UNIT 15: APPEARANCE AND REALITY: BRADLEY

Unit Structures:

15.1: Learning Objectives

15.2: Introduction

15.3: Bradley's Concept of Reality

15.4: Criteria of Reality

15.5: Reality is one

15.6: Reality is individual

15.7: Knowledge of the Reality

15.8: Bradley's Concept of Appearance

15.9: Relation between Appearance and Reality

15.10: Degrees of Truth and Reality

15.11: Conclusion

15.12: Let us sum up

15.13: Further Reading

15.14: Answer to check your Progress

15.15: Model Questions

15.1: LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- describe what is Bradley's Concept of Reality
- define the criteria of Reality
- explain that Reality is one
- explain that Reality is individual
- discuss that whether Knowledge of the Reality is possible
- explain that Bradley's Concept of Appearance
- discuss the relation between appearance and reality
- explain the Degrees of Truth and Reality

15.2: INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce to you the Problem of Appearance and Reality and will also know how it plays a vital issue in metaphysics. The contrast

between appearance and reality, however, is by no means peculiar to metaphysics. In everyday life people distinguish between the real size of the Sun and its apparent size, or again between the real colour of an object (when seen in standard conditions) and its apparent colour (nonstandard conditions). A cloud appears to consist of some white, fleecy substance, although in reality it is a concentration of drops of water.

It seems that there are at least two components in the metaphysical conception of reality. One characteristic, which has been illustrated by Plato, is that reality is genuine as opposed to deceptive. The ultimate realities that the metaphysician seeks to know are precisely things as they are—simple and not variegated, exempt from change and therefore stable objects of knowledge. Second, and perhaps most important, reality for the metaphysician is intelligible as opposed to opaque. Appearances are not only deceptive and derivative; they also make no sense when taken at their own level.

15.3: BRADLEY'S CONCEPT OF REALITY

The concept of Bradley's Absolute or Reality may be summarized in few lines which run as follows:-The ultimate reality is a self-consistent whole. It includes in itself all differences and forms in an inclusive harmony. The perplexing diversity of the phenomenal world must be brought into unity and made self-consistent. The content of reality is nothing but sentient experience. Thought, feeling, volition are the only materials of existence. The finite minds should be in a position to give a general outline of the nature of the Absolute, but the detailed description of the Absolute is impossible.

15.4: CRITERIA OF REALITY

Our ordinary experience has made us familiar with the distinction between what really is or exists and what merely appears to be. We recognise that things are not always what they seem to be, what appears to us is not real, and 'what really is' does not appear to be so always. If there is a distinction between things as they really are and things as they

appear, then there must be some universal criterion which makes the distinction between them.

The first criterion of Reality is that it is infallible. We cannot doubt its validity without falling into a contradiction in our thought. What is real is not self-contradictory and what is self-contradictory is not real.As according to Bradley, ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion. And it is proved absolute by the fact that, either in endeavoring to deny it, or even in attempting to doubt it, we tacitly assume its validity.

Bradley arrives at the absolute standard of reality by a dialectical examination of all the notions commonly accepted as valid. He examines all the categories such as primary and secondary qualities, substantive and objective, relation and quality, space and time, motion and change, causation and activity with which our intellect or thought interprets the world, and finds them all self-contradictory. So, Bradley condemns all the contradictory notions as appearances because reality is such that it does not contradict itself. The reform on-contradictions must be the criterion of reality. Non-contradiction also means consistency. Reality is not only self-consistent; it must be self-subsistent. So the self-consistency of reality demands that all appearance must belong to reality. The character of the realist opposes everything phenomenal in a harmonious form.

As reality is free from contradiction, both internal and external, it is one all-inclusive systematic whole. Reality then is known to be a connected and self-consistent or internally coherent system. But which matter has composed this system?According to Bradley , all the materials or data of reality consist of experience, experience being provisionally taken to mean psychical matter of fact, what is given in immediate feeling. According to Bradley, the distinction between subject and object is a product of intellectual abstraction. If we go back to immediate experience we donot find these fragments. Immediate experience is fully unified and contains no break or relations, but it is not undiversified. Bradley calls this experience as sentient experience.

