

The Transcendental Consciousness

Indian and Western Perspective

The Mind

- No Mind, No matter
- No matter; never mind
- Daniel Robinson (1998)

- **Mind transcends the realm of the physical**

Ontology of the Mind

- Is there a mind?
- What kind of stuff it is?
- What is the nature of mental life?

Taxonomy of the mind

- **Monism**
- **Dualism**
- Idealism/ monistic spiritualism / Immaterialism
- **Monistic materialism**
 - **Eliminative Materialism**

Isms

- Monism
- **Ontological Dualism**
- Idealism

Mind as Transcendent Reality

- “The concept of mind as transcendent is indeed venerable.”
- It only satisfies the query of spiritual persons and is also metaphysically durable
- **Metaphysics and theology**

Nature of Mind

- “mind is a thing apart; neither dependent on nor reducible to matter; not sharing matter’s features or fate.”
- **(Robinson 1994: 4)**

Metaphysics and early Greek Philosophy

- Thales
- Heraclitus
- Pythagoras
- Plato
- Aristotle

Pythagoras & Plato

- Mathematical knowledge is comprehended by virtue of mind's rational character.
- It is a special kind of self-discovery (discovery of eternal truth)
- 'Knowing thyself means subtle or less personal than one might assume.'
- True knowledge is eternal

Plato

- Sense perception give illusory knowledge
- **Parable of cave**
- True knowledge is transcendental
- Soul is **Perceptual, Emotional and Intellectual** operations of the mind.
- **Divine mind**

Metaphysical-Epistemic thesis

- There must be knowledge independent of experience
- All experience must be related to senses
- Non-sensory knowledge is non-material knowledge
- Being immaterial mind as such is ‘embodied’ without itself being a body.

Aristotle

- God is the **creative power** behind the sensible universe and the world of nature. He is the **Unmoved mover**.

Immaterialism

- Upanishads
- Brahman as the source of light
- Universal soul
- Source of knowledge

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

- Maitreyi and Yajnavalka
- Care for no worldly goods but care for immortality of the soul
- Self is immortal
- **“the self is to be seen, to be heard, to be perceived, to be marked, and everything else is only for the sake of the self.”**

Notion of Reality

- Conscious self as pure witness (*sākhi*)
- *Parable of the two birds*
- Atman is everything as sound
- Being and non-being
- Material and non-material

Supreme Reality

- World of experience
- Supreme reality is defined by *not this ... not this...*
- Brahman is all pervading ... 'Aum' is brahman
- *Katha Upanisada* Dialogue between YAMA and Nachiketa

Nature of Consciousness

- Self-awareness – **spiritual vitality**
- Knowing one's own being – *one knows the knowing subject*
- All act of knowledge is ultimately unified
- Direct perception

Consciousness as Void

- Aim is to arrive at conscious subject
- All construction of the subject must be eliminated
- The knowledge of object is the representation of the subject
- Consciousness appear as phenomenon of self-consciousness

Cont...

- Conscious action → (transitory quality)
→ qualified subject
- Void/ sunyatā
- Does not mean absence, pure negation
- Reality does not fit into our mental framework.

Cont..

- “All factors conceived as essential to individuality are objective constructions and so cannot reveal the self. Whatever is conceivable belongs to the objective world by that every fact to be excluded from the area of consciousness.”