
UNIT 2 BEING AS ONE

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

Being is both analogously and transcendently related to beings. In the previous unit we have seen how Being is related to beings analogously. In this unit and in the next units we will study the transcendental properties of being: oneness, truth, goodness and beauty. In this unit you are guided to:

- Understand the Problem of One and Many
- Reflect on a possible solution to the problem
- Explain the meaning of oneness and its convertibility with Being

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Unity is the process by which a being is not divided in itself, but divided from everything else. The meaning of unity presupposes that it comes from the comparison of two or more *different* things. It is the coherence of an intrinsically plural being. Hence unity too presupposes plurality. A being is all the more united in itself, and so distinguished from others, the more intimate its connection with others is. Unity and plurality, ‘unism’ and pluralism are inseparably related. There is no unity without plurality, and no plurality without unity. They found and sustain each other. One is in the other; the other is in the one. They are the two sides of Being which is in some way or something.

2.2 FROM UNITY OF PLURALITY TO THE PROBLEM OF ONE AND MANY

The problem of one and many is fundamental to human experience. Both poles seem to be equiprimordial to any intelligent awareness. ‘The many’ is inescapable for any experience which is spatio-temporal in its form consisting in the manifold of sensations that are spread out in space and that succeed one another in time. But to a human experience there belongs also from the beginning a unity, which allows the manifold items in it to be ordered and related among themselves; if this did not happen, there would be only a chaotic flux of impressions comparable to the flux which briefly passes through consciousness when we are overcome by dizziness or are about to lose

consciousness. Is this unity of experience imposed entirely by the human mind giving an illusion of unity? That might be the Kantian epistemology, in which it is the human mind which imposes unity upon the given forms of space and time by unifying the spatio-temporal data brought together under the categories of the Understanding in the unity of apperception. However, it would be impossible for the mind to impose a unity on the manifold of sensations unless the conditions for such a unity were already there in the sensations themselves. If the flux of sensations were endlessly varied, we could never emerge from the state of dizziness, leaving us helpless to construct any kind of unity. But in fact the same sensations keep coming back, and we are able to recognize them. It is the repetition, the recurrence of what has been, that makes possible the construction of a unified experience; this repetition lies in the given, the raw data of experience. Unity then is not a creation of the human mind, but a discovery of what has already been there, a discovery which is never complete.

There has also been in many individuals and schools of thought a metaphysical awareness of this discovery of the underlying unity of all things. Such persons and schools have been seized of an awareness of a single Reality embracing all the manifestations of the manifold in itself and expressing itself in them. The metaphysical vision of an all-embracing unity has found expression in various monistic philosophies. The most illustrious representative philosopher of monism in ancient Greece was Parmenides. For him reality is one and unchanging. That which changes is that which is not, and thus unreality. The thought of Parmenides may be compared with that of Sankara. For him too, there is one unchanging reality, Brahman.

But from the earliest times there have been also philosophers who are openly pluralist. In ancient Greece, the priority of the multiple and the changing over the one has usually been ascribed to Heraclitus. But the typical pluralist philosophy has also been empiricist, in contrast to the rationalistic approach of monism, evident in modern and contemporary times reaching its most extreme form in Nietzsche and the postmodernists who championed pluralism and contingency. For them there is no beginning, no end, no absolute centre, but just the endless proliferation of contingent occasions. This view lies at the opposite extreme of Parmenides, Sankara and the like.

Perhaps, it is difficult to find anywhere a thoroughgoing monism or pluralism. Most advocates of monism have thought of the One implying at least some sort of differentiation in itself. They are in tacit agreement with Radhakrishnan's view that the One is so far from being empty that it is characterized by a fullness that it surpasses comprehension. At the other extreme, is it possible to find a thoroughgoing pluralism? Here even Nietzsche, who denied that there is either beginning or end or middle, nonetheless taught a doctrine of eternal recurrence. Thus we have to conclude that the extreme forms both of monism and of pluralism are untenable. In the words of John Macquarrie, "The highest unity is that which already conceals within itself the richest diversity, while sheer diversity devoid of anything unifying is unthinkable. The one and the many do not stand in stark opposition to each other, for each implies the other". But how do they imply each other? The question of their mutual implication calls for further ontological analysis. For the philosophical position of monism, of dualism, of radical pluralism, all depend upon the ontological solution offered to the problem of one and many: how can Being be *identical and diverse* at the same time? In order to answer this question we shall turn our attention to the core teachings of classical western metaphysics.