15.5: REALITY IS ONE

For Bradley Reality is one organic whole. It expresses itself immediately in all its appearances.All appearance must belong to reality. The character of the real is to possess everything phenomenal in a harmonious form. For Bradley, Reality is above all relations, whether external or internal. However Bradley does not take Reality to be personal. Reality, according to him, is both supra-relational and supra personal.

The Reality for Bradley must be one. If reality is to be free from contradictions and conflicts then there cannot be many independent reals. For him, that Reality is one is more a matter of conviction than are as one out belief or knowledge. Reality must satisfy the intellect. Plurality and external relations between independent reals are self-contradictory. So it cannot satisfy the intellect.

Bradley says that it is not wrong to accept the plurality of facts of daily life. It is necessary for practical convenience. The objects of the earth are really appearances of reality. The appearances of the daily life are not unreal, but they are partially real. Reality is unintelligible without appearances.

15.6: REALITY IS INDIVIDUAL

Reality is one in the sense of being an individual self-contained of experience. For Bradley, Absolute is the only real individual and finite beings are the adjectives of the real. In the Absolute no appearance can be lost, but finite selves must blend and undergo complete transformation. But Bradley says that how the finites blend in the Absolute, it is in explicable.

15.7: KNOWLEDGE OF THE REALITY

Our knowledge is in essence relational and discursive. So, according to Bradley, to fully realize the existence of the absolute is for finite beings impossible. Kant rejected the things-in-themselves as unknown and unknowable. so his concept leads him to agnosticism, as he states that we know that noumena or things-in- themselves exist, but we do not know

what they are. Against this Kantian argument, Bradley says that if reality were not a subject of knowledge we could not know that such a thing even existed. our knowledge of the absolute is limited. But this is not good ground for our declining to entertain it. Mere thinking, by its nature relational, and does not give us the complete knowledge of reality. Thought yields a dissection of experience. In order to transcend its relational form, thought commits suicide. In anything real for Bradley there are two aspects: an existence and content, a 'that' and a 'what' and these two are inseparable. Thought cannot join these two aspects and therefore is unable to arrive at its goal. But thought as an ideal implies separations of content and consciousness but these two aspects are inseparable in reality. So thought in its very nature is inadequate to give us knowledge of reality. Thought is relational and discursive, and if it ceases to be this, it commits suicide.

By committing suicide thought can transcend the dualism of content and existence and then only the knowledge of absolute is possible. But if thought ceased to be relational then it would cease to be thought. Thus thought by its very nature fails to grasp the reality. Bradley therefore reaches the conclusion that by transcending its relational form i.e. by committing suicide thought can grasp the supra-relational whole. Suicide of thought means the transcendence of its inherent dualism between 'that' and' what, 'when thought attains immediacy of feeling as a harmonious whole, it would be transformed into a supra-relational immediate experience and it would cease to be thought.

15.8: BRADLEY ON APPEARANCE

F.H. Bradley maintains that there is no unity in phenomena; space, time, motion, change are self -contradictory. Appearance belongs to reality. For him, reality is a self -consistent whole embracing all differences in an inclusive harmony. The absolute is a harmonious system. Truth and life, beauty and goodness are revelation of the absolute. Appearances are part of absolute. In Metaphysics Bradley held that many phenomena considered real, such as space and time, are only appearances.

According to Bradley the universe is full of puzzling contradictions.It is not reality, but a mere appearance of reality. Bradley starts from the principle of contradiction as the supreme criterion of every reality, applies it to all scientific concepts and intellectual categories-substance, quality, relation, space, time, motion, change, causality, force, activity- which involve contradiction from his point of view, and are, therefore, appearances of incomplete realities.

