PART III

THE PERSPECTIVES: ILLUSTRATIONS
CHAPTER IV

A METAPHYSICAL ISSUE: THE MIND-BODY RELATIONSHIP

The mind-body problem is chosen here as a representative metaphysical issue, and it is discussed with reference to Descartes, the Father of modern Western philosophy and in comparison with the dualistic system of Samkhya in Indian philosophy. Rather than conclude as to the correctness or otherwise of the doctrines found in these systems, the following discussion attempts solely to highlight the nature and kinds of issues raised the general procedure followed and solutions offered. This, it is hoped, will bring out the essential difference between the two approaches underlying these systems.

A. Descartes' Solution

(a) The Background

The problem of mind-body relationship is, in its general form and as it is visualized in the West, the problem of the intercommunication of substances. As such even systems which are not dualistic are obliged to account in some way for the apparent dualism of body and mind, while dualistic systems have taken the hypothesis of two ultimate substances seriously.\(^1\)
It is not easy to say what was Socrates' conception of matter and of its relation to mind. The universe, he said, was a work of art which presupposed a Divine Artist; as for God's relation to the world, we have a kind of experience of it in the relation of our soul to our body.

In Plato, matter is non-being and the bodily mechanism is subordinate to the ends of the soul. The soul, divided into three parts, is situated in the head, the heart and the abdomen, harmonizing the body, restraining its desires and generally controlling it. The bodily mechanism has a psychological purpose; it is to be understood through the soul and as its instrument. Sensible things exist only in so far as they participate in the Ideas. Plato explains the rationale of the body by the same theory of participation: the body is, and has a meaning, only to the extent that it participates in the soul. Of course the body too reacts upon the soul. It is, indeed, the source of errors and passions by which most men are so strongly bound to sensible life. The health of the body is, therefore, necessary for the health of the soul and vice versa.

With Aristotle, matter is not non-being or a mere logical possibility, for it contains as a tendency, that of which the form is the reality. Matter aspires to attain form, which excites it to motion and makes it complete.
union of soul and body is merely a particular case of the union of form and matter. The soul, thus, is the form of the body; and life is not to be conceived as a combination of heterogeneous elements. The soul is the active force in the body; the body is the natural instrument of the soul. In a word, soul and body are correlative terms, logically distinguishable but actually inseparable. The soul is the realization (entelechy) of that which, in the body, only exists potentially. Though he says the soul cannot be without the body, Aristotle makes one exception: the active intellect has no bodily organ; it comes from without, is separable, and alone and immortal.

Neo-Platonism returned to Plato's conception of matter as Non-being, indeterminate and without qualities. For Plotinus, matter was not the body, but the phenomenal union of the soul with matter. This union was conceived as the image of Being in Non-being. The sensible world may be compared with the appearance of an object reflected in a mirror. The individual soul, yields to the derive of acquiring an independent life in a separate body. But in doing this it does not lose its purely spiritual nature, but remains united to the world, soul.

St. Augustine's conception of the relation of the soul to the body recalls those of the Neo-Platonists. The
soul is a simple substance, and cannot be conceived as extended. It is, however, present all over the body and fills it. The soul is whole and entire in all the parts of the body and in each one of them. St. Augustine admits indeed that the union of soul and body cannot be scientifically explained. He does not hold that the body acts on the soul, it is the soul, he says, which in the body acts on itself.

In the Middle Ages, we find once more the theory of matter and form. Aristotle had not explained how form which is universal, can, out of matter that is completely indeterminate, make an individual being. The scholastic philosopher Thomas Acquinas imagines that he avoids this problem by making matter itself the principle of individuation. Duns Scotus, the antagonist of St. Thomas, denied that form was identical with the universal and that matter was the principle of individuation. The individual, he said, is the ultimate reality. Individual existence is not a decadence but a perfection, for it presupposes the addition of positive determinations to the universal, and the general essence is completed by the individual nature.

Ockam, who at the beginning of the 14th century brought Nominalism once more into favour, held that the thinking soul is not identical with the vegetable and sensitive
souls. The sensitive soul was extended and joined in a corporeal manner to the body, all parts of which it fills. The thinking soul is another soul, a separable substance, which is united to the body in such a way that it exists whole and entire in each of its parts.

(b) Descartes' Views on Mind-body Relation

Descartes' antithesis between extension and thought needs to be understood in the background of his varied past, just as it must be viewed in the context of the totality of his philosophy.

For Descartes, the essence of matter is extension, because extension is the only thing in body of which we have a clear and distinct idea, and without which we are unable to conceive it. The living body, animal or human, is a marvellous machine. But in man there appears something entirely new, namely, thought. Body and thought having nothing in common, how then are we to conceive the union of these two heterogeneous substances?

Descartes does not really attempt to explain this union by any metaphysical hypothesis; he merely accepts it, and states it as a fact. Our notion of thought is rendered clear through metaphysics, and that of the extended through
mathematics; but, "in order to understand what the union of the soul and body is, one must live and refrain from speculation." 14

To understand the full implications of this very important admission, it is necessary to go into some details about Descartes' notions of matter and mind.

According to Descartes, the essence of matter is extension in the dimensions of length, breadth and depth. Any material object, a piece of wax for instance, contains a confused multitude of properties which are variable and unstable. We say of this piece of wax that it has such a colour, such a form, but these expressions do not reveal the essence of matter. Hold the piece of wax near the fire, and all colour and form will melt away, giving place to an extended, soft and flexible mass, which, however, we still call wax. 15

Consequently all the secondary qualities, which the vulgar regard as so many properties of matter, are things that depend on external circumstances and on the sensibility of the subject, and do not really constitute the material object. There is nothing in them for the understanding to take hold of, while the real is that alone which is clearly perceived by the mind. The only essential and fundamental
property which persists throughout all modifications, and of which the mind can have a clear and distinct knowledge, is extension in length, breadth and depth.\(^1\)

Thus by a subjective method, Descartes reduces the manifold properties of matter to unity, i.e. extension. Living bodies being mere automation, we have here a reduction of quality to quantity.