2.3 FROM THE PROBLEM OF ONE AND MANY TO ONE IN MANY

The classical western metaphysics, beginning with Aristotle, interpreted it as *the science of being as being*. According to its traditional meaning, science is *sure and evident knowledge of things from their causes or systematic body of knowledge*. In this sense metaphysics seems to be supremely a science; for metaphysics arrives at the first efficient cause and the ultimate final cause of all things. From the viewpoint of causal explanation, metaphysics is the highest type of science. Its starting point that ‘there is something’ is immediately known. From its immediately known starting point the procedure of metaphysics is demonstrative with a further reflection on the sensitivo-rational experience of the being or ‘something’ of sensible things which has both necessary and contingent characteristics. The reasoning of metaphysics bases itself only on the necessary features. The being of any sensible thing is necessarily dependent on a prior efficient cause, on the ultimate subsistent Being. Hence the reasoning of metaphysics is never based upon the accidental character of a sensible thing’s being. Of course, metaphysics lacks the incomparable advantage enjoyed by the experimental sciences, verification through further sensible experience. For instance, molecules were reasoned to form transference of odours and diffusion of gases. Their activity was verified in numerous experiments, and in recent years very large molecules became visible through the electron microscope. No such double check for its conclusions is possible in metaphysics. It has only the much harder way of checking each link in the demonstration through reflection. Accordingly, the agreement among astronomers or chemists or physicists is enviable, while the agreement among metaphysicians at any historical period is notoriously lacking. Therefore, metaphysical doctrines are neither ‘theories’ in any modern acceptation of the term, nor are they conjectured hypotheses proposed for experimental verification, but demonstrated conclusions resting solely but evidently upon the immediacy of their starting points and the cogency of reasoning processes which qualify them to be scientific. Besides, metaphysics as science, which provides us with sure and evident knowledge of things from their causes, has also its own material and formal object. *The material object of metaphysics* includes all things which fall under the notion of being, such as actual or possible, abstract or concrete, material or immaterial, finite or infinite. *The formal object of metaphysics* is the study of ‘*being as being*’. “There is a science which investigates being as being, and is different from the sciences that investigate special parts of being”. That is to say, metaphysics does not restrict itself to any particular being or part of that being, but rather treats of what is *common to all beings*. It investigates the *general nature* of anything insofar as it has some kind of being. The general nature is Being in beings as it is never apart from beings. It is the one Being in many beings. The one in the many, evident in the following analysis, is intrinsically and inseparably related to each other in varying modes. Being can be shown as one in many by analysing and establishing action as one in many, as ‘action follows being’ (*agere sequitur esse*).

Action as One in Many

“Yes or no [Blondel asks in his introduction to *L’action*], has human life a meaning, has human a destiny? I act, but I do not know what action is. I have not wished to live, and I do not know exactly who I am or even if I am. . . and yet my actions carry within themselves an eternal responsibility. . . Shall I say, then, that I have been condemned to live, condemned to die, condemned to eternity! How is that possible, and by what right, since I did neither know it nor will it? . . . The problem is inevitable;

