ADHYĀSA AND NĀMA-RŪPA IN

THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

OF ŚAṄKARA

By

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ABSTRACT

The eighth century A.D.[1] Indian thinker, Śankara,
was the greatest exponent of the Advaita Vedānta school (the
non-dualistic school of vedānta). Śankara's philosophical
speculations are to be found in his commentaries on the
prasthānas (the three scriptural sources of the vedānta
darśana, namely the Brahmasūtras, the upaniṣads and the
Bhagavad-Gītā). Śankara is not a systematic thinker and
his thought proceeds only by means of the reasoned exegesis
of scripture.[2] Śankara advocates, by means of this exegesis,
an uncompromised non-dualism. Reality is Brahman, the one
without a second, that which is, sat (being). This presents
Śankara with the problem of attempting to account for the
plurality of the experienced world, that is, the relation-
ship of Brahman to the world.

The aim of this study is to clearly describe this
relationship of this unity (Brahman) to the world of diversity.
Śankara utilizes two concepts, those of adhyāsa and nāmarūpa,
as explanatory terms of this relationship. In this thesis

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[1]Śankara's dates are normally given as 788-820 A.D.
See for example, S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy (London:
George Allen and Unwin, 1931), II, 470.

[2]It should be noted that technically the Bhagavad-

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these two concepts will be analysed in order to attempt to explain the relationship of Brahman to the world. Adhyāsa (superimposition) presupposes nāmarūpa (name and form), which is dependent upon vāc (speech). The operation of both these principles as explanations of this relationship are dependent upon Śankara's understanding of the nature and funtion of vāc.

The question of the relationship of Brahman to the world of diversity is co-extensive with Śankara's philosophical enterprise and metaphysical quest.[3]

Both traditional and contemporary scholarship have largely neglected Śankara's concern with vāc (speech, language), failing to appreciate, what I consider to be, the vital importance of vāc in his Advaita.

In terms of methodology, I have attempted to place the whole study within the context of Śankara's own methodological distinctions, rather than apply Śankara's categories to problems outside of his concerns or apply external methodological categories to Śankara's thought.[4]

Gītā falls into the religio-literary class of smṛti (traditional texts) rather than śruti (revealed texts).

[3]See Śankara's introduction to the Brahmasūtras.

[4]Pages 6-11 of the Introduction to this thesis are devoted to methodology.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used consistently throughout the text:

B.s.B.	Brahmasūtrabhasya (Brahma-sūtras with Sankara's commentary)
Brh.Up.	Brhadāranyaka Upanisad Brh.Up.B. (bhāsya)
Man.Up.	Māndūkhya Upanisad Man.Up.B. (bhāsya)
B.G.B.	Bhagavad-Gitā Bhāsya
Ch.Up.	Chāndogya Upanisad Ch.Up.B. (bhāsya)
Mu.Up.	Mundaka Upanisad
Taitt.Up.	Taittiriya Upanisad Taitt.Up.B. (bhāsya)
I.P.	Indian Philosophy, Vol. 2 -- Radhakrishnan

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INTRODUCTION

This is intended to be a brief consideration of the fundamental nature of the problem of the relationship of Brahman and the world in the Advaita Vedānta of Śankara and the centrality of adhyāsa and nāma-rūpa in the understanding of this relationship.

The object of this thesis is to explicate and illucidate the relationship of Brahman to the world, in terms of the question of language in the Advaita Vedānta of Śankara, with a view to answering the questions: What does Śankara assert of the world? How are we to understand the role of language within the relationship of Brahman and the world? What is the nature of this relationship?

The philosophy of Śankara rests upon, and only proceeds upon the presupposition[1] of the existence of Brahman and the possibility of knowledge of Brahman.[2] This knowledge of Brahman is Brahman. Thus for Śankara there is

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[1]The word "presupposition" here is intended in the sense of "philosophically given" there being no implication that the authority for this presupposition rests upon this assertion alone.

[2]The use of the genetive case here ("of Brahman") requires further clarification; from the final Advaitic

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a direct correspondence (and ultimately identity) between "being" and knowing. To know <u>Brahman</u> is to be <u>Brahman</u>.

<u>Brahman</u>, ". . . all-knowing, absolutely self-sufficient, ever pure, intelligent and free, pure knowledge, absolute bliss"[3] is[4] <u>moksa</u> (final release) "free from all modification, eternal, not composed of parts, self-luminous in nature".[5] These two terms can be understood as synonomous in terms of his philosophical methodology in that for Śaṅkara his philosophical enterprise and metaphysical quest are identical.[6] The word "<u>moksa</u>", however, denotes "release", but release from what? That which release is from is the world of diversity (bondage). Given the presupposition

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standpoint there can be no knowledge "of <u>Brahman</u>" or existence "of <u>Brahman</u>" as the essential nature of <u>Brahman</u> is knowledge and <u>is</u> existence, but from the provisional viewpoint of the vedantic enquiry such usage is unavoidable. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the <u>Brahmasūtras</u>, translated by G. Thibaut, <u>The Vedānta Sutras of Bādarāyana</u> (New York: Dover, 1962), 1/1/1. Hereafter cited as <u>B.s.B.</u>

[3]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 2/1/6.

[4]The suggestion of identity is clarified in footnote 6 below.

[5]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/4.

[6]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/4, "'Different from merit and demerit, different from effect and cause, different from past and future' (<u>Ka.Up.</u> 1/2/14) <u>moksa</u>, is therefore, the same as

of the existence of <u>Brahman</u>[7] and the characterization of
its nature as "partless", "that which is" (<u>sat</u>), there is
no necessity for "the world of diversity" (<u>vyavahara</u>) to be,
and yet it is our given experience. How are we to account
for this world?

As Sankara's philosophical and metaphysical intention
is the removal of all obstacles to the perfect knowledge
of <u>Brahman</u>,[8] this entails the determination of the precise
"characteristics of this <u>Brahman</u>".[9] The world of "practical
distinctions"[10] appears to undermine the given unity of
<u>Brahman</u>. Thus the question of the relationship between the
non-dual <u>Brahman</u> of <u>sruti</u> and the world of multiplicity

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<u>Brahman</u> in the present enquiry". It is not that Sankara
wishes to equate these two terms (<u>Brahman</u> and <u>Moksa</u>), but
rather that, in terms of his methodology, they both fall
on the same side in connection with the distinction that
he is drawing.

[7] I.e., given in <u>sruti</u>. On the question of Sankara's
philosophical presuppositions and their relationship to
<u>sruti</u>, see page 12 of this Introduction.

[8] <u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/4.

[9] <u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/2, refer to footnote 2, above. This
task, the determination of the characteristics of <u>Brahman</u>,
is advocated by Sankara only in the interests of the
enquiry.

[10] <u>B.s.B.</u>, Introduction.

is the fundamental issue for the <u>Advaita Vedānta</u> of <u>Śankara</u>. This issue arises solely from Śankara's philosophy and is not an external philosophical issue posited in terms of Śankara's thought.[11] Much of Śankara's commentary on the <u>Brahmasūtras</u> is devoted to a critical examination of this relationship. The first <u>adhyāya</u> (chapter) proved that the <u>vedānta</u> texts uniformly teach that there is only one cause of the world; this is <u>Brahman</u> and <u>Brahman</u> is of the nature of intelligence. The second <u>adhyāya</u>, first <u>pāda</u> (section) contains a lengthy discussion on the nature of causation with a view to understanding the creation of the world by <u>Brahman</u>. Cause and effect, it is maintained, are non-different, and, thus, the creator and the creation are non-different. This doctrine entails the argument that although all the qualities attributed to <u>Brahman</u> by <u>śruti</u> are finally ficticious, they are necessary only in order to facilitate consideration of how <u>Brahman</u> effects the creation of the world. This is made clear in the third <u>pāda</u> which considers the question of whether the multitude of forms which are the world, are eternal as is <u>Brahman</u>, or originate subsequently from <u>Brahman</u>. The analysis there which includes a consideration of the nature of the individual soul

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[11]This point is of importance in terms of my own methodology, see page 6 of this Introduction.

concludes that the soul's origination is merely due to its illusory connection with the upādhis (the limiting adjuncts, whcih are the world). The third adhyāya, second pāda, deals with the problem of reconciling the Brahman of scripture (śruti),[12] which is "free from all diversity" with the Brahman which is referred to as "having different forms". This diversity, it is argued, does not affect the Self within the upādhis. In śruti the negative "definition"[13] of Brahman as "neti, neti", "not this, not this" (Brh.Up. 2/3/6; etc.) negates these upādhis (the world of diversity) and not Brahman. The third pāda provides an account of how the individual soul, the jīva, or Brahman limited by the upādhis (world), can "attain" mokṣa by meditation on Brahman. In his consideration of each of these problems Śankara is drawn back to the question of the relationship of Brahman, untainted by duality, and the multiplicity of our experienced world.[14]

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[12]I have used the words "śruti" and "scripture" interchangeably in this thesis. With respect to the śruti/ smrti distinction, however, I have limited the reference of the word "scripture" to śruti alone.