As to the notion of the soul, Descartes defined it by thought. In the very fact of doubt, he discovered a fundamental truth: I who doubt, think; I think, therefore I am. I may imagine that I have body, but as long as I think I still continue to exist. The idea of thought is therefore distinct from the idea of extension, and my own thought is the only thing which it is impossible for me to doubt.

The second Meditation establishes only and ideal distinction between mind and body; a distinction which exists only for the thought which knows them by different means. Is it also a real distinction? It is not till the sixth Meditation that Descartes attacks this problem.

To ideas that are clear and distinctly conceived, distinct realities correspond, because God cannot deceive us, and His omnipotence can realize everything that we
conceive. Descartes had need of the divine veracity and omnipotence in order to establish that every clear and distinct idea must correspond to a distinct reality; and this is why he waits until the sixth Meditation to prove the real distinction between the soul and the body. The second Meditation proves by the 'cogito ergo sum', that thought is an ultimate notion; the fourth Meditation establishes the divine veracity and power; and the sixth Meditation concludes thus:

"Since, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am only a thinking and unextended thing, and as, on the other hand, a distinct idea of body, in so far as it is only an extended and unthinking thing, it is certain that I, that in my mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely and truly distinct from my body and may exist without it." 17

The living body is something finished, a complete thing; it is a marvellous automatic machine, needing no impulse from without. As a body, man is an automation like any other animal, and so far everything in the universe can be explained mechanically. "The body of a living man is as different from that of one who is dead as a watch or any other automation, when it is wound up and has within itself the material principles of the movements ... and the same
watch or other machine when it is broken and the principle of its motion has ceased to exist."\(^{18}\)

But, in man there is also something which is entirely new, namely, thought. Body and thought having nothing in common, there arises the problem of their interaction. As already noted, Descartes does not try to explain it. Rather he accepts and mentions it as a fact. "That the mind, which is incorporeal, is able to move the body, we know neither by reasoning nor by any comparison with other things; nevertheless, we cannot doubt it, since we are too clearly informed of it by experiences which are too certain and too evident. And we must keep in mind that this is one of the things that are known by themselves, and that we render these more obscure whenever we try to explain than by other things."\(^{19}\)

The union of soul and body is then "sui generis"; in order to understand it we must proceed neither from the notion of extension; nor from that of thought, but from life itself, and from the notions which correspond to this union, such as hunger, thirst, pain, etc. This union is of the closest kind. Descartes goes so far as to say that the body is substantially united to the soul in his response to the 4th objection. The mind is distinct from the body, just as the arm is distinct from the body; that is to say, although
strictly speaking it can be separated from the body, it forms part of the whole.

"Nature teaches us by these sensations of pain, hunger, thirst, etc. that I am not only lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but that I am besides so intimately conjoined and, as it were, intermixed with it that my mind and body compose a certain unity. For if this were not the case, I should not feel pain when my body is hurt, seeing merely I am a thinking thing, but should perceive the wound by the understanding alone just as a pilot perceives by sight when any part of his vessel is damaged." 20

This being the manner in which soul and body are united, how does the reciprocal action between them take place? The soul is joined to the whole of the body, but has its principal seat and performs its functions more particularly in the small pineal gland towards which the animal spirits increasingly ascend.

"This small gland, which is the principal seat of the soul, is suspended between the cavities containing these spirits, in such a manner that it can be moved by them in as many different ways as there are sensible differences in objects; and at the same time it can be moved in diverse ways by the soul, which is of such a nature that it receives as
many different impressions within itself or, in other words, has as many different perceptions, as there are different movements of the gland; and conversely, the bodily machine being so constituted that, by the very fact of this gland being moved in diverse ways by the soul or by any other cause, it impels the surrounding spirits towards the process of the brain, through which they are conducted by the nerves into the muscles, by means of which the soul causes them to move our limbs."

Thus Descartes holds that the soul can act directly on the body. No doubt the soul cannot increase or diminish the quality of motion in the body, since the quantity is constant, but it can by its will alone change the direction of the motion of the animal spirits and modify their course.

Descartes is, however, in spite of himself, brought by his own dualism near to the doctrine of occasional causes and of pre-established harmony, developed later by Malebranche and Leibnitz. Why has the soul as many different perceptions as there are different movements in the pineal gland? "Because these movements are given by nature for the purpose of making the soul feel them, because they give it the occasion to feel". And "the spirits, merely by entering the pores, excite a particular movement in the gland, which is instituted by nature, that the soul may feel this passion."
The parallel development of extension and thought, implied by Descartes and later developed by Malebranche by his theory of occasional causes, is explained by Spinoza by positing the unity of all substance. "What does he understand, I ask, by the union of the mind and body? What clear and distinct conception has he of thought intimately connected with a small portion of matter? I wish that he had explained the union by its proximate cause. But he conceived the mind to be so distinct from the body that he was able to assign no single cause of this union nor of the mind itself, but was obliged to have recourse to the cause of the whole universe, that is to say God." 23

As Spinoza conceives them, "the mind and body are one and the same thing, conceived at one time under the attribute of thought, and at another under that of extension. For this reason the order and concatenation of things is one whether nature be conceived under this or that attribute, and consequently the order of the actions and passions of our body is coincident in nature with the order of the actions and passion of the mind." 24

According to the doctrine of pre-established harmony of Leibnitz, the soul and the body are regarded as two clocks which without acting one on the other, always point to the same hour and strike at the same time.
Since the Cartesian attempts to solve the problem of the union of the soul and the body, philosophers have endeavoured to avoid, rather than solve, this problem of the interconnection of substances. Phenomenalists of the school of Hume, for instance, are content to state that we cannot lay hold of the connection between a bodily modification and a state of consciousness, and that, consequently, we have before us two series of irreducible phenomenons. Kant regards it as one of the advantages of his Critique of Pure Reason that it relieves us of the insoluble problem of the union of soul and body.