human inevitably resolves it; and this solution, right or wrong, each one carries out in one's own actions. That is why one must study action". For Blondel action is a complex term of one in many that stands for the entire human experience conceived within the framework of human's basic needs and tendencies. It is the activity of the whole human, the synthesis of thought, will, and being itself. The greater and the nobler is human's activity, the greater and the nobler is one's action. Action is the most universal and unavoidable fact in human life. It is also a personal obligation that may demand a hard choice, a sacrifice, and even death [even suicide itself is an act]. In other words, *to refuse to choose is to make a choice*. One always wills something; for otherwise one's act of willing would be a purely negative one. Now the minimum object we can assign to the will, after it has been proved that it is impossible for the will not to will, is to will nothing or nothingness (*le néant*). But is it possible to will nothing or to make nothingness, i.e., non-being the term of our act of willing? Evidently not, because a negation is only conceivable in terms of an affirmation. Every negation implies an affirmation of something. Thus the *human will always tends towards something or Being* which underlies, penetrates, transforms, and unifies every action composed of two elements: exercise and determination. *Exercise* is the inner element of the operation which accounts for its taking place. *Determination* is the inner element of the operation which specifies or distinguishes the operation from other operations.

A Finite Being as One in Many

A finite being is as structured as one's operation is. "As the operation is, so the being is". The operation is composed of exercise and determination – a one in many. Hence a finite being (person) must also be composed – a one in many. The finite being is composed of Being (*esse*) and essence (*essentia*). Essence is composed of substance and accidents. Substance is composed of prime matter and substantial form. The prime matter is in potency; whereas the substantial form is in act.

Being in Essence

The finite being has to be identical with Being; for Being is immanent in this finite being because this being *is*. This identity is not perfect because alongside *this* being, there are also other finite beings. Being, in so far as it is immanent in this being through a certain identity, is not unlimited Being. For unlimited Being transcends *this* particular Being. The immanent Being is a modified, finite or limited Being. It is the *proper* Being of the particular being. The limiting principle (essence) is neither Being nor being. Nevertheless, the limiting principle constitutes *this* being as *this being*, and expresses a modification of the unlimited Being into a limited *being this* and nothing else. Whatever essence has it derives from the relative opposition to Being, to which as a modifying principle it refers by its whole nature and from which it has also its modifying capacity. Hence, Being lets itself be modified or limited, and according to the limitation the finite being participates in unlimited Being. The unlimited Being, which transcends all modes, does not fully coincide with the *proper Being* of each being which is only in a limited way. The finite being is through *participation* in unlimited Being. To explain this participation, we must admit that within the finite being there is a distinction between its *proper Being* and the principle through which Being becomes its own limited Being, i.e., its own modifying and limiting essence.

The relativity of essence and Being cannot be fully reciprocal. Being as being transcends all modes of being and therefore all modifications through essence, while the essence is fully relative to Being. However, in the finite being, Being has let itself be modified.

In a sense, the essence is prior to being in so far as the mode modifies Being into *being this*. But this priority is not absolute; for the mode also arises from Being which includes in itself the possibility of being-finite, becoming 'incarnate' in the finite. Hence, Being is prior to essence; for Being makes the mode a mode of Being. Perhaps, the unlimited Being points to a ground which is transcendent not only relatively to finite beings but absolutely.

Being as the Principle of 'Unlimitation' of Beings

Should something possess no Being, but only an essence, then it is a mere possible and not real. The real differs from the possible because of Being. In other words, Being is that in a being which makes it real, distinguishing it from a merely possible being. It is the principle of perfection or unlimitation of all beings. Being is the inner principle or universal ground of that which really is and through which beings are in themselves.

Essence as the Principle of Limitation

When we ask about something what it is, we suppose that we know already that it is a certain *what*. In this way it differs from the whatness of all other beings. If it differs in this way from that which it is not, then beings possess Being not to its fullest extent, but only within determined limits that through which a being is that which it is. Essence is that through which a being is posited in a determined, limited manner of being. Of course, essence implies a negation of Being. It is not a negation which suppresses the Being of a being and reduces it to nothing; but it is a negation which limits it's Being and reduces it to a finite being. It is not total or absolute but a partial and relative negation which refers to certain determinations and denies their presence in this Being. Such a relative negation is also a negative relation as it refers one being to all others and distinguishes it from them. A relative negation is a determined negation, determined by that which it refers. Hence the finiteness is always and necessarily determined finiteness.