[13]Technically "neti, neti" is not a definition at all although it does serve as a type of "dividing-line" between what can be asserted and what must be denied. It should be noted, however, that Śankara does regard it as a definition, see for example, his commentary on Brh.Up. 2/3/6.

[14]This is not intended to be a complete list of the contents of Śankara's commentary, but only to given an in- dictation of the centrality of this relationship.

In the consideration of the question of the rela-
tionship between the non-dual Brahman of śruti and the
plurality of the experienced world, that is the basis of
our attempt to understand the philosophy of Śankara, we are
continually drawn back to the consideration of the role and
function of vāc (speech) in his thought. In a broad sense
the question of language or speech refers to a family
of "linguistic" terms such as vāc, śruti, śabda, and
nāma-rūpa. The vedānta darśana itself, is the enquiry into
the meaning of śruti ("that which is heard"; revealed
language), for the revealed scriptures are the only source
of "the origination of knowledge of Brahman".[15] That which
is heard (śruti) is vāc (speech). This world is vāc as
nāma-rūpa (name and form). Language stands as both the
basis of the world and of the possibility of knowledge of
Brahman. The question of language is co-extensive with
Śankara's philosophical and metaphysical quest.

Śankara utilizes two concepts to explain the
relationship of Brahman to the world, those of adhyāsa
(superimposition) and nāma-rūpa (name and form). An analysis
of these two concepts is undertaken in this thesis in order

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[15]B.s.B., 1/1/4; 2/1/11; 2/1/27; 2/3/1.

to answer the questions posed above.

Some interpreters of Śankara attempt to understand his thought in terms of philosophical/methodological distinctions imported from conceptual structures alien to Śankara's philosophy. Paul Deussen in his System of Vedanta and S. Radhakrishnan in his Indian Philosophy understand the philosophy of Śankara in terms of the western philosophical categories of epistemology and metaphysics. I am not suggesting that these divisions are not to be found in the vedanta philosophy, but only that the definitive categories as applied are alien. Both these thinkers understand the Advaita concept of avidya (ignorance or nescience) as the "principles of mind expressing themselves through the [Kantian] categories of space, time and cause",[16] and Deussen implies that Śankara is merely a non-scientific Kantian. A full discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this work, however, it is of great interest to note that both these interpreters use the Kantian phenomenal/ noumenal distinction. Both assume that Śankara Advaita is concerned with a knowledge of the noumenal -- a concept (knowledge of the noumenal) that is expressly denied within

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[16]P. Deussen, System of Vedanta, ps. 52-53.

the Kantian framework and thus seems invalid as a methodological procedure. A certain amount of distortion is inevitable when distinctions external to a system are applied to it.

Other interpreters utilize Śankara's thought to address themselves to problems arising from alien philosophical traditions. E. Deutsch in his Advaita Vedānta (A Philosophical Reconstruction) uses Śankara's thought to attempt to answer problems facing western philosophy. In order to effect this end he lifts Śankara "somewhat out of his historical and traditional context"[17] and finds in Advaita "what is philosophically meaningful to a westerner".[18] The question of śruti, so critically important for Śankara is an example of what is not "meaningful for a westerner". Śankara is removed from his context "by a rejection of what is not still philosophically alive".[19] Although this type of study of Śankara might prove helpful in terms of the western philosophical issues, the very fact that Śankara's thought as a whole is not considered, limits its value in

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[17]E. Deutsch, Advaita Vedānta (A Philosophical Reconstruction), p. 3.

[18]Ibid., p. 6.

[19]Ibid., p. 7.

terms of the study of Śaṅkara's philosophy. Given that the
orientation is towards the understanding of problems arising
external to Śaṅkara's thought some distortion of his thought
is unavoidable.

In terms of my own methodology, the problem dis-
cussed in this thesis arises solely from within the frame-
work of Śaṅkara's philosophy.[20] I will attempt to under-
stand Śaṅkara's thought within the context of his own
methodological distinctions. In B.s.B., 1/1/4 Śaṅkara makes
a distinction between that which is affected by plurality,
causation and time, and that which is immune from such
effect.[21] I have termed the former "cosmological" and the
latter "ontological". I use these terms not with the in-
tention of suggesting that this western philosophical dis-
tinction is applicable to Śaṅkara's thought, but, rather,
that the "absolute" distinction that he holds between the
concept clusters, Brahman/Ātman/Mokṣa (all of which point to
"the One without a second" -- Sat -- "that which is"
-- Being) on the one hand, and Īśvara/Dharma/Saṃsāra/Karman/
Kalpa (the ground of multiplicity) on the other can best be
indicated by the qualified use of these terms. The

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[20]See page 35 of this work.

[21]See B.G. Introduction.

adjective "ontological" refers to that which "is" while "cosmological" refers to that which is limited.

Within terms of the framework of the above distinction, adhyāsa (superimposition) can be seen as Śaṅkara's explanatory principle from the viewpoint of the jīva (individual soul); that is, in terms of his ontology. Śaṅkara's principle of explanation in the context of his cosmology can be understood as nāma-rūpa (name and form) -- presupposed within the adhyāsa principle.

Vāc as śruti is the only source of the knowledge of Brahman; that is, the knowledge of sat (of the ontological) can only commence by means of the exegesis of śruti. Śruti, however, also yields another type of supersensuous knowledge, that of Īśvara ("the Lord"), of the cosmological. In order to explain the world of plurality, the cosmological must necessarily be assumed. These two realms are separate from our experienced world of diversity, this world having arisen entirely from the cosmological. In order for moksa. to be possible there must be a connection between the world we find ourselves in, and Brahman.[22]

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[22]Sankara's objection to Sāṅkhyan metaphysics is that, without a point of contact between ontos and cosmos (duality), moksa is not possible; there is eternal inescapable duality.

The ontological "link" is the <u>Brahman-Ātman</u> identity
("that thou art", <u>Ch.Up.</u>, 6/8/7), for <u>Brahman</u> is the Self
of us all,[23] freed from the <u>upādhis</u> (the cosmological) the
individual soul is <u>Brahman</u>. Thus even the ontological
connection presupposes the cosmological, in that the
individual soul (limited by adjuncts) can only be explained
in terms of its relationship to <u>Brahman</u> by reference to the
world of plurality; that is the ontological and cosmological
"share" the ground of the <u>jīva</u>.[24]

The cosmological "link" between <u>Brahman</u> and the
world can be understood in terms of the dual nature of <u>vāc</u>.
This world is <u>vāc</u> as <u>nāma-rūpa</u> (name and form); that is,
the world has its origin in <u>vāc</u> (language). Thus language
provides the basis for both the world and knowledge of
<u>Brahman</u>. Language partakes of both realms. Language is
both the basis of the <u>upādhis</u> of <u>Brahman</u> and the final
dissolution of these same <u>upādhis</u>.

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[23] <u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/1; 1/1/4; 2/3/7.

[24] See section on <u>Adhyāsa</u> in this thesis.

The final section of this Introduction is devoted to a brief discussion of Śaṅkara's philosophical method, in terms of his unquestioned acceptance of the authority of śruti (scripture). It might be charged that, as śruti provides the basis for his philosophical speculation rather than sense experience or the dictates of reason, Śaṅkara is a dogmatist or that his method is uncritically deductive.[25]

While it cannot be denied that for Śaṅkara śruti is authoritative and the sole source of knowledge of Brahman, this does not entail the rejection or denial of reason. Reason independent of authority is inconclusive.[26] No thinker can build a "rational system" without an authoritative base. For Śaṅkara śruti provides such a base. Reason grounded in śruti is a necessary aid in the exegesis of scripture.[27]

The authority of śruti for Śaṅkara is not without qualification; śruti is not opposed to sense-experience or

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[25] For more on this issue refer to S. Mukherjee, "Śaṅkara on the Relation Between the Vedas and Reason", Indian Historical Quarterly, VI (1930), 108-113 and K. Satchidananda Murty, Reason and Revelation in Advaita Vedānta (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), Part I.