Something of the Cartesian dualism yet remains in Kant's theory: the underlying substance of things is neither matter nor mind, but an unknown thing in itself, which is revealed to us in body and thought under the different forms of space and time. The materialists and the idealists were both equally wrong: we do not perceive mind immediately as a substance, much less as the substance of all things; mind is not a mode or phenomenon of matter, there is no way of passing from the one to the other. Body and thought are two different phenomena; it is possible that the thing in itself is a single substance, which under the form of space is body, and under the form of time is thought. Although we cannot escape from this antithesis of the two orders of phenomena, we are supposedly delivered by the Critique from an insoluble problem.
"The difficulty which lies in the execution of this task consists ... in the presupposed heterogeneity of the object of internal sense (the soul) and the objects of the external senses, inasmuch as the formal condition of the intuition of the one in time, and that of the other space also. But if we consider that both kinds of objects do not differ internally, but only in so far as the one appears externally to the other ... this difficulty disappears. The remaining question as to how a community of substances is possible ... lies beyond the region of human cognition." \(^{25}\)

B. The Sāmkhya Approach

The Upanisadic doctrine of the Five Sheaths (Pancakośa) may be considered here as providing the necessary background to an understanding of body, mind and their relationship in Sāmkhya. The principle involved in this doctrine is virtually the same as that in the Samkhya theory of evolution.

We shall look briefly at this Upanisadic doctrine in section (a); and in section (b) we shall discuss the Sāmkhya understanding of mind-body relationship; and finally in section (c) we make some critical observations on this in order to bring out its implications for an understanding of the Indian perspective.
(a) The Background

(i) The Doctrine of the Five Sheaths:

This was first advanced in the Taittiriya, one of the Upanisads of the older canon. The doctrine, in brief, is as follows:

Within the physical body, which is made up of food (ānāma), is another body which is made up of vital air (prāna); the former is filled with the latter which is like unto the shape of man. More internal than the body which is made up of vital air is another body which consists of mind (manas); the former is filled with the latter which is again like unto the shape of man. More internal yet than the mental body is another body which is full of intelligence or discriminative power (vijnāna); the former is filled with the latter which is again like unto the shape of man. Finally, still more internal than the body of intelligence is another body consisting of bliss (ānanda); the former is filled with the latter which also is like unto the shape of man.

Here we are told that there are what may be called the physical, vital, mental cognitive/discriminative/intentional and beatific bodies of man; that every internal body is enclosed within an external one; and that all these bodies are made in the pattern of man.
The metaphysical significance of this becomes clear when it is taken along with another discussion in the same Upaniṣad, a discussion as to the nature of ultimate reality. This discussion is summed up as follows:

Bṛigu approaches his father Varuna and asks him about the nature of Ultimate Reality. The father directs him to practice penance and learn the truths for himself; he only gives him the hint that the ultimate principle should be one from which all things spring, in which they live, and into which they are finally resolved.

The boy after practising penance returns to his father and tells him that food or matter may be regarded as the principle of things. The father is not satisfied and asks him to practise tapas again. Then the son comes back with the answer that the vital air may be regarded as the principle. The father is not satisfied with the successive answers his son brings telling him that the ultimate reality is to be regarded as being mind, or intellect; and when the son finally brings the answer that it may be beatific consciousness which is the source of all things whatsoever, the story abruptly ends and we have no means of knowing whether the father was satisfied with the final answer. We are only told that his piece of knowledge shall be forever known as Bhārgavi Vāruni Vidvā, and that this is exalted in the highest heaven.
Now, the account cited first, the one about the different bodies, present a remarkable attempt to understand man's true nature with reference to its various dimensions and their inter-relationships. I.K. Watson feels that "this teaching about the concentrically related Kosas accurately conveys the truth about the nature of personhood, albeit by metaphor." And the account about Bhārgavi Vāruni Vidyā is avowedly an attempt to understand the ultimate nature of reality.

The two accounts take us directly to the same basic metaphysical question, each to a particular formulation of it: the doctrine of the Five Sheaths addresses itself to the task of answering the fundamental question "Who am I?" and the Bhārgavi Vāruni Vidyā is purported to be an answer to the question "What is the nature of the Ultimate Reality"? Each of these questions needs to be understood in relation to the other; their answers should be mutually illuminating.

These accounts do raise a number of questions and they are not easy to answer. Thus one might ask whether the true nature of man is to be taken as being represented by all the kosas taken together, as Buddhism views it in Coomaraswamy's interpretation of it. Ac. to Coomaraswamy, Buddhism regards these sheaths as constituents of the self which, however, is evanescent. Or, is it to be identified
with the inner most kośa as Radhakrishnan tends to do? He says: Bliss or Ananda reveals itself as the final explanation. Or is it to be understood as something beyond all these as Sankara seems to have implied? Similarly, it can be asked whether reality is to be understood in terms of the different kinds of 'stuff', or only in terms of the bliss-stuff, or in terms of something beyond all these.

Different answers to these questions will probably constitute different theories regarding self/reality. But we are not interested in the 'validity' or otherwise of these theories as such. What we are interested in is the fundamental perspective of these theories, and to discern this we need only to inquire into the relationship among the different kośas. In any case, the problem of mind-body relationship is essentially the problem of this relationship among the the kosas, that is, as it occurs in Indian thought.

(ii) The Underlying Principle:

Now, what is the relationship among the kośas? In other words, what is the principle of their inter-relatedness?

Each one of these kośas is, we are told, in the pattern of man, such that what man is, that is, his true nature,
becomes manifest through all these. Yet, as another Upanisad has succinctly put, "Life is the essence of matter, mind of life, intellect of mind, and joy of intellect."\textsuperscript{34}

As Radhakrishnan observes, the name \textit{annam}, meaning food, is advisedly given to the principle of matter; for, matter exists for the purpose of being used up by life.\textsuperscript{35} At the same time, as the \textit{Taittirīya} itself says, "matter is these two when they have become one, reach the highest stage, that is, Brahman."\textsuperscript{37}

And the relation of mind to life is exactly of the same kind as the relation of life to matter.\textsuperscript{38}

The relationship among the \textit{kośas} is, then, pretty complex. On the one hand each external \textit{kośa} is dependent on the one internal to it; that means the external may be understood in relation to the internal. On the other hand each internal \textit{kośa} is, in its turn, dependent on the one external to it. Furthermore, these two dependencies are not of the same kind. This needs some explanation.