Let us consider the relation between substance and qualities. Substance is not identical with any of its qualities; nor is it an aggregate of all of them. If sugar were identical with sweetness, it could not be hard at the same time, because sweetness would then be identical with hardness. Nor can sugar be something other than its qualities. Substance is neither an aggregate of its qualities anything different from them.

Substance, then, is a link connecting its qualities with one another. Or, it is a name for qualities in relation. But this also raises difficulties. How is one quality related to another? Neither of them is identical with the other or with relation to the other.

Quality does not exist apart from relations, but relations can exist only between qualitative terms. Thus, on the one hand, quality is the result of relations, since difference in qualities cannot exist apart from the process of distinction; on the other, relations are ultimately forms of quality. Thus substance and quality are self- contradictory, and are therefore appearances.

Again, a relation, taken by itself, is nothing. Nor can it be identified with the things related. A is related to B. A relation or R is necessary to relate A to B, then R, being third entity, requires another relation or R1 to relate it to A, another relation or R2 to relate it to B. Again, R1, being a distinct entity, requires another relation or R3 to relate it to A, and so on to infinity. Thus relation is self-contradictory, and is, therefore, an appearance.

In the same manner Bradley shows that space, time, movement, activity, causality, etc., are self-contradictory, and that therefore they are appearances. The intellectual categories and scientific concepts are then mere appearances which are harmonized and transfigured in an integral harmonious system.

Even the concept of self is self-contradictory, and, consequently, an appearance, because it involves discord between self and not-self, which can never be resolved. Thus, nature and self are appearances. Appearances are incomplete realities, and not mere non-entities. There is no truth which is entirely true, just as there is no error which is entirely false. Error is partial truth. Appearance is incomplete reality. All appearances are real in some way or other, and to some extent, and they are rightly arranged, transformed, supplemented, and merged in the absolute, a harmonious whole of experience.

15.9: RELATION BETWEEN APPEARANCE AND REALITY

There are two things about appearances, in relation to reality. First all appearances, from lowest to the highest, have to be given place in reality. Secondly, when they are so housed, their distinctiveness is lost and merged.

Bradley's view about the relation between appearance and reality can be understood only in the context of his doctrine of degrees of reality.Bradley regarded all finites are appearance of reality. But all finites are not equally imperfect. Some are more harmonious and more real. In contrast some are less harmonious and less real.

15.10: DEGREES OF TRUTH AND REALITY

Bradley believes that the Absolute is one all-comprehending reality. He reconciles the existence of this ultimate Reality with everything finite that exists by his doctrine of Degrees of Truth and Reality. Bradley considers all finites as appearance of reality. The apparent plurality of the world is constituent elements of the Absolute. We should clearly not that according to Bradley, Reality has no degrees. He says that the Absolute, considered as such, has of course no degrees; for it is perfect, and there can be no more or less in perfection. Such predicates belong to, and have a meaning only in the world of appearance.

The perfect Absolute is unmoving. Appearances are conditioned by change, movement and are the reform imperfect. So the doctrine of degrees

of reality has a meaning and applicability only in the realm of appearance. The Absolute is present among the finite appearances indifferent degrees. Appearances can be arranged in an ascending scale from lower to higher position. Lower elements are less real compared to the higher. Nothing is absolutely real or false, because Absolute is all-inclusive. So reality is a matter of degree, in respect of finite appearances.

The concept of degrees of reality is related to the concept of degrees of truth. Bradley denies the absolute truth and absolute falsity. The false judgement means that it is incapable of giving a complete picture of reality. On the other hand every judgement is true because all refer to reality. So every judgement is both partially true and partially false.

Bradley says that of two given appearances the one wider, or more harmonious, is more real. It approaches nearer to a single, all-containing, individuality. To remedy its imperfections, in otherwords, we should have to make a smaller alteration. The truth and the fact, which, to be converted in to the Absolute, would require less rearrangement and addition, is more real and truer. And this is what we mean by degrees of reality and truth. To possess more the character of reality, and to contain within one self a greater amount of the real, are two expressions for the same thing.