[26] In any rational system we can detect the acceptance of past authority -- we call this "detection" -- history (of philosophy, of science, etc.). See also, B.s.B., 2/1/11, "reasoning which disregards holy texts rests upon individual opinions and has no proper foundation".

[27] "Enquiry into Brahman, a disquisition of the

reason. The authority claimed for scripture is only with regard to its own subject matter, (the supersensuous); that is, śruti is only invoked in cases where the other means of right knowledge (pramānas), (perception, inference, etc.) do not apply. No pramāna can disprove (sublate) the knowledge given by śruti within its own sphere. The pramānas have "absolute" validity within their own domain, and thus, when śruti is in conflict with other means of right knowledge, scripture must be re-interpreted in a secondary sense. Even when one hundred scriptural texts claim that "fire is cold"[28] this cannot be accepted as authoritative, and the word "fire" is understood to refer to other than the fire we know from experience.

However, Śaṅkara argues vigorously in terms of the dictates of reason (non-contradiction, etc.),[29] using reason in "an independent manner with reference to the vedānta texts",[30] when attacking the positions of other

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vedānta-texts, to be carried out with the help of conformable arguments." B.s.B., 1/1/1.

[28]Bṛh.Up., 2/1/20.

[29]My intention here is not to limit the sphere of reason by the qualification of the acceptance of the principle of non-contradiction and pronounce all those who do not adhere to this principle as a-rational or irrational (e.g. Jainas) but only that for Śaṅkara this is the case.

[30]B.s.B., 2/1/6.

schools.[31]

Thus, the philosophy of Śaṅkara can hardly be called blind faith or uncritical in that the acceptance of śruti (authority) is qualified by the limitation of its validity to its own sphere, and while reason does not compete with scripture for authority, it does fulfil a necessary function -- that of "a subordinate auxilary of intuition".[32]

The importance of Śaṅkara's insistence on the necessity of reason for the interpretation of scripture lies in the fact that reason is a necessary aid for the understanding of the relationship between Brahman and the world. The intelligibility of this relationship is dependent upon the reasoned exegesis of scripture (śruti). The comprehension of the relationship rests upon Śaṅkara's understanding of the nature and function of vāc (speech). The centrality of adhyāsa and nāmarūpa as the terms of this relationship in this context necessitates an examination of these concepts in order to understand the nature of this relationship.

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[31]As an example of the "blind faith" and "binding" authority of śruti compare Śaṅkara's and Ramanuja's commentaries on the prasthānas (three "scriptural" sources of the Vedānta).

[32]B.s.B., 2/1/6 ("intuition" being the "faculty" of discerning the knowledge to be found in śruti).

CHAPTER ONE

ŚANKARA'S TASK: PHILOSOPHICAL AND

METAPHYSICAL SCOPE AND METHOD

OF THE COMMENTARY ON THE

BRAHMASŪTRAS

Śankara's philosophical enterprise proceeds from

the only point from which philosophy can proceed; from the

concept of the Real (sat, "that which is"), from the

presuppositions of the existence and essential nature of

Brahman.

Śankara's stated task is the ". . . freeing of

one's Self from the wrong notion which is the cause of all

evil and attaining thereby the knowledge of the unity of

the Self.[1] The aim is to realize "the true nature of

Brahman which can only be known when the appearance of

plurality that obstructs true knowledge is removed".[2] This

apparent plurality is removed by the knowledge of Brahman

"which is conveyed in Vedic passages".

In order to effect this end, Śankara endeavours to

prove that the "consistent and uniform"[3] Vedic passages

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[1]B.s.B., Introduction.

[2]B.s.B., 3/2/2; see also 2/3/1.

[3]B.s.B., 3/2/15.

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indicate that nature of the non-dual <u>Brahman</u> and teach the <u>Brahman-Ātman</u> identity.[4] This necessitates the determination of whether a passage refers to <u>Brahman</u> or the cosmological.[5] This entails the reconciliation of apparent contradictions in the Vedic texts by rejecting primary in favour of secondary meanings and the explanation of problematic sections. In the interests of the removal of all obstacles to knowledge of <u>Brahman</u>, Śaṅkara also engages in polemical attacks against the positions held by other schools with the aim of demonstrating their falsity.[6]

With regard to his methodology two related issues require further elucidation. <u>Brahman</u> as "close" to us as the <u>Self</u> of everything[7] must also be understood as "ever"

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[4]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/3/25.

[5]As only <u>Brahman</u> exists (<u>sat</u>) the world must necessarily be <u>Brahman</u>, but <u>Brahman</u> as the explanation of the world -- cosmological (<u>saguṇa</u>) <u>Brahman</u>.

[6]Although, Śaṅkara's philosophical enterprise proceeds with the utmost consistency with regard to his presuppositions (1. Existence of <u>Brahman</u>, 2. Moksa, and this entails 3. <u>Brahman-Ātman</u> identity). It should be noted that his thought proceeds only by way of the exegesis of the <u>Brahmasūtras</u> of <u>Badārāyana</u>. He is not a systematic (topical) thinker and the interpretation of his philosophy necessitates an awareness of the contextual connection.

[7]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/4; 2/1/1.

beyond. As Brahman is ("that which is") sat. there can be nothing beyond or besides Brahman; our undeniably given world of diversity must be the very same Brahman. Our world must be "seen"[8] wrongly, for if "seen" correctly it will be "seen" as Brahman. This "given, incorrectly-seen" Brahman (the world) must necessarily have arisen from Brahman; for, given non-dual Brahman, from where else can it have originated? All that is differentiated cannot be Brahman, "one without a second", but all that is differentiated must be an effect and thus must have an origin, and this origin can only be the non-dual Brahman.[9]

The non-duality of Brahman is absolute. Brahman cannot be affected by even the smallest hint of duality. In light of the philosophical necessity of the world of plurality being a construction from Brahman, Brahman remains unaffected by this construction. Brahman is "ever" beyond this world untouched by the cosmological.

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[8] Sankara's use of (empirical) vyvahāra language when referring to Brahman will be discussed below.

[9] It is this logical necessity that results in Sankara's insistance that Brahman is the material cause of the world and the designation of the cosmological as Brahman (saguna).

Śankara draws the sharpest distinction between the ontological and the cosmological. When discussing the claim of the Mīmāṃsā (ritualistic) system that the sole purport of the Vedas is injunction to action (enquiry into the nature of dharma, duty), he contrasts the fruits of actions, the effects of merit, which result in "worldly possessions and the like",[10] limited by time, in time (cosmological "freedom") with the ontological freedom -- mokṣā -- which is beyond time, not the results of action acquiring merit. Mokṣa, unlike the cosmological (dharma, karman, etc.) is ". . . eternal in the true sense"[11] in that it undergoes no changes. It is beyond the "time" imposed by the kalpas. It is Brahman unaffected by the creation; subsistence and dissolution of the world, the cosmological process.[12]

The same "absolute" distinction is held between pramā and jñāna, between knowledge as the result of the senses, the mind, etc., and knowledge of Brahman, which depends only upon Brahman. Knowledge of Brahman is not

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[10]B.s.B., 1/1/4.

[11]B.s.B., 1/1/4.

[12]Ka.Up., 1/2/14; B.s.B., 1/1/4.

dependent upon the mind. The realization of this knowledge is not mental (of the mind) but intuition[13] (anubhava)..

"Brahman is beyond speech and mind",[14] Brahman transends all differentiation. Brahman cannot be known by any pramāna. Perception cannot yield knowledge of Brahman for all perception implies Brahman as subject. Inference cannot give knowledge of Brahman for we cannot infer cause from just knowledge of the effects; that is, we cannot infer Brahman given the world.

Śruti is the sole source of the knowledge of Brahman. It must be understood, however, that śruti itself is not this knowledge of Brahman. The word "Brahman" is only a word;[15] that is, the word itself is part of the construction from Brahman. The concept of Brahman, as absolute, must be seen as just the rational concept of "absolute".

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[13]B.s.B.., 1/1/3; 2/1/6; 4/1/2; commenting on Brh.Up., 2/4/5, "heard, thought and reflected upon", Śankara describes the fi nal end of all these mental activities as intuition. Thus making a distinction between all the mental activities and their end. Although, it should be noted that the word "anubhava" is sometimes used by Śankara to refer to empirical knowledge.; B.s.B.., Introduction.

[14]B.s.B., 1/1/19; 1/1/20.

[15]B.s.B., 1/1/24.

