualism considering “[a]ll moral, religious, and metaphysical questions revolve around them.”(p.1).

The book is divided into five chapters and each chapter has its own conclusion. It also has a separate glossary, bibliography and index. The introduction not only cites the origin of dualism but also gives a long description exclusively on the origin of Sāṃkhya philosophy in India. Sāṃkhya is being regarded as one of the systems in Indian philosophy. The author states how its philosophy is preserved in culture of North-Eastern people of India. other than that, the five chapters are, Dualism-I, Dualism-II, Disembodied Existence, Concept of person, and Dualism of Sāṃkhya.

In the first chapter, Chakraborty discusses the nature of dualism that has been sustained in philosophy since Plato. The author talks about various theories of mind, such as, Monism, Pluralism, Mentalism, and Materialism in detail in order to highlight that they don't really resolve dual conception about the nature of reality. The chapter also elaborates Descartes' conception of dualism. According to Chakraborty, Descartes leaves most of the “questions unanswered.”(p. 69). The causal interactionism between the two incompatible substances is very much questionable. For Chakraborty, “the core of mental substance considered by substance theory can be regarded as an abstract concept and not a reality at all.” (p. 70). Answering to the problem of interactionism, she says that human beings possess “neutral entities” constituted by both physical and psychological properties - *fibain*.(p. 40). And it can further very well eschew the problem of Category-Mistake. This chapter also cites the arguments of C. d. Broad and C. J. Ducasse in order to defend dualism. The arguments are based on (i) the principle of Conservation of Energy, and (ii) Psychological facts and natural processes and human behaviour. It also analyses different other theories, Occasionalism, Parallelism and Pre-established harmony of the modern thinkers, Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz respectively. The commonality among all these theories is centred around the notion of God for maintaining the regulatives between mind and body. The author also rejects the notion of Epiphenomenalism by citing the view of famous epiphenomenalist

Thomas Huxley, precisely, because the juxtaposition of epiphenomenalism with interactionism results in severe drawbacks of epiphenomenalism. Though it follows that interactionism is more reasonable one than the other, still it proposes "most possible dualism." (p. 65). Finally, the chapter deals with Hobbes' Materialism. According to author it is reductive and thus it is "self-contradictory". (p 66) Chakraborty also brings out a comparison of Hobbes' Materialism with Chārvakā, the Indian materialistic thought. Consequently, the materialism does not entertain many important aspects of human existence, according to the author. As a result their views are mostly unsatisfactory. In the concluding remarks, the author states that the conception of interaction between mind and body has to be replaced by the notion of "bodily entities;" and "mental entities". They are unitary concepts that exist in "human being". (pp. 67-68).

In the Chapter II, Dualism II, the author mainly focuses on the Identity theory and Metalinguistic dualism. The identity theory basically includes the contention of behaviourism and mind-brain identity theory. Insofar as the behaviourism is concerned, Chakraborty stresses its relationship with the analytic behaviourism, referring to the methodology of Logical Positivism and Hempel's verificationistic method. However, J. C. C. Smart's and D. M. Armstrong's conception of mind-body identity is well taken up. The non-spatial feature of the mental results in a logical objection. The conceptual or logical analysis draws a limitation to the scientific explanation of the identity theory. Computationalism is incompatible for explaining many other features of human mind, such as, thinking, composing, feeling, etc. (p. 88) The author asserts a sort of autonomy of the mind. (p. 122). The chapter, further discusses Neil Bohr's theory of 'complementarity'. It explains the "nearness" between the two phenomena. Seeing the incompatibility between the mind and the body, the author points out that our concern must be based not on the two divergent features, neither they belong to two different categories. Rather, mind and body belong to the person. The person as an unitary concept possesses both bodily activities as well as mental activities. However, the Metalinguistic dualism emphasizes the linguistic aspect of the mental states. The characterization of the mental can be done through the linguistic expressions. As a result the knowability of the mental is corrigible. Rorty, who advocates incorrigibility as "partial mark" for distinguishing mental from the non-mental, according to author, gives a one sided

view without explaining the nature of the physical properly. It is because the physical body possesses certain other characteristics, viz. spatio-temporal continuity, extension, etc (p. 118). The author, further talks about Levison's notion of corrigibility with reference to the distinction that Levison makes between "paradigm mental events" and "non-paradigm mental events". According to Chakraborty, both Rorty and Levison provide an "inconclusive" theses. (p. 123).