Take, for instance, matter (\textit{annam}) and life (\textit{prāna}). The demands made on the former by the latter are limited by the very limitations of the former. Thus life can make only such demands on matter that the latter can bear. In this way,
the limitation of matter is also the limitation of life.
But we might say that within these limits the demands made
by the latter on the former, make for the reality of the
former. That is, within the limitations imposed by matter
on life, it is the very demands that life makes on matter
that renders matter significant.

Significant, however, not for life by itself, but for
that which makes life itself significant, viz., the mind, and
so on, until we reach ananda (bliss), or even beyond.

If this is so, then, neither matter, nor life, nor
mind can be understood in itself and in isolation. Nor can
all these, perhaps, be understood even in their interrelation­
ship; for, that which gives significance to all these, that is,
the self, could be beyond them. As we have already noted,
this is a controversial issue. The complexity of the situation
which gives rise to this controversy may be guessed from :
"I am the food of life, and I am he who eats the food of
life"; and, "I am the food which eats the eater of food." 39

One thing is clear is the midst of all the controver­
sies that might be there. It is certain that it is the self,
however it may be identified, which gives meaning and signif­
icance to matter, life etc., "From the self is life from the
self is desire, from the self is love, from the self is light,
from the self are waters, from the self are manifestation and disappearance, from the self is food". Radhakrishnan interprets this, in the idealistic fashion, to mean that the ultimate reality is of the nature of spirit. We might take this, without much of interpretation, to support our contention that the kosas and their interrelationship ought to be understood with reference to the supreme stage of the perfection of the self which is also its true nature.

In short, matter, life, mind etc., have to be understood not only in their interrelationship but also in their relationship with the true self. In other words, it is the understanding of the self which renders possible the understanding of matter, life, mind, etc. and their interrelationship. This does not rule out there being different understandings of the self, the non-self and their interrelationship. Whatever the specific understanding of the self and its relation to the kosas, these kosas and their interrelationship cannot be understood without taking the self into account.

If we may describe the true understanding of the self as the understanding of the 'whole', then it is in terms of this whole that the parts, viz., the sheaths and their interrelationship, may be understood. In other words the parts are to be understood as parts of the whole. "The whole
has existence through the parts, (but) the parts are intelligible only through the whole."\(^{42}\)

(b) The Sāmkhya View of Mind-Body Relationship

The Sāmkhya view of this issue is to be understood with reference to the Sāmkhya theory of evolution. The stages of this evolution are briefly yet comprehensively presented in a single verse of the Sāmkhyarīkā: \(^{43}\) From Primal Nature (Prakṛti) proceeds the Great One (mahāt), thence individuation (ahamkāra), thence the aggregate of the sixteen (the five jñānendriyas, the five karmendriyas, manas which belongs to both these categories, and the five tanmatras or subtle elements), and from five out of these sixteen, (that is, from the tanmatras), the five gross elements (the mahābhūtas).\(^{xxi}\)

Mahat which is often rendered as 'intellect' but perhaps is better rendered as 'discrimination' on account of its being a discriminative faculty, \(^{44}\) can be in any one of two aspects, the sātvika and the tāmasa. In the former it is characterized by virtue, wisdom, non-attachment and the possession of lordly powers, and in the latter by the opposite of these (xxii).

Ahamkāra being conceit in the ego, evolution from it it proceeds in two ways: as the elevenfold aggregate and as
the sevenfold subtle elements (xxiv). Now, from that form/aspect of ahamkāra which is characterized by satva the elevenfold aggregate proceeds; the subtle elements proceed from that form which is of the nature of tamas; but both proceed due to the dominance of rajas which is, as it were, the efficient cause (xxv).

It is important to note here that the relationship between these two kinds of evolutes of ahamkāra can be understood only with reference to the relationship between the three gunas of Prakriti; and Prakriti itself is understood in its relationship with Purusa.

Eyes, ear, nose, tongue and skin are called organs of cognition (jñānendriyas); voice, the hands, the feet and the organs of excretion and generation are said to be the organs of action (karmendriyas) (xxvi).

Note here that, as said in the previous verse, their material cause is ahamkara as characterized by satva. Note also that they serve as marks wherewith to infer the percipient subject, the soul, who is referred to as Indra; the mark of the presence of Indra, the soul, is Indriya.

The mind is of the nature of both the organs of cognition and the organs of action (xxvii).
Note that the mind is an **indriya** like the ten others inasmuch as it is also generated by that form of **ahamkāra** which is characterized by **satva**; it is an **indriya**, also because it serves, in its functioning, as a mark of the soul.

**Mahat**, **ahamkāra** and **manas** constitute the internal organs (**antah karaṇa**) as compared with the ten **indriyas** other than **manas**, which are external organs.

The organs, external and internal, discharge their respective functions, prompted by mutual impulsion; the goal of the Spirit alone is the cause; by nothing else is any instrument actuated (xxxvi). The goal of the Spirit is of course, release from the threefold misery.

For the reason that the intellect with the other internal organs ascertains the nature of objects of sense, the internal organs are the principal ones, while rest of the organs are the entrances thereto (xxxv).

The external organs, the **manas**, and the **ahamkāra**, comparable in their functioning to a lamp, disclosing the goal of the Spirit in its entirety, present it to **mahat** (xxxvi). Note that the lamp analogy is used precisely to explain how mutually distinct and conflicting elements may cooperate towards a common end, viz., the goal of the Spirit.
The material worked up by the other organs is presented to mahat which brings about the enjoyment of the Spirit in respect of all things, and it is that itself which further reveals the subtle difference between Primal Nature and Spirit (xxxvii). We may note here that the enjoyment is effected through sense objects, and the discrimination through inculcating the knowledge of the difference between Purusa and Prakriti.