Śruti is but the "origination" of such knowledge.[16] Śruti can but "indicate"[17] Brahman. When knowledge of Brahman arises of itself, the Veda (itself but part of the cosmological) must be disgarded; that is, the Veda is necessary but only instrumental in the realization of Brahman.[18]

Śruti states that "Brahman transcends both Speech and Mind".[19] It is beyond the cosmological/rational. Śankara explains that this śruti (text) must not be understood as indicating that Brahman is non-existent, for we are assured of its existence via the knowledge conveyed by the vedānta-texts. Speech gives rise to mind, name gives rise to form, to give the conceptual. Śankara's understanding of the nature of knowledge, "knowledge cannot be made or not made upon vedic statements or the mind of man",[20] leads to the realization that knowledge of Brahman is perceptual rather than conceptual.[21]

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[16]B.s.B., 2/3/1.

[17]B.s.B., 3/2/21.

[18]Ibid.

[19]B.s.B., 1/1/19; 1/1/20.

[20]B.s.B., 1/1/4.

[21]The veda is not conceived but perceived: B.s.B., 2/1/1; 2/1/27; 1/4/28; cf. 1/3/13: Reality (anubhava) "is spoken of as the object of sight" (samyagdarśana). Moksa is defined as "eternal Self-cognition" (B.s.B., 1/3/19).

The term "darśana" (vision) is derived from the verbal root dṛk (dṛś)(to see); Reality is to be "seen". Knowledge of Brahman transcends both the rational and the cosmological, is beyond metaphysics and religion as both presuppose the distinction between the real and the non-real or the lesser real. The rational and cosmological are conceptual accounts (presupposing difference) of darśana.

However, even the idea "Brahman transcends Speech and Mind" is expressed in language.[22] Even the statement "the world is a construction from Brahman" must be expressed by that construction (language). Language is that which gives rise to the world and yet can "indicate" Brahman. Reality does not depend upon language but our conceptual (rational) knowledge of it does, both cosmological and ontological presuppose language (the cosmological). How can Śruti, which is merely cosmologic, indicate beyond itself to Brahman?

The "cosmological" creation of the world by Brahman (saguna -- endowed with the necessary qualities to effect

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[22]"Brahman" is defined as "beyond" language, and yet even the definition is in language. The negative description "neti, neti" is as far as language can take us within the sphere of the rational.

such a creation) is not a uniform origination: "Brahman
eternal, unchanging and uniform reveals itself in a
graduated series of beings".[23]   This series is due to the
"gradual rise of the excellence of minds" and extends from
blades of grass to saguna Brahman itself.

This concept of "gradation" is also explained by
Sankara in the form of the "doctrine of the five sheaths"
(Taittiriya Upanisad, 2/1-5). The grossest sheath (body)
is that of "food". Moving from the grossest to the most
subtle, the next sheath is that of "vital airs"; then the
body of "mind"; then "understanding". The fifth and "last"
sheath is the body of "Bliss", this final body is in truth
atman itself.[24]

This gradation is but a reflection of the grada-
tion of vac (speech), for the world has its origins in
speech (as does sruti). Mind (intellect) also has its
origins in speech. Human language parallels the body of
"food", in terms of its grossness: "ordinary human state-
ments are mixed up with error, untruth and deceit",[25] leading
up to the purity and uniformity of the language of the vedas.
However, just as the body of "understanding" and the series

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[23]B.s.B., 1/1/11.

[24]B.s.B., 1/1/11; 11/4/14; 4/1/2; "The Self abides
within a series of sheaths beginning with the grossest body,
rising until Atman".

[25]B.s.B., 2/3/7.

which preceeds it, are "different" from the Body of "Bliss"
(the body of bliss is not only different in kind but also
different in nature from what preceeds it), śruti is
different from Brahman. Brahman lies beyond the last member
of any series of gradations.

This process, the gradual rising of excellence is
the gradual removal of the obstacles to true knowledge.
Śruti can take man only as far as the "indication" of
Brahman.

Language is the beginning and end of the cosmo-
logical -- speech gives rise to the cosmos, is the cosmos,
and also gives rise to the basis of its dissolution.

"The doctrine of Sheaths" is a prime example of
what might be called the "vedāntic method". The beginning
and end of the cosmos is Brahman as vāc -- saguna Brahman.
The importance of the qualified Brahman is that it leads
men away from the world; that is, saguna Brahman (Īśvara
or Lord) is of the utmost importance as the "object" of
devotion or meditation.[26] Man is turned away from the
empirical world of diversity towards the unity of Brahman,
creator of the cosmos, only to be turned a "final time" away

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[26]B.S.B., 1/1/11; 2/1/14; 3/2/21; 3/2/33.

from it and towards <u>Brahman</u>, <u>sat</u>, <u>moksa</u>. Each of the sheaths

is ever more subtle until even the body of "understanding"

is absorbed into the cosmological. An example of this

<u>vedāntic</u> method, taken from everyday experience, is given

by Śaṅkara[27] if a man wants to show a boy a certain star,

he first shows him the brightest star in the sky, then when

the obstacles are lessened, and the boy's eyes are used

to the night sky, he can be directed to that certain star

itself.

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[27]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/8.

CHAPTER TWO

ADHYĀSA: ŚAṄKARA'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE

OF THE ONTOLOGICAL LINK BETWEEN

BRAHMAN AND THE WORLD

Adhyāsa (superimposition) is the most important

methodological concept of Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta. Through

the use of this concept Śaṅkara resolves the (apparent) contra-

diction between the unity of the scriptural Brahman and the

diversity of the experienced world. This concept provides

a unique solution to an interpretation of the above problem

-- that of unity and diversity. For Śaṅkara any form of

dualism falls short of the truth.[1] The ontological link[2]

between the two realms is to be found in the Brahman-Ātman

identity. The jīva (embodied soul) is in essence ātman,

pure consciousness, but due to the upādhis this identity is

unrealized. The questions: "why must the world of diversity

be rejected?" and: "why does this diversity appear as the real?"

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[1]The One cannot in reality become the many. It can
only appear as the many and the question of How? becomes
of paramount importance.

[2]Śaṅkara proceeds from śruti and Brahman, not from
the world.

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are answered by adhyāsa. To postulate the real as dif-
ferent from our experienced world (the "unreal") can never
be philosophically satisfactory in itself because the ques-
tions: "Why do we believe this world to be real?; or "Why do
we believe that we are in truth jīva?" "Why do we not
realize our identity with Brahman?" must be answered.

We cannot deny the existence of consciousness in
that no one can say "I am not".[3] We cannot doubt the
existence of consciousness because "doubt implies a
doubter".[4] The objects in a dream do not have the character-
istic marks of our given "reality". While the content of
the dream is sublated by the waking consciousness, the
consciousness of the dream is real and cannot be sublated.[5]
Consciousness is the "substance" of the link between
Brahman-Ātman and jīva. Brahman-Ātman is pure conscious-
ness. Jīva is the same consciousness limited by upādhis.

In his commentary on the Brahmasūtras Śaṅkara
begins his introduction with an analysis of the concept
essential for the understanding of his philosophy, the
concept of adhyāsa. Adhyāsa, or superimposition, is defined

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[3] B.s.B., 1/1/1.

[4] B.s.B., 2/3/7.

[5] B.s.B., 2/1/14.

as "the apparent presentatio n, (avabhasa) in the form of rememberance (smrtirūpa), to consciousness of something previously observed (pūrvadrstasya avabhasa) in some other thing".[6] This concept is cited as one of the four (possible) alternative explanations of the legitimate relationship between two words standing in the same grammatical case relationship.[7] Adhyāsa (superimposition), like apavāda (sublation), ekatva (unity) and viśesana (specification) all necessitate this grammatical case relationship. Thus given a situation where no such case relationship can be established it "is a matter not requiring any proof . . . (that the terms-in question) cannot be identified", that is, no relationship, of the nature of the four alternatives above, can be asserted.

Śankara introduces the two terms as visaya [the object (of knowledge), the known, that which refers (points to the notion of "you" (yusmat)] and visayin [the subject (of knowledge), the knower, that which refers to the notion

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[6] B.s.B., Introduction.

[7] B.s.B., 3/3/9 -- "adhyāsa takes place when the idea of one of two things not being dismissed from the mind, the idea of the second.thing is superimposed on the first thing -- so that together with the superimposed idea the former idea remains attached to the thing on which the second idea is superimposed. When e.g. the idea of (the entity) Brahman superimposes itself upon the idea of name, the latter idea continues in the mind and is not driven out by the former".

of "I" (asmat)].[8] The relationship between which is to
be discussed.