The third chapter raises an age old important question "Is mind independent of the body?" And, "does mind or soul exist after body perishes?" In order to answer this question the author takes up the textual view points of reincarnation and resurrection of Hinduism and Christianity respectively. In both the cases the immortality of soul has been strongly advocated. This "embodied survival" of the mind or soul is looked at from the stand point of both theoretical and empirical possibility. The author strongly argues by undertaking the arguments of Terence Penelhum and Anthony Flew, who reject the logical possibility of disembodied survival. On the other hand, Chakraborty also gives a juxtaposition while relating the contention of Penelhum with G.C. Nayak's concept of karma for establishing personal identity. Penelhum rejects the notion of 'memory' as the criteria for personal identity advocated by Nayak. He says that "memory is essentially a parasitic concept" depends necessarily on perception.(p.145) Citing various conflicting views regarding the relationship of the soul with body as unsatisfactory. According to Chakraborty, it is unsatisfactory because it results in contradiction. Since we do not know about the nature of the soul, it is difficult to associate soul with personal identity. Moreover, there is continuity occurring in the case of bodily transformation. She further says that "disembodied existence implies dualism but dualism does not imply disembodied existence. Even if dualism is true, disembodied existence may not be true".(p.149)

In the Chapter "The Concept of Person" Chakraborty gives more importance to the concept of person. So far as the nature of person is concerned there are two conflicting views. According to Buddha and Descartes, the notion of person is identified with soul, whereas, for Strawson, the concept of person refers to both bodily and mental states and processes. The chapter also includes the Lockean conception of person. However, the chapter exclusively brings about the rejection of Strawsonian notion of person by Mrinal Miri. According to

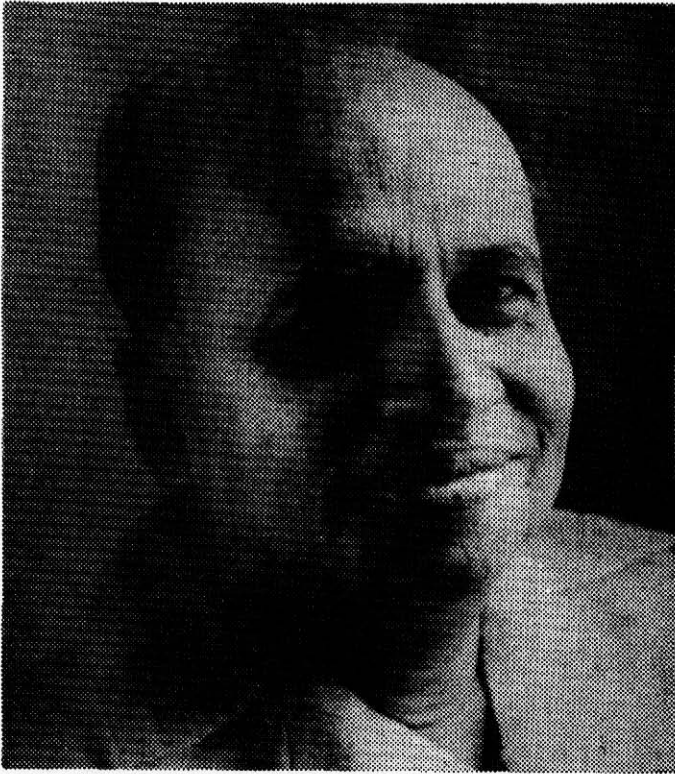
Strawson, the concept of person is logically prior to the concept of 'pure-ego'. The pure-ego has a secondary existence. For Strawson, "A person is not an embodied ego, but an ego must be a disembodied person" (p.188). Precisely, the person can be defined with relation to the two types of predicates that a person possesses. They are, M- predicates (relationship of person that is ascribed through the material objects) and P-predicates (Psychological predicates that are ascribed to the person). Miri thoroughly rejects Strawson's view of person, saying that identification of person through memory is a misunderstanding. Miri remarks, "it is possible to think that a person is a material body. As a material body a person possesses certain characteristics, functions and capacities, e.g. selfawareness, memory, language, etc.,.... To think that there is something like 'I' which is essentially distinct from body may arise from linguistic illusion." (p.193) Chakraborty does not fully agree with Miri's view, pointing out that, Strawson's concept of person is not a serious failure nor does it involve mistake in principle. (p. 205) On the other hand, she defines person as "composite unity." (p.206). Thus, the author brings about an expository version of person.