Substance in Accidents

Finite beings are composed of a relatively permanent principle which remains primarily the same throughout secondary changes and secondary principles which may come and go without producing a change in the primary mode of being. The relatively permanent principle is called 'substance' and secondary principles are called 'accidents'. The notions of 'substance' and 'accident' may be acquired from the analysis of an external experience. For instance, our external senses reveal to us an unripe orange as a concrete whole which is extended in space, green coloured, sour etc. The intellect conceives the qualities which may come and go as determinations which affect something underneath these changes and modified by them. The difference between the determinations and their subject is expressed by the notions 'accidents' and 'substance' which correspond to a reality existing in the extramental world. Thus we may interpret substance as the being-in-itself of a finite essence which is the basic inner principle of permanence or continuity of that being which becomes. A being is originally constituted by its act of existing and essence. It is posited as a limited but a real being which exists in itself autonomously as a substance. It is Being-in-itself and not in another. *Accident*, on the other hand, is that which is not in itself but in another. It is a mode of being, but not autonomous. It does not exist in itself, but in another. It is whatever is added in anyway to another determined in it's being.

Form in Matter (Hylomorphism)

Hylomorphism is derived from the Greek words ‘*hyle*’ (matter) and ‘*morphe*’ (form). It is the theory of matter and form. This theory of Aristotle seeks to explain the essential constitution of a corporeal substance in terms of a twofold principle: prime matter and substantial form. Prime matter is material and indeterminate, and substantial form is formal and determining.

Prime Matter

All material beings possess a principle of materiality. It is not a being at all but a principle of material beings as such. Hence it cannot be known scientifically (empirically), but metaphysically. This principle of materiality is prime matter. It is the common substantial principle found in all material bodies. It is wholly without determinateness in itself. It cannot exist itself. It is substantial, but an incomplete substantial principle. It requires another substantial principle to exist, or rather to give it existence in a determinate body. The other substantial principle (with the exception of human soul) is also an incomplete substantial principle. The prime matter is the determinable element and the substantial form is the determining element. It is also pure potentiality as it is a pure capacity for existence in a material body. It is a capacity which must be filled up, determined, made into the only existible body by a substantial principle other than itself. Since the result of the union of this determining principle with prime matter is a single bodily substance, the union itself must be a substantial union, the substantial fusing of two substantial principles into an actuality which is a third thing. This third thing is neither prime matter alone nor substantial form alone, but an existing body of a specific kind. It is that which makes any body a body, not actively but passively receiving the impress and union of the substantial form. For the whole character of prime matter is its passivity, its inertness, its indifference to become this particular kind of body rather than another, in a word, its indeterminateness, its *potentiality*. In this way we can affirm the classical Aristotelian assertion: ‘Prime matter is that constitutive principle of corporal substance which of itself is quite indeterminate and hence can be determined to form corporeal substance.’

Substantial Form

To illustrate the various senses in which the term *form* is used we shall consider a few instances of its use: Form is frequently used as a synonym for outline or shape. We speak of the oval form of a race-course, of the symmetrical form of a drawing. It also means a plan or program, a record, or a form-sheet to be filled. It is often used for *good condition*, and a golfer is said to be ‘in form’ or ‘at the top of his form’. The adjective of form (i.e., formal) is often employed to indicate a certain dignity, or a certain decorum invoking precise details of dress or conduct. Thus we speak of ‘formal dress’, ‘formal occasion’, ‘formal introduction’ etc. To a philosopher form may mean that which *determines* a thing, sets it in its being, in its essence, in its substance, in its accidents, in its actuality. Any determining element is a being in form. When it is spoken of corporeal substance the term refers to *substantial form* which makes a bodily substance an existing reality (actuality). It is the substantial form of human which makes the one bodily being a human being. That which sets and determines a substance in its actual being, and makes it a substance of this precise kind or essential nature, is its substantial form.