The five subtle elements (śabda, sparga, rūpa, rasa and gandha), their distinctions not being perceived by us, are non-specific; from these proceed the five gross elements; these are really specific, because being possessed of different qualities, they are perceived as distinct (xxxviii).

The specific is three-fold: as subtle bodies, as gross bodies born of parents, and as the gross elements. Of these the subtle bodies are relatively constant, while the gross bodies perish (xxxix).

It must be noted here that the non-intelligent universe is divided into two: one proximate to intelligence and appearing like it, the other having nothing in common with it. The gross elements viz, ether, air, fire, water and earth, belong to the latter category; also, objects like pitcher. Bodies gross and subtle belong to the first category.
The gross bodies are composed of the six constituents: hair, blood, flesh, tendon, bone and marrow; the subtle body is formed of eighteen constituents: the mahat, ahamkāra, the eleven indriyas, and the five subtle elements. It is this subtle body which, being endowed with dispositions, transmigrates; for, the cognitive apparatus, that is, the intellect, etc., does not subsist supportless, without what is specific, that is, the subtle body.

The seeds of merit and demerit are already present in the subtle body in the shape of virtue, vice and the other dispositions of the intellect (mentioned in xxiii). The subtle body is affected by these in the same way as a cloth acquires the fragrance of the flowers it contains. This explains how the subtle body can have dispositions.

The gross body is the consequence of the dispositions of the subtle body; the subtle body, being united to the 'might' of the Prakriti and prompted by the goal of the Puruṣa, performs its part like a player (xLii). Note here that the object of performing this part is related to the Puruṣa, but the capacity to perform this is related to the Prakriti.

The eight intellectual dispositions, viz., virtue, wisdom, non-attachment, lordly power and the opposites of
these, have their effects or consequences, such as release which is a result of wisdom, and bondage which is due to ignorance. Of these dispositions, wisdom alone is an attainment (siddhi); the others are cases of ignorance (viparyaya), infirmity (asakti), or complacency (tusti). These are of fifty varieties owing to differences in the proportion of their constituents. (xLvi).

Attainment itself is eight-fold, the principal ones among them being the three-fold suppression of misery, viz., pramoda, mudita and modamäna. These result from the acquisition of the other attainments which are listed as study, proper use of reasoning, oral instruction from a teacher, intercource with friends and purity (Li).

The raison d'être for creation is explained thus:

This creation, from intellect down to the gross elements is brought about by Prinal Nature, to the end of the release of each Spirit; this is done for another's benefit, as if it were for her own benefit. And, as non-intelligent milk functions for the nourishment of the calf, even so does Primal Nature function for the liberation of the Spirit. (Lvi & Lvii)

The analogies of the dancer who desists from dancing after having exhibited herself to the audience, of the woman
servant who does her part unmindful of any gain or loss, of the bashful lady who, having accidentally exposed herself to the stranger's gaze, takes special precautions never again to come within his view, and of the blase couple who live together in the knowledge of their prior intimacy but without any impulse to create, - these analogies are put forward to explain the end of creation (Lix to Lxvi).

C. The Perspectives of Descartes and Samkhya

(a) Some Critical Observations

In the first place, why do we choose Samkhya in contrast to Descartes? Not so much because Descartes has a dualism of body and mind, and Samkhya too is dualistic. For one thing, they are dualistic in two different ways. The dualism of Samkhya is not between body and mind both of which are evolutes of Prakriti, the material principle; it is rather a dualism between the self and not self. For another, Descartes' dualism is relative because body and mind are substances only in a relative sense; in the absolute sense God alone satisfies his definition of substance which Spinoza took seriously enough to build a whole philosophical system on it. This is one side of the picture.

On the other hand, these and similar differences
between Samkhya and Descartes do not so much imply a difference between them in their basic perspective. Therefore, it is not on the basis of such differences that we propose to contrast the two systems. Instead, we propose to go beyond these particularities and get at their basic approach to the issue under consideration.

The approaches of Decartes and the Samkhya to the issue of mind-body relationship may be understood with reference to their presuppositions regarding the relationship between the whole and its parts. In other words, the particular view of mind-body relationship in any one of these systems may be seen as illustrating that system's understanding of the whole and its relationship to the parts of the whole.

It might be regarded as a problem that the concepts of 'body' and 'mind' are not identical in the two systems. But this is not a major problem; for, we can do with the internal-external distinction that is implied by the distinction between body and mind, even when the concepts employed for the purpose of making this distinction are not exactly identical in the two systems. Also, it need not bother us much that the internal-external distinction itself is not drawn so sharply in Samkhya as it is in Descartes.
In Descartes as well as in Samkhya there is an emphasis on the epistemological aspect. If Descartes is particular about first laying down the rules of the game, the Samkhya is no less insistent on this. A few verses in the terse Samkhyaśārikā are set apart for the consideration of the means of right knowledge, and the reason for this is also explicitly stated: what is to be known cannot be adequately grasped while in ignorance of the means of correct knowledge. (verse iv).

At the same time there is a significant difference between the two cases. In the case of Descartes, the emphasis on the epistemological aspect seems to limit the scope of the inquiry, while in Samkhya it does not. For instance, the Samkhyaśārikā states: knowledge of objects beyond the senses come from inference based on analogy; what knowledge is obscure and not attainable even thereby is gained by valid testimony (vi).

Thus the question of method is given thought to, and at the same time, it is not allowed to unduly limit the scope of the inquiry. The different ways in which Descartes and Samkhya actually lay down the rules of philosophical investigation, may be a matter of greater significance than the fact of their similarity in the insistence on the epistemological aspect.
But, is not Samkhya a cosmology rather than metaphysics proper? While it is quite possible that the Samkhya theory of evolution is not metaphysics in the same sense in which Descartes' theory is, it is equally possible that the Samkhya provides a different kind of metaphysics; and, probably, it is this difference that creates the confusion as to whether it is metaphysics or not. The difference between the two kinds of metaphysics may be indicated by describing the one as a theory of God and the other as a theory of self. On the whole, metaphysics in the West has tended to be a theory of God; and if a theory of God may be called metaphysics, the Samkhya which provides a theory of self, need not be denied that status.