The implication of the doctrine of degrees of reality is that, there is no absolute difference between appearance and reality. The difference is that in reality there is total harmony. But in appearance this total harmony is not to be found.Secondly, reality is a single all- inclusive individuality. But appearance is not single all -inclusive individuality. Appearance belongs to reality.

15.11: CONCLUSION

But Bradley's view of appearance and reality is not completely satisfactory. Bradley said that appearance is neither real nor unreal. But at the same time, he put appearance inside reality.Again appearances do not persist in reality as they are but as transformed and transmuted. After transmutation an appearance cannot retain its individual identity. It is therefore unintelligible how we can measure the degrees of reality of transmuted appearances.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is the absolute criterion of reality?

Q 2: What is the criterion of appearance?

Q 3: What is the content ofreality?

Q 4: How many realities are there according to Bradley?

Q 5: Is reality unknown and unknowable?

Q 6: Where appearances belong?

Q 7: Is there absolute difference between appearance and reality?



15.12: LET US SUM UP

- The Problem of Appearance and Reality plays a vital issue in metaphysics.
- The ultimate reality is a self-consistent whole. It includes in itself all differences and forms in an inclusive harmony.
- The perplexing diversity of the phenomenal world must be brought in to unity and made self-consistent.
- The content of reality is nothing but sentient experience. Thought, feeling, volition are the only material so existence.
- The finite minds should be in a position to give a general outline of the nature of the Absolute, but the detailed description of the Absolute is impossible.
- There is a distinction between things as they really are and things as they appear, and then there must be some universal criterion which makes the distinction between them.
- As according to Bradley, ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion.
- According to Bradley, all the materials or data of reality consist of experience, experience being provisionally taken to mean psychical matter of fact, what is given in immediate feeling.
- Bradley examines all the categories such as primary and secondary qualities, substantive and objective, relation and quality, space and

time, motion and change, causation and activity with which our intellect or thought interprets the world,and find sthemallself-contradictory.

- For Bradley reality is one organic whole. It expresses itself immediately in all its appearances. All appearance must belong to reality.
- The Reality for Bradley must be one. If reality is to be free from contradictions and conflicts then there cannot be many independent reals.
- According to Bradley, to fully realize the existence of the Absolute is for finite beings impossible. But reality cannot be considered as unknowable.
- According to Bradley the universe is full of puzzling contradictions. It is not reality, but a mere appearance of reality.
- Bradley considers all finites as appearance of reality.
- There are degrees of reality in relation to appearances.Bradley says that of two given appearances the one wider, or more harmonious, is more real.
- The implication of the doctrine of degrees of reality is that, there is no absolute difference between appearance and reality. The difference is that in reality there is total harmony. But in appearance this total harmony is not to be found.



15.13: FURTHER READING

1) Bradley, F.H. (1893). *Appearance and Reality*. London:George Allen and Unwin LTD.

2) Chakravarty, D. K.(2000).*Fundamental Questions of epistemology and Metaphysics*. New Delhi: Omsons Publications.

3) Masih, Y. (1993). *A Critical History of Western Philosophy.* Motilal Banarsidass.



15.14: ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q 1: Non-contradictory is the absolute criterion of reality.

Ans to Q 2: Contradictory is the criteria of appearance.

Ans to Q 3: The content of reality is nothing but sentient experience.

Ans to Q 4: The Reality for Bradley must be one

Ans to Q 5: According to Bradley, to fully realize the existence of the Absolute is for finite beings impossible. But reality cannot be considered as unknowable.

Ans to Q 6: All appearance must belong to reality.

Ans to Q 7: There is no absolute difference between appearance and reality.



15.15: MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q 1: Is there difference between 'that' and 'what' in immediate experience?

Q 2: Is time an appearance, according to Bradley?

Q 3: Are relations external or internal according to Bradley?

Q 4: Is space an appearance, according to Bradley?

Q 5: Is self real according to Bradley?

B. Short Questions: (Write in about 150 words)

Q 1: What is Reality according to Bradley?

Q 2: What is appearance according to Bradley?