The concepts of act and potency historically have delineated the dramatic antinomy felt by Greek thought with Heraclitus and Parmenides. Heraclitus held that everything is fleeting, transient, ephemeral, becoming; whereas Parmenides was of the opinion that the sensible, mutable, contingent and phenomenal world is pure illusion which requires of critical intelligence a judgment in favour of the unique, absolutely immutable Being, absolute perfection and fullness. The efforts of Plato succeeded only in fragmenting the Being of Parmenides, multiplying it as many times as there are Ideas in his World of Ideas. The multiple and becoming were reduced to mere appearance, to a shadow of the true and single Being of the Ideas. The Aristotelian proposal of *act and potency* finally offered a solution taking a middle position between the Parmenidean rigid immobilism and the fluent becoming of Heraclitus. The proposal has saved the *permanence* of reality and its uninterrupted *flux and becoming, giving and receiving*. Later on, Christian philosophers accepted the same proposal on account of its conformity to biblical realism which is both static and dynamic.

Act

The term ‘Act’ comes from the Latin root ‘*Actus*’ which means an entity of whatever kind which perfects and determines a thing in its being or perfection itself. It includes the power or faculty, operations of the faculty, accidents, essence, substance, form, act of existing. Whatever a being *has* or *is* in a positive manner is an act. It is perfection itself. There are as many kinds of acts as there are kinds of ‘being’; for every being as such is a perfection.

Potency

Potency comes from the Latin root ‘*potentia*’ which means power. Potency is the capacity for act. It is the capacity or aptitude in reference to something which a being is not or has not, but which it can be or can receive. For example, hydrogen has the ‘act’ of hydrogen; Oxygen has the ‘act’ of oxygen; but both have the ‘potency’ of water. They are actually hydrogen and oxygen but ‘potentially’ water. Water on the other hand, is actually water; but it is potentially hydrogen and oxygen, since the water has the aptitude to be resolved into them. There are two main kinds of potency: Active Potency and Passive Potency. *Active potency* is the capacity to communicate act or perfection to another. It is a power of action such as the power of hearing. Since such a power in itself already confers a certain perfection upon its subject, it is an act with respect to its subject. Hence it may also be called first act. *Passive potency* is the capacity to receive act or perfection from another, e.g., a child has the capacity for acquiring knowledge from parents and teachers. There are two kinds of Passive potency: Determinate Passive Potency and Indeterminate Passive Potency. *Determinate passive potency* is that which contains an act and is in potency to some further act, e.g., substance for accidents or the complete essence for the act of existing. *Indeterminate passive potency* is the principle of an act, but which itself contains no act. It is pure potency, e.g., prime matter.

We have already seen action and finite being as one in many. If finite being is one in many, unlimited Being – from which the finite being proceeds and in which every finite being is – could also be one in many.

Unlimited Being as One in Many

In reality, monism, dualism and pluralism, are extreme positions that create the illusion of solutions to *the problem of one and many* which can be briefly explained in this way: Every being belongs to Being. Everywhere Being reveals itself as an absolute. Every finite being is a whole being, a complete being; yet it is not the whole of Being. For it does not contain all reality, since there are beings outside of it. A particular being participates in Being. The particular being that participates in Being is a complete being, a subsistent whole unlike a part which is not a complete whole. The particular being, which is limited, is an imperfect being. It does not contain other particular beings; nor does it possess their perfection. Hence it does not contain all perfection. Consequently, it is imperfect. It does not mean that it is unfinished in itself. The perfection of every particular being belongs itself wholly to Being, and by that token it is to be distinguished from every other being. In this way Being possesses an absolute character. It is not opposed to anything. Consequently, it penetrates and envelops everything. Nevertheless, Being manifests some relativity, since the real is broken up into multiple unities which participate in Being. In other words, the participation of beings in Being is an undeniable fact. But how can we explain the fact that the distinct beings in Being preserve their autonomy? This is the fundamental metaphysical problem of one and many that calls for fresh attempts aiming at a solution. Being as one-in-many can be the result of such an attempt: *Being is one*: being is that which is in some way. Insofar as it is in some way, it is one. *Being is many*: being is that which is in some way. Insofar as being is in some way, each being is in its own way. Insofar as each being is in its own way, all beings are in their own ways. When all beings are in their own ways, there would be a plurality of beings that are many. In this sense, being is many. *Being is one-in-many*: being is that which is in some way. Insofar as being is in some way, it is one. However, each being is in its own way. Insofar as each being is in its own way, all beings are in their own ways which are many. In other words, being which is in some way is also in its own way. Being is in beings, i.e., one is in many. Therefore, being is one-in-many. In this way, being, considered in its relation to other beings, is one in many. Now, what about Being which is transcendently considered, i.e., being in itself?