That one is a theory of God and the other a theory of self need not by itself make them two different kinds of metaphysics. But it may be noted that, when it is a theory of the self, it is easily seen that the self is established not through theory/metaphysics by itself; morality (ethics), for instance, becomes prominent in this establishment/explanation of the self. The relationship between metaphysics and ethics (to be explained further in Ch.7 section B.i) which is involved here, alters the very character of both. If this is so, then we have an explanation as to how and why the Samkhya metaphysics is different; but the Samkhya cannot be easily denied the status of metaphysics merely on account of its 'ethical' and 'religious' character.
Unlike the usual attempts to see the whole of Indian philosophy in terms of its idealistic or absolutistic character, we have tried to present the speciality of this philosophy in such a way that idealism and realism, monism and dualism, transcendentalism and naturalism, can all be viewed as being consistent with a single basic preoccupation viz., the preoccupation with an understanding of the self and its possibilities. In their efforts to formulate the different theories in this regard, the systems are governed by the same principle, viz., the principle that the elements in this explanation, and the relationship of these elements among themselves, are to be understood in relation to the self itself.

We shall not take into account here such doubts as whether it is possible to talk about Samkhya without distinguishing between classical Samkhya, Samkhya of Mahabharata, etc. Theoretical differences among the varieties of this philosophy do not necessarily mean a difference in their basic perspective, and it is exactly with the understanding of this perspective that we are here concerned.

We also ignore the view that Samkhya is only a "stage" in the development of Indian thought, "where, due to discriminative wisdom, we distinguish spirit from matter." This
view, of course, has a strong appeal to minds which have been developed on the idea that Vedanta is the finest flower and fruit of the whole of Indian Philosophical investigation. But we have already argued, in chapter III section (c), to the plausibility of a different view of the relationship among the systems.

(b) The Samkhya Approach Vs. the Cartesian Approach

Having already made some observations on the way in which the metaphysics of Samkhya differs from that of Decartes, we shall here attempt to show how our understanding of the Samkhya metaphysics as a theory of the self illuminates some of the details of its doctrine of evolution, particularly its view of the relationship between body and mind. We shall then argue how this understanding of the Samkhya metaphysics is consistent with the view that theory is not alone in the justification of the goal which is understood here as discrimination between Purusa and Prakriti. The distinction/contrast between the approaches should become clear from all these.

While discussing the doctrine of the Five Sheaths, it was observed that its underlying principle is to try and understand the parts in terms of the whole. Thus, it was noted, it is the understanding of the self which makes the
understanding of the different sheaths and their relationship possible.

It is now possible to apply this principle to the understanding of the Samkhya system itself. If we may understand the Samkhya as a theory of the self, and we have seen there is a strong case for viewing it as such, then it may be that the body, the mind, etc., i.e., the various evolutes of Prakriti, and their interrelationship can be understood in relation to the understanding of the self involved here, and not otherwise. In order to test the feasibility of this, we raise a few questions here about the relationship (i) between Purusa and Prakriti, (ii) between the three gunas of Prakriti, (iii) between Prakriti and its evolutes, (iv) and between the various evolutes themselves, (v) particularly between the internal ones and the ones external.

How are the gross elements, for instance, related to the gross body, to the subtle body and to the subtle elements? And how are these related to manas which is an internal organ and which is thereby closely related to ahamkāra, to mahat, and so on?

The gross elements are, of course, evolutes of subtle elements, with the further difference that the latter is non-specific while the former is specific. This means that the
specific, i.e., the gross elements are to be understood with reference to the non-specific subtle elements which in their turn should be understood with reference to ahamkara, and so on, till one reaches Prakriti and Purusa which have to be understood as distinct but in their relationship.

Not only the gross elements, but also the gross body and the subtle body are specific, and, probably what we have said about the gross elements will apply to these also. Moreover, the gross body is the consequence of the dispositions of the subtle body, and, at the same time, these dispositions really belong to the intellect; the subtle body is affected by these dispositions in the same way as a cloth acquires the fragrance of the flowers it contains. This connects the gross body with the subtle body, and both these bodies with the intellect. These do not mean much without the intellect. On the other hand, the intellect itself is dependent on the subtle body as it cannot subsist supportless.

To be taken into account here is the distinction between the two categories of the non-intelligent universe: one proximate to intelligence and the other having nothing in common with it. While the gross elements belong to the latter category, bodies gross and subtle belong to the former. This proximity of these bodies also connects it with the intellect, and through it to Prakriti and Purusa.
Now what about manas which, along with mahat and ahamkāra, constitute the internal organs? These are, of course, the principal ones when compared to the ten indriyas which are external organs and which are regarded as secondary. For, the intellect with the other internal organs ascertains the nature of objects of sense. At the same time, the external organs, the manas and the ahamkāra "comparable in their functioning to a lamp, disclosing the goal of the Spirit in its entirely, present it to mahat". As noted earlier, (section B.b), the lamp analogy explains how mutually distinct and apparently conflicting elements co-operate towards a common end. That end being the goal of the Spirit, these elements and their functioning ought to be understood in relation to that Spirit.

Moreover, manas and the other indriyas are, as the etymology indicates, marks of the soul the self. It is in relation to the soul (Indra) which they indicate, that these indriyas can really be understood. This at once connects the jñānendriyas with the karmendriyas, the internal with the external, and all these with the soul/ the self.

It is with ahamkāra that really the internal- external branching off begins. So the mechanism of this branching off should help explain the relationship between the internal and
the external. What is this mechanism? From that form/aspect of *ahamkāra* which is characterized by *satva* the elevenfold aggregate proceeds; and the subtle elements proceed from that form which is of the nature of *tamas*; but both proceed due to the dominance of *rajas*. In so far as *rajas* is, as it were, the efficient cause for both, the two branches have to be understood in their interrelationship.