These two concepts are ". . . opposed to each other
as much as darkness and light", they can never stand in
the same relationship as one is dependent upon the other
and hence "it is wrong"[9] to superimpose the visaya [non-Self
(anātma)] upon the visayin ["whose Self (ātma) is intelli-
gence (Brahman)] and vice versa. In spite of this, it is
man's "natural procedure" (naisargika)[10] to mutually super-
impose the ātma and the anātma, thus "coupling" (mithunīkrtya)
the real and the unreal.

Śankara then proceeds to define adhyāsa as above.
He also cites three definitions alternative to his own and
shows that his definition accords, in essential details,
with the others. Śankara also gives two examples of
adhyāsa from our everyday experience, the shell that appears

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[8]See P. K. Sundaram, "Superimposition", Vedānta
Kesari (1964), 352-355.

[9]Radhakrishnan translated as "logically false".
IP, p. 506.

[10]Deussen, System of Vedānta, p. 53 -- "innate
disposition".

as silver and the one moon appearing as two. From these examples Śaṅkara derives what appear to be the necessary prevailing conditions for a relationship to be, in fact, a case of adhyāsa. In order for adhyāsa to occur it at first appears that the two things have to be objects (viṣaya) and "placed before" the subject (purovasthita), that is, presented to the senses. Śaṅkara then asks how the Self, which by definition cannot be objectified [for it is viṣayin, subject (of knowledge)], can possibly be involved in a case of adhyāsa. He answers that it appears as the object of the notion "I". The second, of the apparently necessary conditions, is rejected by invoking the example of colourless "ether" (sky), although this is not "placed before" us, at least not according to Śaṅkara's understanding of perception,[11] the dark blue colour is superimposed upon it.

Having shown that these two objections to the relationship between ātma and anātma being terms of adhyāsa, are in fact groundless, Śaṅkara then asks if it is not unreasonable to understand this logically inexplicable relationship as a special case of adhyāsa.

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[11]See section on perception, below.

This mutual adhyāsa of self and non-self is avidyā (nescience or ignorance).[12] This avidyā is the "basis of all practical distinctions", that is, between means of knowledge, knowledge and knowing, between agents and enjoyers, both in ordinary life and in the Veda, for all these distinctions presuppose a knower with a body, senses, etc.. We are bound to assume adhyāsa, for the Self which is "free from all contact" (Brahman) cannot become this presupposed knower.[13]

Śaṅkara gives examples of this mutual adhyāsa of Self and non-Self which reflect his understanding of the graduation in "being".[14] Extra-personal attributes, such as the gross body, the sense organs or the interal organ, are superimposed upon the Self. This internal organ etc. is superimposed upon the Self, which is, in reality, witness to all the modifications (vrttis) of the internal organ, etc. and vice versa the Self is superimposed upon the internal organ, senses etc. Consciousness, just as in a dream, remains unaffected by this adhyāsa.

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[12] B.s.B., 1/3/2 and Introduction.

[13] That is, without the "feeling" (abhimana) of "I" in the body there can be no knower.

[14] The five sheaths, Taitt.Up. (2/1-5), B.s.B., 1/1/11-12.

Śaṅkara concludes his Introduction by stating that this adhyāsa is the root cause of all evil and that the only aim of vedānta is to free ourselves from ". . . this wrong notion and thereby attain knowledge of the absolute unity of the Self".

Śaṅkara accepts the presupposition of the scriptural Brahman and its identity with ātman. He then uses the concept of adhyāsa to explain why we do not realize ourselves to be the non-dual Brahman. The consequent need for mokṣa becomes the rationale for the whole vedāntic enquiry. Adhyāsa explains why the non-dual Brahman appears as the world and why we believe the world to be true. Adhyāsa is the transference of the properties of one thing to another but the coupling together of things standing in polar opposition to each other counters logic and results in false adhyāsa. Dark and light, ātma and anātma are superimposed one upon the other giving rise to a logically inexplicable relationship. Conscious man in the world is the result of the coupling of the real and unreal. This is the "mystery" of man's existence.

Traditionally the classical schools of Advaita Vedānta,[15] have understood this concept of adhyāsa as a

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[15]Vivarana and Bhāmatī.

general thory of "psychological" error and our experience of the world as "psychic modification". Adhyāsa was considered to be an epistemological category dealing with perceptual errors of experience, misperception, misconception, illusion, etc. These speculations often proceeded from the analyses of Śaṅkara's two examples of adhyāsa taken from everyday life. The inevitable "appearance of the two moons" and the appearance of the "shell as silver".[16] However, these must be understood only as examples that are cited within a particular context in order to attempt to deduce the necessary conditions for adhyāsa to occur. In his Introduction Śaṅkara's only concern is to postulate a special case of false adhyāsa (Self and non-Self) and then to prove that the relationship can be plausibly terms "adhyāsa" and that the concept of adhyāsa is legitimately comprehensive enough to include this particular case.

Given this, Śaṅkara obviously does not intend adhyāsa to be understood as a general theory but only as the ground of the world whose basis can only be explained by what might be correctly called adhyāsa. Thus, adhyāsa is

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[16]Also, the "proverbial" snake and the rope.

not an error of experience but the basis of all experience. Adhyāsa must not be understood as perceptual error, for perception[17] is dependent upon this "first" case of adhyāsa. Adhyāsa is a metaphysical concept. The psychological is only possible given the initial metaphysical adhyāsa.

Adhyāsa stands as Śankara's ontological explanation of the relationship of Brahman to the world. The partless, non-dual Brahman is "divided up" into the objects of knowledge and the knowers. The diverse world is apparent and due to the mutual superimposition of Brahman and that what is not Brahman.

The ontological explanation must utilize what is not ontological, that is, the cosmological,[18] for our given world is diverse. The non-Self, that which is not consciousness, is presumed to exist within Śankara's analysis of adhyāsa.

What constitutes the non-Self, which is coupled with Brahman, to give the world? The "ontological argument" can only take us as far as the identity of the essence of the jīva (embodied soul) with Ātman-Brahman. In order

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[17]Brahman (the Self) is self-revealing but all objects are dependently revealed. This dependent revelation is perception.

[18]Of course, the "ontological argument" is in language and vāc for Śankara is (of the) cosmological.

to "effect" <u>moksa</u> we must return to our world of diversity, for the basis of bondage, if bondage is transcendable, must be of the world of effects, that is, the cosmological. "The expanse of <u>nāma-rūpa</u> is superimposed upon <u>Brahman</u> by <u>avidyā</u>."[19]

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[19]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 4/3/14.

CHAPTER THREE

NAMARŪPA (NAME AND FORM): ŚAŃKARA'S

UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF

THE COSMOLOGICAL LINK BETWEEN BRAHMAN

AND THE WORLD

I have already used the word "cosmological" to
refer to the aspects of Śaṅkara's thought that have their
grounding in the world of diversity and not in the pre-
supposition of the nature of the Real (Brahamn or sat ("being"))
as conveyed by śruti. It is not that Śaṅkara considers
all that is not the partless non-dual Brahman to be of a
different ontological order from Brahman or on a different
level of "being". Given non-dual Brahman (sat) there
can be no ontological levels.

However, Śaṅkara does make a distinction between
paramārtha (highest truth) and vyavahāra (empirical "truth")
but this distinction cannot be held to be ontological in
nature. The distinction between undifferentiated "Being"
on the one hand and the apparently differentiated on the
other, can be understood as the ontological and the
cosmological because for Śaṅkara only Brahman "is" and all

else, the cosmological, can be nothing but that same "is".[1]

The cosmological rests upon this diverse world. All that is diverse must be an effect and all that must be an effect must have a cause. Thus, man is led to the consideration of causation. Nāmarūpa is this cosmological.

Śaṅkara explains radical multiplicity by the concept of nāmarūpa (name and form). The meaning of this Sanskrit compound will become clear during the ensuing discussion. In Śaṅkara's analysis of nāmarūpa three distinct levels can be detected, the third standing as the synthesis and resolution of the two preceeding levels. [1] The cosmological, that is, the nature of the diverse, created world, creation and causation and Lorship. [2] The cosmological necessarily implicit within the context of the ontological argument, the logical conclusion to the adhyāsa "line of reasoning", the relationship of the jīva (the embodied soul) to the world, and [3] the "relationship" of the cosmological to the ontological, the relationship of the non-dual Brahman to the world. Each will be discussed in turn below.

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[1]See conclusion below for discussion on ontos-cosmos.