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What do you understand by unity of plurality?

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2) How do you resolve the problem of One and Many?

2.4 FROM BEING AS ONE IN MANY TO THE ONENESS OF BEING

Being, which is transcendental, is One. *One is that which is undivided in itself and divided from all others.* *Undivided in itself* means that there is no need of comparing a thing with another in order to speak of its oneness. A thing would be ‘one’ even if no other being were in existence or possible. Because a thing is undivided in itself it follows that it is *divided from all others*. Since a thing, according to the Principle of Identity, is what it is, it must primarily be undivided in itself. Then, since the thing, according to the Principle of Contradiction, cannot simultaneously be both itself and not itself, it must also be divided from every other. Hence a ‘part’ of a thing cannot truly be one as it is not actually divided from the other part. A part is united with the other part or parts to form the unity of the whole. The whole is one, not the part. One signifies interior indivision and distinction from other beings. The more easily divisible a being is, the less consistency it has in itself. The tendency to divisibility is an ontological weakness. It is a tendency to be no longer itself – to be alienated. In fact, every being tends to conserve its own *unity*, as it tends to conserve its own *being*.

Kinds of One: Perfectly One and Imperfectly One.: *Perfectly One* is one of simplicity without any inner real distinction. A thing is ‘simple’ when it is not a ‘compound’. A compound is a unit made up of a number of parts. In other words, a compound is one and undivided in such a manner that it can be resolved into a number of components called its parts. Hence a compound is actually undivided (a unit) but divisible. On the other hand, what is ‘simple’ is neither divided nor divisible. Simplicity is defined as *the absence of composition in the reality of a being*. This definition is negative in form but positive in content. The reason for this negative form of the definition lies in the fact that what human perceives in this world are affected by composition in some way. Human arrives at the notion of simplicity by denying composition. Since it is some ‘reality’ which is devoid of composition, the definition is positive in content. The denial of composition in a being implies the affirmation of simplicity in that being. Since a simple being is undivided in itself and indivisible, there are two kinds of simplicity: *absolute and relative*. *Absolute simplicity* excludes all parts of whatever nature, be they real or conceptual. An absolutely simple being is not only actually undivided but also potentially indivisible since it is devoid of all parts. A compound being is actually undivided (because it is a unit) but potentially divisible since it consists of parts, which make it to be a compound, and into which it can be divided. *Relative simplicity* excludes parts of one kind but has parts of another kind. The relatively simple being is indivisible in one respect but divisible in another. For instance, human has a composite

nature consisting of body (matter) and soul (form). Human body is a compound made up of different parts (head, trunk, arms, legs, etc.); whereas human soul is simple because it does not consist of substantially different parts. Thus human possesses relative simplicity in the simple substance of one’s spiritual soul; but in many other respects one is a composite being. In no case can human be absolutely simple. For only God is absolutely simple. *Imperfectly One* is one of composition with a real distinction of the principles of a being, e.g.,all corporeal beings. A being of this kind has parts within itself, but these parts are so united that they form a unit, a whole, and a totality. For instance, a human’s body is composed of head, trunk, and extremities, and each of these consists of various minor parts. These parts are not separated from each other as they form an organism, and an organism is a whole or unit.