And, moreover, what is a *guna*? As Vacaspati explains, it is called *guns* not because it is an attribute of *Prakriti*, but because it subserves the interests of the Spirit. This also shows that the evolutes, whether they have in them the dominance of *satva* or *tamas*, are all linked with the Spirit via its goal of liberation. And the functioning of the three *gunas*, which is also explained with the help of the lamp analogy, goes to further strengthen their interrelationship among themselves and their relationship with *Prakriti* and with *Purusa*. The wick, the oil and the flame are opposed in nature and yet they co-operate in the lamp in giving light. Similarly, the three *gunas* have the common aim of 'assisting' the Spirit. In this regard, each of these *gunas* is, as it were, a consort of the others.

Now, the evolutes of *Prakriti* are like and unlike *Prakriti*: while verse X lists their contrary characteristics,
verse XI lists their similarities. One of the similarities is non-intelligence. Yet, it is the function of mahat, with the help of the other evolutes, to reflect the intelligence of the Spirit. The association of Nature and Spirit which is compared to the association of a blind man and a lame one, is again for the contemplation of Nature by Spirit and for the release of the Spirit from threefold misery. And creation itself proceeds from this association.

Spirit and Nature being equally ultimate and irreducible entities, they cannot be understood in isolation from each other. Nor can creation, which leads to enjoyment and misery, and release be understood in isolation from each other. For, creation itself is brought about by Primal Nature to the end of the release of each spirit; this is done for another's benefit, as if it were for her own benefit.

One could probably ask: how can the purpose of release be relevant before creation, and how can creation take place in the absence of this purpose? Possibly, this is one of the difficulty problems in Samkhyā; but as we are concerned here not with the right and wrong of these views but with the underlying perspective, we can afford to overlook such problems.

And, this perspective is indicated by the need to
understand the elements of Samkhya in relation to the Self and its goal. As the Katha upanisad says: That something, apart from which the mechanism of the body would be meaningless, is the soul. 

Now, what is the goal of the Spirit which unifies the various elements and their functions? It is described as the wisdom: "I do not exist, naught is mine, I am not", which leaves no residue to be known, is pure and absolute. But this, as we have argued in chapter II, is an expression/description of the experience of the realized soul, which is in one sense ineffable and therefore only partly communicable. We have argued that the self and its goal are to be understood not in terms of such Experience alone, nor by theory alone, or by life alone, but by a combination of these.

The Samkhya system is predominantly theoretical and therefore the arguments and explanations in this system are highly relevant for the understanding of the self and its goal. At the same time, the elements of Experience and Life will also be present, though in a subdued form. We have already referred to the Experience-aspect. The Life-aspect is there in so far as the highest attainment, wisdom, is also a matter of dispositions.
The principal forms of wisdom, the highest attainment, viz., pramoda, mudita and modamāna, are the threefold suppression of misery. The suppression of misery being the subject of the whole inquiry, and this suppression itself being a matter of acquiring certain dispositions, the Life-aspect is undeniably present in this highly speculative enterprise which aims at 'wisdom' regarding the true nature of the self, the non-self and their distinction.

Thus, the understanding of Samkhya as a theory of the self at once explains how the mind, body, etc., can be understood in relation to the self, and how, in this understanding, theory or metaphysics functions in conjunction with the aspects of Experience and Life.

It is here that we can see both the connections between Samkhya and Descartes as also their basic differences.

Descartes' admission in his letter to Princess Elizabeth that one must live and refrain from speculation in order to understand what the union of the soul and body is, indicates at least two things which are important to be noted. One, Descartes sees, though somewhat vaguely, the limitation of taking theory or metaphysics by itself; this explains, partly at least, why he did not so much try to remove the
contradictions in his theory and offer a clear solution to the problem at hand. Secondly, though he brings in the life aspect in this way, the problem of relating life with thought is left unattended. It seems, Descartes thinks it to be a question of "either-or, but not both"; for, he says one must live and refrain from speculation.

When he does actually speculate, however, Descartes sees almost no reason why this aspect of life must be taken into account in the explanation of body and its relationship with mind. Hence he says: "Men have thought without any reason that our natural heat and all the movements of our body depend on the soul." Here, it seems, Descartes does not see the soul as connected intimately with the life aspect which he elsewhere regards as crucial for an understanding of mind-body relationship.

But, one might ask, does not Descartes consider the soul, the self, as an important element in his philosophy? Does he not make the indubitability of the existence of the thinking self the cornerstone of the new metaphysics that he proposes?

It should suffice here to point out that, as Coomaraswamy opines, "the self which Descartes found indubitable, the mind which Hume discovered to be a bundle of
sensations, or the soul which Jung says man is in search of, is to be distinguished from the *atman* (self) of which the Indian is supposed to be in search."  

"The self's immortal self" may be identified, as Coomaraswamy says, with Philo's "Soul of the soul" and Plato's "immortal soul" as distinguished from the mortal soul, and not with Descartes' thinking self.

God, of course, occupies a prominent place in Descartes' philosophy. In fact, God provides the basis of all his speculation. For, the second Meditation, which proves by the "cogito ergo sum" that thought is an ultimate notion, establishes only an ideal distinction between mind and body; it is a distinction which exists only for the thought which knows them by different means. Is it also a real distinction? It is not till the sixth Meditation that Descartes attacks this problem. This had to wait because he had first to establish the divine veracity and power. So, in the fourth Meditation he establishes that God cannot deceive us, and that His omnipotence can realize everything that we can conceive.

In this sense one might say that Descartes' understanding of mind, body and their relation can also be viewed in relation to God who is the only real substance even according to him. But this raises two problems which incline
us to insisting on the distinction between the approaches of Descartes and Samkhya.

In the first instance, Descartes begins with the parts, the body and the mind, and then he tries to explain the unity of these; he is, in a sense, forced to bring in God, and even then he manages only in a sort of way to explain this unity in man. In this attempt to build up the whole from the parts, both the understanding of the whole and the understanding of the parts suffer.