1. The Nature of the Created World. Creation,

    Causation and Lordship. the Cosmological

Īśvara (the Lord) or saguna Brahman is the cause of
the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the differenti-
ated world.[2] "This activity of the Lord may be supposed to
be mere sport (līlā) proceeding from his own nature without
reference to any purpose."[3] This created world is dif-
ferentiated only by nāmarūpa.[4] This world of effects is
"evolved exclusively by nāmarūpa".[5] "The divinity thought,
let us evolve nāmarūpa."[6]

What is the cause of this world of effects? Given
the above, how is Brahman the cause? Śaṅkara argues that
the relationship between any effect and its cause is one
of non-difference. (This theory is known as satkāryavāda).
He draws upon our ordinary experience as proof of his
position:

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[2]B.s.B., 1/1/2; 1/1/5. See Ait.Up.B., Introduction,
for equation of saguna Brahman and hiranyagarba.

[3]B.s.B., 2/1/33. See N. Smart, Doctrine and Argument
in Indian Philosophy (New York: Humanities Press, 1964),
pp. 101 ff.

[4]B.s.B., 1/1/2; 2/1/34.

[5]B.s.B., 1/2/22.

[6]B.s.B., 1/1/6.

> . . . such non-difference between cause and
> effect does happen to be directly perceived
> . . . in the case of cloth which is a con-
> struction of threads, we do not of course
> perceive merely the effect -- the cloth as
> such, as apart from the threads themselves,
> but what we actually and directly see are'
> merely the threads only in the condition as
> warps and woofs.7

We know that from milk comes curds, from clay come pots

and from gold come ornaments. This is because the effect

exists in the cause prior to its production, ". . . for

had the effect been really non-existent before its product,

there is no reason why curds should not be produced out of

milk alone or pots from clay . . . all the effects being

equally non-existent, anything might have come out of

anything else".[8]

However, an effect must be different from its

cause in order for a distinction to be held between the two.

This difference is held by Śankara to be that of _vrtti_ (or

modification)[9] but beneath this change we still recognise

the substance as one.[10]

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[7]_B.s.B._, 2/1/5.

[8]_B.s.B._, 2/1/8. Śankara criticizes adherents of
other theories as any other relationship between cause and
effect besides non-difference [e.g. (_asatkāryavāda_)-Buddhism,
Mīmāmsā, Nyāya-Vaiśesika] must logically lead to an
anavastha (_regressus ad infunitum_).

[9]See below.

[10]_B.s.B._, 2/1/8.

Thus, namarūpa, before its evolution as the world of effects, must not be understood as non-existent but only as namarūpa unevolved, that is to say, before creation namarūpa existed in the state of potentiality[11] or in a germinal condition.[12]

The origination of the world, the "original" vrtti as well as all other ensuing effects, is not a real change in substance[13] but only a change in namarūpa for "all effects or vrttis are name only, they exist through and originate from speech (vāc) only, while in reality there exists no such thing as modification".[14]

Thus, the plurality of effects originates soley from vāc,[15] that is to say, namarūpa originates from vāc.[16] For

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[11] B.s.B., 2/1/17; 2/1/27.

[12] B.s.B., 1/1/5; 1/4/9; 1/4/2; 1/4/14; 1/4/15.

[13] Substance persists through modification, e.g. milk and curds -- "in that they take the name of effect". B.s.B., 2/1/18.

[14] B.s.B., 1/18; 2/1/14; 1/1/5 -- "we must assume that the world evolved at the beginning of the creation in the same way as it is presently seen to develop itself by namarūpa . . . by intelligence".

[15] B.s.B., 2/2/11.

[16] B.s.B., 2/1/23.

Śaṅkarà the phrase "having its origin in vāc", is a
declaration of the unreality of all effects.[17]

How are we to understand language (vāc) in this
world creating sense? How are we to resolve the apparent contra-
diction between the world originating from Brahman (Īśvara)
and the world arising from the word (śabda)?

Śaṅkara maintains that the word denotes the species
and not the individual member of the species, which must
have an origination. "The origination of the world from
the word is not to be understood in the sense that it con-
stitutes its material cause as Brahman does, but while
there exists the everlasting word whose essence is the
power of denotation in connection with their eternal sense
. . . the accomplishment of such individual things as are
capable of having these words applied to them is called an
origination from the word".[18]

This connection between the word and the thing that
it denotes is eternal. Śaṅkara understands the veda (śruti,
vedic words) to be the infallible example of śabda. We know

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[17] B.s.B., 2/1/14.

[18] B.s.B., 1/3/28.

that creation is preceeded by the word from both revelation (śruti) and inference (smṛti) and also from ordinary experience. We must have the word for the completed product before we can proceed upon any task.[19] These vedic words became manifest in the mind of the creator, Prajāpati and he subsequently created things corresponding to these words. The eternality of this connection rests upon the "sameness of nāmarūpa" in each creation (at pralaya, following the end of each kalpa "when the world divests itself of nāmarūpa",[20] the letters of the words giving rise to their sense [meaning].[21]

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[19]B.s.B., 1/3/28.

[20]B.s.B., 1/3/28.

[21]B.s.B., 1/3/28. Śaṅkara rejects the sphota doctrine of the grammarians (a doctrine later accepted by some schools of Vedānta). The adherents of this doctrine hold that the word or sentence is an indivisible unity which is given independently of the component letters of words. Through the utterance of these component elements the sphota (unit of meaning or meaning whole) is manifest and explodes itself into view. This "eternal word" (sphota) is substantial in form and gives rise to all meaning. Śaṅkara's rejection is based upon the assumption that words and the letters, in combination form these words, all have the power of denotation, that is, it is the specific combination of letters and words that give rise to meaning, and stands in no need of another entity, ". . . there is no need for the assumption of sphota as there is no separate cognition/perception of the sphota over and above the perception of the letters" (1/3/28). Also, the ontological status accorded sphota entails an undermining of the non-duality of Brahman. If both are accepted the only solution is the equation of the two as in (Vācaspati) and this is certainly not in the spirit of Śaṅkara's Advaita. For a

The compound "nāmarūpa" is usually translated as
"name and form". In order to understand the implications
of Śaṅkara's designation of the world as this nāmarūpa
it is necessary to understand his concept of the relation-
ship of thought to language.[22] While it might be maintained
that thought and language are co-extensive for man in the
world, every thought (concept) having a word to denote it,
for Sankara these two terms cannot be considered to be
equal or identical in nature or function. This connection
of concept and word is reflected in the use of such phrases
as "speech (vāc) and mind (manas)". Nāmarūpa stands as the
correlate of vāc and manas. Śaṅkara understands perception
(pratyaksa) as the vrtti of the mind in accordance with the
rūpa of the object perceived. Given this model Śaṅkara
makes no distinction between an object and the "idea" or

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a more comprehensive analysis of the sphota doctrine, see
paper by K. A. Subramania Iyer, "The Doctrine of Sphota",
McMaster University (reprint 1947), B.133.578 and Datta's
The Six Ways of Knowing (University of Calcutta, 1960),
pp. 256-58. For further discussion on Śaṅkara's rejection
of this doctrine, see Data, ibid., pp. 259-60 and Dave's
article "Shri Śaṅkarācārya and Sphota", Sarada Pitha
Pradipa, VI (1966), 19-27.

[22]For a summary of this relationship in the more
general context of Indian thought refer to J. G. Arapura's
paper, "Language and Phenomena", Canadian Journal of Theology,
XVI (1970), 42-53. See also, Murti's article "Some Comments
on the Philosophy of Language in the Indian Context", Journal
of Indian Philosophy (1947), 321-331, and Staal's "Sanskrit
Philosophy of Language", Current Trends in Linguistics, V
(1967), 499-531.

vrtti or rūpa of that object itself.[23]   That is, the world
is known only by means of man's thought or concept (idea)
of it. Nāman stands as the name of the rūpa (concept, it-
self nāman).   Both elements of the compound nāman and rūpa
are derived from vāc (language).   Likewise manas originate
from vāc.   The linguistic vāc preceeds manas and manas is
both subsequent to and dependent upon vāc as one of the
elements of its "evolution"[24] (nāmarūpa).   Thus, the
linguistic is prior to and gives rise to the psychological.
The entire expanse of the world is language (vāc) as
nāmarūpa (name and concept) and man's relationship to the
world is linguistic. Vāc exists prior to its manifestation
in the mind of Prajāpati. Vāc exists prior to its organisa-
tion by manas. For every nāman there is a rūpa, there being
one exception, the ontological. The two names Brahman
and Ātman which have no rūpa and are mere differences in
name.[24]

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[23]B.s.B., 4/1/5.