Q 3: How appearance related to Reality According to Bradley?

Q 4: What is meant by 'degrees of Reality'?

C. Long Questions: (Write in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: **W**hat does Bradley mean by reality? How are appearance related to reality? Discuss Bradley's view.

Q 2: Explain Bradley's view of appearance broadly.

Q 3: Explain Bradley's view of Doctrine of Degrees of Reality.

** *** **



REFERENCES

1. Ayer, A.J., Metaphysics and Common Sense, (London: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1994).
2. Burnham, Douglas and Young Harvey Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2007).
3. Cassirer, H.W., Kant's First Critique: An Appraisal of the Permanent Significance of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, (London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1961).
4. Collingwood, R.G., An Essay on Metaphysics, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2002).
5. Dryer, D.P., Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics, (London: Routledge, 2016).
6. Ewing, A.C., A Short Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).
7. Falkenberg, Richard, History of Modern Philosophy, (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1977).
8. Hampshire, S.N. "Metaphysical System", in The Nature of Metaphysics, edited by D.F. Pears and Others, (London: Macmillan, 1959).
9. Kant, Immanuel Critique of Pure Reason, translated by N.K. Smith, (London: Macmillan, 1973).
10. O'Connor, D.J., (ed.), A Critical History of Western Philosophy, (New York: The Free Press, 1964).
11. Russell, B., History of Western Philosophy, (London; Routledge, 2004).
12. Scruton, Roger Kant, (London: Oxford University Press, 1982).
13. Wood, Allen Kant, (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).
14. Solomon, C. Robert. (2008). *Introducing Philosophy*. New York. Oxford University Press
15. Roberts, Francis. (2003). *The Philosophy Workbook*. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press

16. Hospers, John. (1971). *An introduction to Philosophical Analysis*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private limited
17. Goswami, Sauravpran. *The Strawsonian Concept of Person*. Guwahti. Anwesha Book House
18. Sen, P.K.&Verma, R.R.(1995) (ed) *The Philosophy Of P.F. Strawson. New Delhi:* I.C.P.R.
19. Strawson, P.F.(1974). *Freedom and Resenement and Other Essays.* London. Metheun &Co. Ltd.,
20. Shaffer, J. A. : (1988) *Philosophy of Mind*. New Delhi. Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd.
21. Ghose, R. : (1990) *The Idea Of a Person.* Calcutta: Punthi Pustak
22. Mackenzie. John S. (1975). *A Manual of Ethics.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2/11 Ansari Road, daryaganj
23. Sinha, J.N. (1984) *Manual of Ethics*. Calcutta: New Central Book Agency
24. Lillie, William. (1990). *An Introduction to Ethics*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers limited
25. Chakraborty, D.K. (1995) Problems of Analytics Ethics. New Delhi: Omsons Publications, T-7, Rajgouri garden
26. Chatterjee, Phanibhusan. (1950). *Principles of Ethics*. Calcutta: Beadon Street
27. Frankena, William K. (1989). *Ethics*. USA : Prentice Hall, Inc, Engelwood Chiffs
28. Aaron, R. I. (1952): The Theory of Universals: Oxford.
29. Edman, I. (ed.) (1956): The Works of Plato: The Modern Library: New York.
30. Sarma, Dr. Ramala (2013): Theory of Universals: N. L. Publications: Guwahati.
31. Warrington, J., (ed.) (1961) Aristotle's Metaphysics: Everyman's Library: London.
32. Hume, D. (1967): *A Treatise of Human Nature*: Ed. by L. A. Oxford:Selby-Bigge:

33. Woozley, A. D. (1982): *Theory of Knowledge*: New Delhi: B. I. Publications:.

34. Bradley, F.H. (1893). *Appearance and Reality*. London:George Allen and Unwin LTD.

35. Chakravarty, D. K.(2000).*Fundamental Questions of epistemology and Metaphysics*. New Delhi: Omsons Publications.

36. Masih, Y. (1993). *A Critical History of Western Philosophy.* Motilal Banarsidass.