The understanding of the whole, of the unity of elements, suffers in so far as it is regarded as a matter of theoretical understanding alone. This is in fact, the second problem. This is probably why, when the limitation of thought or theory is felt, Descartes recommends refraining from speculation instead of trying to relate thought and life.

What is true about Descartes, applies also to Spinoza, even though he recognized only one substance, God, from whom he derives the modes, attributes, etc. Because, while a 'self-centered' philosophy tends to view the theory in relation to the aspects of Experience and Life, a 'God-centered' philosophy is prone to view theory in isolation and this makes enormous and significant differences between the
two approaches, even though neither God-centeredness nor 'self-centeredness' is in itself a sufficient guarantee that there is the right approach; also, perhaps, either could be alright with a proper understanding of the relationship between theory on the one hand and Experience and Life on the other.

Kant who follows basically the same procedure as that of Descartes, arrives at only the transcendental unity of apperception, not the real individual human being. Wittgenstein comes up to the question of the identity of the experiencer, not the 'self'.

On the other hand, the Samkhya analyses the various aspects without ever separating any one of them from the others. Not only body and mind are viewed in their inter-relationship and in relation to Prakriti, Prakriti itself is understood in its relationship with Purusa whose presence triggers the process of evolution, and for whose release the various evolutes of Prakriti play their respective roles.

There are problems in both these kinds of accounts. We shall not go into these problems some of which are probably serious. For, our purpose is not to say which account is better; rather we want to see how the perspectives underlying these accounts could be distinguished in a significant way.
It may however be observed here that the problems of each become conspicuous when it is viewed from the perspective of the other; and, in so far as the prevalent method is to approach Samkhya itself from the modern Western perspective, it could be of some use that we occasionally take a look at Descartes and others in the modern West from the perspective that we have here described as Indian.

The problem as to how this perspective could be described as Indian when Buddhism, for instance, denies the self as well as God, might be answered with reference to Coomaraswamy's interpretation of Buddhism. Referring to the representation of the psychophysical vehicle by a chariot, he says: "Just as one confection is called a 'chariot' for convenience, so ought the human personality to be called a 'self' only for convenience... (and), just as the repeated expression 'That is not my self' has so often been mis-interpreted to mean 'there is no self', so the destructive analysis of the vehicular personality has been held to mean that there is no person! It is complained that the charioteer is left out."^55

Coomaraswamy adds that in view of the Buddha's identification of himself with the Law, we should regard the Eternal Law as the charioteer, who is in fact taken
for granted. The Buddha is thus "the spiritual self, that Great Person, the Mahāpurusa." And he says, "It is ignorance to see self in what is not-self ... In Brahmanical terms, ignorance is of who we are; in Buddhist language, of what we are not; and these are only two ways of saying the same thing, what we really are being definable only in terms of what we are not."  

If this is so, then it is not correct to say, as K.H. Potter contends, that the Buddhists had a mind-body problem, because one relation was real and the other was not. True, they had a problem; but the problem was more likely to be one of understanding how the body, the mind etc. can be understood and explained in relation to man's true nature which in its turn is understood in relation to his destiny, the ultimate goal of Nirvāṇa.

To conclude, in the modern-Western perspective, the mind-body problem is more or less correctly described as the problem of inter-communication of substances; but in the Indian context, such as in Samkhya, it is the problem of understanding how both the mind and body have functions to perform in man's pursuit of perfection. The meaning and explanation of the perfection which the self might attain,
therefore, serve at once as the meaning and explanation of the elements such as the body and the mind. This explanation which is predominantly theoretical, does not, it may be repeated in conclusion, confine itself to the theoretical realm; rather, it embraces the realms of Experience and Life as well.
NOTES AND REFERENCES: CHAPTER 4

(References are to the editions mentioned in the Bibliography)

1. This background information as well as the following account of Descartes' views are based on Janet and Seailles: A History of the Problems of Philosophy, Trans. by Ada Monahan and Ed. by Henry Jones, MacMillan Co., London, 1902, pp. 214 - 243. References in this section (nos. 2 - 25) are as quoted in this.

2. Mem. I, iv, 17
3. Timaeus 70 - 73
4. Tim. 66e; 86 - 90
5. Phys. I, 9
6. Meta. 1045
7. De An. II, 4
8. De An. II, 2
10. Ennéad IV, 3,9
11. Œst. 166, 2, 4
13. Prinre. II 4
15. 2nd Meditation
16. Principles of Philosophy, II, 4 - 11
17. 6th Meditation

18. Pass. a5 and 6


20. 6th Meditation

21. Pass. a54

22. Pass. a56

23. Ethic, Part V Preface

24. Ibid.


27. This account is extracted from Belvalkar and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy: The Creative Period*, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 250, 251.

28. Taittiriya 3: 1-6

29. Belvalkar and Ranade, pp. 252, 253


31. *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 59


33. Belvalkar and Ranade, p. 252


36. Bhāṣya i, 3


38. *The Reign of Rel.*, p. 419


40. Chāndogya Up. vii, 26

41. *The Reign of Rel.* p. 442

42. Ibid. p. 443

43. References to the Sāmkhyakārikā in this section are to S.S. Sastri's translation. (1973)

44. Ibid. xiii. Sastri himself has used this term on p. 36, footnote.

45. Sastri S.S., p. 1

46. Ibid., p. 38

47. Ibid. Verse xx1

48. Katha Up. II, 11, 1. 3. 3. Quoted by M. Hiriyan.na, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 66. Hiriyan.na explains this notion of the centrality of the self in the understanding of matter, life, mind, etc., indirectly though, by an analysis of the different terms used for the soul. Ibid. pp. 66 - 68.

49. Verse LXIV

50. Quoted by Janet and Seailles, p. 231
52. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 34
53. m.U. III 2.
54. *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 34
55. Ibid. p. 72
56. Ibid. p. 73
57. Ibid. p. 62