[24]B.s.B., 4/2/. The priority of the linguistic
over the psychological -- ". . . there is no proof
whatsoever for speech originating from mind".

2. The Cosmological Necessarily Implicit

With the Context of the

Ontological Argument

Although adhyāsa is dealt with at length only in Śaṅkara's Introduction, the concept is implicit in all subsequent discussions. In the section of this paper on adhyāsa it was explained that the ontological explanation of the relationship of Brahman to the world necessitated and presupposed the existence of the cosmos or what is not ātma (anātma). Atman the essence of jīva is one with Brahman[26] but due to the upādhis this identity must remain unrealized. Unlike all of nāmarūpa, the individual soul is not created, it is merely the false conjunction of Brahman-Ātman and nāmarūpa.[27]

The individual soul is to be limited by the various upādhis, the mind,[28] the internal organ (antahkarana),[29]

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[25] B.s.B., 1/4/22.

[26] B.s.B., 1/4/22; 2/3/43.

[27] B.s.B., 2/3/17.

[28] B.s.B., 1/3/14; 2/3/43.

[29] B.s.B., 1/3/19.

the body,[30] the senses[31] and so on, due to the mutual adhyāsa of the ātman with these adjuncts.[32] "The embodied soul (jīva) realizes its own nature when the expanse of nāmarūpa, which avidyā superimposes (on Brahman, is dissolved".[33] When the individual's "nāmarūpa is broken . . . he becomes immortal",[34] that is, when mind, body and so on, which are the products of nāmarūpa, are removed the individual soul is Brahman. "Thus the entire apparent world is a mere illusion owing to the non-discrimination of the (Self's) limiting adjuncts -- body etc., which spring from nāmarūpa and form the presentations of avidyā -- and do in reality not exist at all".[35] These sense organs, result in the specific cognition of diversity. When these obstacles are removed there results the perfect true cognition (of) Brahman.

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[30] B.s.B., 2/3/47.

[31] B.s.B., 2/1/13.

[32] B.s.B., 2/1/14.

[33] B.s.B., 4/3/14; 1/2/22.

[34] B.s.B., 4/2/22, citing Brh.Up., 6/5.

[35] B.s.B., 2/1/23.

3. The Ontological and the Cosmological

This section stands as the completion and resolution of the previous two sections -- the extents and limits of the relationship between nāmarūpa and Brahman are finally imposed, a line is drawn between the ontological and cosmological, "excepting Brahman there is nothing what-soever different from nāmarūpa".[36]

In section (1) above the questions of creation, causation and Lordship were discussed. In this section Śankara's arguments are followed to their logical conclusions. The world was created by saguna Brahman in accord with the pre-existing word (denoting only genus). The creation of individuals denoted by the word, was spoken of as "the origination of the world" by the word. Given non-dual (qualities, nirguna) Brahman, what is the nature of this saguna Brahman (Iśvara), the creator?

Saguna Brahman is none other than Brahman itself apprehended as qualified by the upādhis "owing to the multiformity of the evolution of nāmarūpa".[37] Although it is inappropriate and illegitimate to ascribe qualities (nāmarūpa) to Brahman, devoid of speech and mind (nāmarūpa)

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[36] B.S.B., 4/3/14.

[37] B.S.B., 1/1/11.

this is in fact what takes place.[38] Iśvara, in order to
be Iśvara, depends upon the upādhis of nāmarūpa.[39] That
is, all the qualities necessary to effect creation are
ficticiously assigned to Brahman, these qualities being
dependent upon the "evolution of the germanal principle
called nāmarūpa, whose essence is avidyā" (the mutal super-
imposition of nāmarūpa and Brahman).[40]

The creator from whom nāmarūpa evolves is himself con-
tinuous with nāmarūpa.[41] Iśvara is inseparable from vāc
(speech). Everything but the non-dual Brahman is inseparable
from (language). The diversity of creation, its sustenance
and its dissolution, mind, body, internal organs, the
senses and so on are mere language, evolving and evolved
according to the pre-existing "logic" inherent within
vāc.

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[38] B.s.B., 1/2/14.

[39] B.s.B., 2/1/14.

[40] B.s.B., 2/1/14.

[41] Brahman is sometimes spoken of as being identical
with this unevolved nāmarūpa but it must not be assumed
that this is saguna Brahman. See B.s.B., 1/1/5.

The modification of language, vāc, the entire cosmos is created/evolved at the beginning of every kalpa and dissolved at the end of each kalpa. The cosmos "goes" the way it came, the order of creation is reversed,[42] from vāc to vāc. Nāmarūpa abides not in Brahman or the individual soul but is Īśvara, in itself, that is, vāc abides in vāc.[43]

What then is the purpose of the vedic passages that deal with saguna Brahman? In the section on Śankara's methodology the "vedāntic" method, -- the direction of man's mind from multiplicity to unity and finally to its very limits, was mentioned. Saguna Brahman exists to direct man away from the diversity of effects to the unity of cause. Saguna Brahman has a purpose in terms of devout meditation and devotion.[44]

The ontological status of nāmarūpa is discussed by Śankara in a number of different places in his commentary.

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[42] B.s.B., 1/1/24.

[43] For if this were not the case at the pralaya the soul if not partless and if not permanent would be merged in causal substances and moksa would be thus impossible. B.s.B., 1/4/22.

[44] B.s.B., 1/2/14; 3/2/21; 3/2/23; 4/3/14.

"The term sat ('that which is') ordinarily denoted that which is differentiated by nāmarūpa, the term asat being used to denote the same substance previous to its differentiation."[45] "Those things which are distinguished by nāmarūpa are in ordinary language called sat."[46] Likewise the jīvahood of the jīva is real but in "a figurative sense only".[47] In ordinary language the language of practical distinctions anātma is referred to as sat, just as asat is used to denote nāmarūpa prior to its evolution.

Śaṅkara is beset with the problem of retaining the absolute non-duality of Brahman and of also accounting for the relationship of that Brahman to our given world of diversity. This world is vāc as nāmarūpa. Śaṅkara uses the designation vāc to denote "unreality".[48] However, given that this world can in truth only be non-different from Brahman, how can this world of effects be unreal?[49]

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[45] B.s.B., 1/4/15, see also p. 39 above.

[46] B.s.B., 1/1/5; 2/1/17.

[47] B.s.B., 1/3/7.

[48] B.s.B., 2/1/27.

[49] Vivartavāda, "that the effect is only an apparent manifestation of its cause", the final cosmological principle.

Sankara attempts to answer this question using the concept of anirvacaniya[50] usually translated as "indefinable"). In three places in his commentary namarupa is "described" as anivacaniya.[51] In two other places he uses a similar format ("is/is not") to describe the reality of maya[52] and that of the jiva.[53]

When discussing the object of the knowledge of the Lord ("knowledge" being part of a transitive verb) prior to the creation Sankara states,

> namarupa . . . which can be defined neither as being identical with Brahman nor as different from it, evolved but about to be evolved . . . .[54]

> belonging to the Self, as it were, of the omnicient Lord, there are namarupa the figments of avidya, not to be defined either as sat (i.e. Brahman), nor as different from it. . . .[55]

> by that element of plurality which is the fiction of avidya, which is characterized by

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[50]This must be distinguished from the later Advaitic concept of anirvacaniyakhyati, a general theory of error. See Dr. Arapura's paper for an account of the differences between the original conception and its later epistemological interpretation (delivered; McMaster University, February 1978).

[51]B.s.B.,

[52]B.s.B., (2/2/3); 1/4/3.

[53]B.s.B., 2/3/50.

[54]B.s.B., 1/1/5.

[55]B.s.B., 2/1/14.

nāmarūpa, which is evolved as well as unevolved,
which is not to be defined as sat or asat.56

It must be understood that Śaṅkara is not asserting

or denying the reality of the world. Given that only the

non-dual Brahman is sat, his concern is not with the

question of whether the world exists or not but with the

nature of its relationship to "that which is". Thus, it

should be noted that Śaṅkara defines nāmarūpa in terms of

Brahman and not vice versa. Our diverse world (vāc) is

given in our experience but there can be nothing besides

the partless Brahman. This world is in truth Brahman but

due to the upādhis superimposed upon Brahman it appears

as multiplicity.