In the concluding chapter, "Dualism of Sāṃkhya" the author gives an exclusive version of Sāṃkhya philosophy. The general understanding of Sankhya philosophy is that the reality is dual, i.e., Puruṣa and Prakṛti. However, the author refutes the views of monistic dualism, which advocates, Prakṛti as the single substance from which the world is evolved, including the puruṣa which is essentially defined as conscious entity. Chakraborty brings about a comprehensive study of the philosophy of Sāṃkhya by both comparing and juxtaposing with Cartesian dualism. From this, one can very well conclude that, dualism, according to Chakraborty persists without facing any hurdles. Simultaneously, she also justifies her position stating that dualism follows in philosophical investigation because of the inadequacy of "predicability." McGinn too agrees with this point. The lack of predicability here means we are still not equipped enough with the properties to explain the mental structure. Chakraborty remarks, "about the mental phenomena predication is not possible because physical cause is not applicable to mental cause." (p.88) However, that does not imply that the realm of mental is something hidden and the mind is unexplainable. There are recent theories, like Biological Naturalism which explain the mind without advocating the primacy of causal theory. (Searle: 1992) In other words, the causation itself is intentionalised. That is, intentionality which

defines causation is one of the essential features of consciousness. And, thus it is regarded as one of the properties in order to explicate the structure of the mental states. As a result, the problem of inadequacy of "predicability" does not occur at all. However, Chakraborty's theses show that the enrootment of dualism in general is conventionalized in the Indian context, whereas, particularly, in philosophy it is logically true.

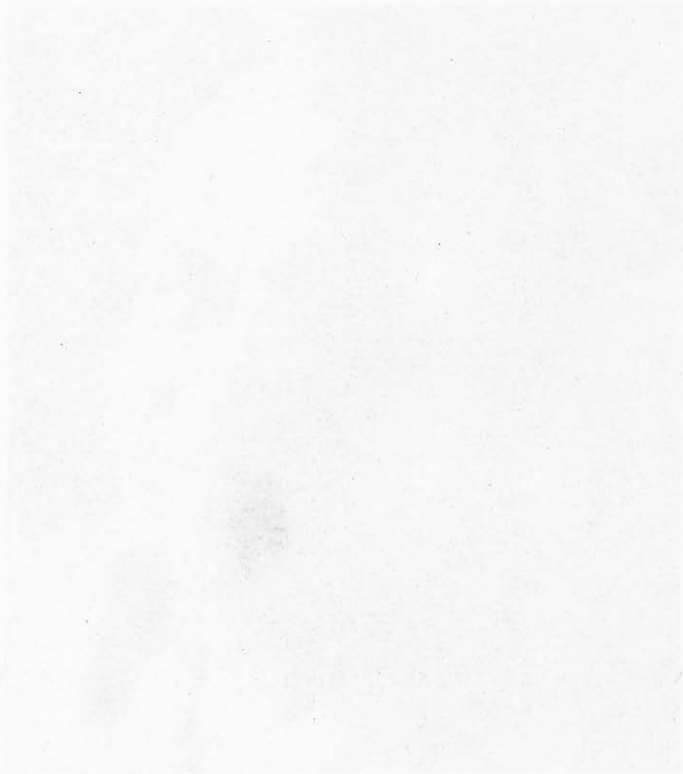
The arguments in the book are well structured in order to project the authenticity of dualism. Insofar as the identity of person is concerned the author attempts to provide a healthy solution by incorporating both mind and body as referents. Arguing from both Indian and Western philosophical perspectives, Chakraborty provides a sound picture of dualism. The ironical position of the author is reflected in various parts of the book. Consequently, the author provides that Dualism in the Indian system is practised from the time immemorial. On the other hand, the author's delving into contemporary philosophers of India like Nayak and Miri is significant. The discussion of their philosophical contributions to the problem of law of karma and the concept of person respectively is admirable. Above all, how far Dualism will be conducive to the epistemology is to be thought seriously. Nevertheless, the book provides a better understanding of the nature of dualism. And, the author's effort in this regard must be appreciated.

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