Convertibility of Being and One: Being and one are convertible. Being is one in so far as it is. Every being is one or a unit, and everything that is one or a unit is a being. First, *every being is one or a unit*: Every being is either simple or compound in its nature. A being is simple when it does not consist of parts. It is compound when it consists of parts. Whatever is simple is undivided actually and potentially; for it has no parts into which it can be divided. Consequently, a simple being is undivided in itself and thus a unit or one. In the same way, a compound is a compound only in so far and only so long as its parts are united and not actually divided. Consequently, a compound being is undivided in itself and therefore a unit or one. Whether simple or compound, the being of every thing is characterized by indivision. In other words, every being is a unit or one. Second, *every unit or one is a being*: To be a unit or one means to have the unity of simplicity or the unity of composition. That presupposes that some thing has this unity of simplicity or unity of composition. Unity of simplicity necessarily implies the concept of a reality consisting of no parts. If the simple unit were not Being , it would be nothing, and nothing cannot be a unit of any kind whether simple or compound. Unity of composition necessarily involves the concept of a reality consisting of parts, and these parts must be real in the whole. Otherwise, they would be nothing, and nothing cannot be distinguished into parts. From this it follows that Being, considered transcendently (being in itself), and One are convertible as they are fundamentally identical.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

Unity is the process by which a being is not divided in itself, but divided from everything else. Unity presupposes plurality. Unity and plurality are inseparably related. There is no unity without plurality, and no plurality without unity. The experience of unity and plurality poses the problem of one and many. The problem of one and many resolves itself when one discovers that Being is one in many. Being is one in many in its relation to other beings, but, when considered in itself, transcendently, it is One.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What do you mean by one?

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2) Being and One are convertible. Explain.

2.6 KEY WORDS

- Plurality** : Plurality is the state of being distinct but united.
- Pluralism** : Pluralism denotes a diversity of views and stands in opposition to one single approach or method of interpretation.
- Transcendental** : Transcendental is the notion which applies to each and every being.

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2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) Unity is the process by which a being is not divided in itself, but divided from everything else. The meaning of unity presupposes that it comes from the

Notion of Being

comparison of two or more *different* things. It is the coherence of an intrinsically plural being. Hence unity too presupposes plurality. A being is all the more united in itself, and so distinguished from others, the more intimate its connection with others is. Unity and plurality, 'unism' and pluralism are inseparably related. There is no unity without plurality, and no plurality without unity. They found and sustain each other. One is in the other; the other is in the one. They are the two sides of Being which is in some way or something.

- 2) *Being is one-in-many*: Being is that which is in some way. Insofar as being is in some way, it is one. However, each being is in its own way. Insofar as each being is in its own way, all beings are in their own ways which are many. In other words, being which is in some way is also in its own way. Being is in beings, i.e., one is in many. Therefore, being is one-in-many. In this way, being, considered in its relation to other beings, is one in many.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) *One is that which is undivided in itself and divided from all others. Undivided in itself* means that there is no need of comparing a thing with another in order to speak of its oneness. A thing would be 'one' even if no other being were in existence or possible. Because a thing is undivided in itself it follows that it is *divided from all others*. Since a thing, according to the Principle of Identity, is what it is, it must primarily be undivided in itself.
- 2) Being and one are convertible. Being is one in so far as it is. Every being is one or a unit, and everything that is one or a unit is a being. First, *every being is one or a unit*: Every being is either simple or compound in its nature. A being is simple when it does not consist of parts. It is compound when it consists of parts. Whatever is simple is undivided actually and potentially; for it has no parts into which it can be divided. Consequently, a simple being is undivided in itself and thus a unit or one. Second, *every unit or one is a being*: To be a unit or one means to have the unity of simplicity or the unity of composition. That presupposes that some thing has this unity of simplicity or unity of composition. Unity of simplicity necessarily implies the concept of a reality consisting of no parts. If the simple unit were not Being, it would be nothing, and nothing cannot be a unit of any kind whether simple or compound. Unity of composition necessarily involves the concept of a reality consisting of parts, and these parts must be real in the whole. Otherwise, they would be nothing, and nothing cannot be distinguished into parts. From this it follows that Being, considered transcendently (being in itself), and One are convertible as they are fundamentally identical.