There are two parallel constructions. Māyā (illusion)

is nāmarūpa,57 "for māyā is properly called undeveloped or

non-manifested since it cannot be defined as sat or asat".58

The jīva, the embodied soul, the illegitimate product

of ātma and anātma, of Brahman and vāc, is "indefinable" in

56B.s.B., 2/1/27.

57B.s.B., (2/2/3); 1/4/3.

58B.s.B., (2/2/3); 1/4/3.

terms of Brahman, "it is either neither directly that (Brahman) nor a different thing".[59]

It is not that the world (vāc) is indefinable but only that, with reference to Brahman, vāc cannot be described. Given the nature of vāc, the cosmological, its reference can only extend to its own dissolution. The removal of all obstacles to pure consciousness, for this removal (dissolution) is Brahman.

It should be noted however, that Brahman appears to be denoted by the mahāvākyas (great sayings), "tat tvam asi",[60] "Aham Brahma Asmi"[61] and so on. Their meaning is dependent upon the presupposition of the existence and nature of Brahman. Given this, their meaning implicitly presupposes vāc and negates the expanse of nāmarūpa (vāc) -- the final stage in the vedāntic method of Śankara.

The necessity of the world being non-different from Brahman gives rise to the world being understood and a vivarta (unreal manifestation) of the absolute. Brahman

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[59] B.s.B., (2/2/3); 1/4/3.

[60] Ch.Up., 6/8/7; quoted B.s.B., 1/1/4.

[61] Brh.Up., 4/10.

is spoken of as the "revealer of nāmarūpa".[62] Brahman
is the ground of the world's "existence", "the entire body
of effects has no existence apart from Brahman".[63] The
complete revealing of vāc cannot be accomplished except
by Brahman.[64] "Brahman becomes the basis of this entire
apparent world with its modifications, etc."[65] It is
important to note that while Brahman can be maintained as
the basis of the world" its real and true nature it at the
same time remains unchanged, lifted above the universe".[66]
That is, "as the distinctions of nāmarūpa originate
entirely from vāc (speech, and thus, are unreal) it does
not mitigate against the partless Brahman".[67]

It should be understood that this designation of
vāc as neither sat or asat is not a postulation of onto-
logical levels. The world still arises from speech and
thus is _asat_ but given Brahman as sat, which it (vāc) is

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[62]B.s.B., 1/1/22.

[63]B.s.B., 2/1/14.

[64]B.s.B., 1/3/42.

[65]B.s.B., 2/1/27.

[66]B.s.B., 2/1/14.

[67]B.s.B., 2/1/14.

not, it cannot be any other than <u>anirvacanīya</u> (indefinable)

when "compared" with <u>Brahman</u>.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALOGY AND METAPHOR-BRAHMAN AND THE WORLD

Śankara's philosophical writings abound with
illustrations taken from everyday experience which are
"extended" and used to refer to the realtionship of Brahman
to the world. The snake and the rope; the air and the
jars; sea, ripples, foam and waves; the man and the post in
the dark; the spider and its web; the reflection of the
sun in the water; and so on all illustrate this relation-
ship of Brahman to vāc.

Śankara expounds the limits of analogy, ". . . when
two things are compared, they are so only with reference to
some particular point they have in common. Entire equality
of the two can never be demonstrated, indeed if it could be
demonstrated there would be an end to that particular rela-
tion which gives rise to the comparison".[1] Thus, analogical
relationships are dependent upon both similarity and dif-
ference.

However, Śankara warns against the use of analogy
as anything but illustrative when referring to things beyond

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[1] B.s.B., 3/2/21.

the empirical, "analogies of ordinary experience cannot be applied to something learnt from scripture".[2]

A good example of this point concerns the question of apavāda (sublation). It is defined as occuring when "an idea previously attached to some object is recognised as false and driven out by the true (later) idea which springs up after the false one",[3] -- the first idea is said to be "sublated" by the second. The waking state is said to sublate the dreaming state. Śaṅkara uses examples drawn from the empirical level[4] of sublation as analogies for the "rising" of knowledge culminating in jñāna.[5] When a post is seen in the dark and it is "thought" to be a man, a torch can be acquired and the post recognised as a post.[6] That is, the later empirical knowledge sublated the initial knowledge. All empirical knowledge can thus be sublated by

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[2] B.s.B., 4/4/10.

[3] B.s.B., 3/3/9.

[4] From where else could examples be drawn.

[5] See p.22 of this work.

[6] B.s.B., 1/3/19.

"truer" or more complete empirical knowledge. Then, given
the nature of <u>Brahman</u> (in this context, in terms of the
concept of <u>adhyāsa</u>), only knowledge of <u>Brahman</u> can be said
to be unsublatable. However, it should not be considered
that knowledge of <u>Brahman</u> stands at the end of a series of
<u>apavādas</u> but only as illustrating that empirical knowledge
is incomplete, insubstantial and inconclusive, in terms
of the knowledge of <u>Brahman</u>.

When discussing the question of what happens to
<u>avidyā</u> when knowledge of <u>Brahman</u> is realized Śaṅkara says,
"the whole process is similar to that by which an imagined
snake passes over into a rope as soon as the mind of the
beholder has freed itself from its erroneous imagination".[7]
We can see that in the case of empirical <u>apavāda</u> the initial
perception is not wholly annihilated but that something is
retained from the erroneous perception and transformed into
the correct perception. However, to insist that <u>jñāna</u>
must thus necessarily be a transformation of <u>pramā</u> fails
to recognise the nature of analogy, that is only allowing
the analogue to stand as an analogue.[8]

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[7] <u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/3/19.

[8] Sastri accuses Śaṅkara of inconsistency over this
issue, see <u>Collected Papers of S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri</u>
(University of Madras, 1961), Essay 6.

Given the nature of analogy as understood by Śaṅkara, it cannot be legitimately asserted that there are different ontological levels corresponding to levels of apavāda.[9]

Śaṅkara also uses the categories of "figurative expression" and metaphor to describe the relationship of Brahman to the world. Evolved nāmarūpa is figuratively called sat and unevolved nāmarūpa is referred to as asat. The jīva is similarly called sat, "Brahman itself is, on account of its connection with the upādhis, metaphorically called individual soul".[10]

Although Śaṅkara goes to great lengths to prove that Brahman is the cause of the world,[11] "we must remember that the scriptural doctrine of creation does not refer to the highest reality, it refers only to that which is characterized by nāmarūpa, the figments of avidyā and it aims at intimating that Brahman is the Self of everything".[12]

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[9]Usually given as asat "barren woman's son" (neither sublatable or not) (2/1/18), not sat/asat "the world" (appearance sublatable), and sat-Brahman (unsublatable).

[10]B.s.B., 3/2/10.

[11]B.s.B., 2/1/14.

[12]B.s.B., 2/1/14.

Śaṅkara also presents his interpreters with a problem by insisting upon a "perceptual realism".

This world of practical distinctions must be understood as "real" (figuratively speaking, see above) until moksa is realized.[13]

> The non-existence of external things cannot
> be maintained because we are conscious of
> external things . . . and that of which we
> are <u>conscious cannot but exist</u> . . . nobody
> when perceiving a wall is conscious of his
> perception only, but all men are conscious
> of walls and posts, etc. as objects of their
> perceptions.[14]

In order to understand why Śaṅkara insists on the "reality" of the external world we must consider his "model" of perception and his understanding of the nature of knowledge.

<u>Prātyaksa</u> (perception)[15] is immediate "knowledge". The mind is in direct contact with the object (<u>vrtti</u>). This knowledge is immediately "valid" for Śaṅkara makes no distinction between truth and validity. All cognitions are <u>svaprakāsa</u> (self-luminous). That is, perception is not of the simple "empiricist" type but yields perceptual knowledge.

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[13]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 2/1/14; 1/1/4.

[14]<u>B.s.B.</u>, 2/2/28. See also <u>B.s.B.</u> 2/1/14 for reality of dream object in consciousness.

[15]See N. Smart, <u>Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy</u> (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), pp. 101 ff.

This model of perception must be understood only as an analogue of perception/cognition of <u>Brahman</u>, for Śaṅkara can hardly be ascribing reality to that which is unreal (vāc), that which at best can be called figuratively real. <u>Brahman</u> cannot retain its absolute non-duality if it is held to be dependent upon anything else. "Action" is defined by Śaṅkara as that which can or cannot be done. "Knowledge is not an activity and depends entirely upon the existent . . . and not upon <u>vedic</u> statements or the mind of man."[16] <u>Brahman</u>, consciousness (<u>cit</u>) is "eternal unchanging cognition". As there exists nothing beyond or besides <u>Brahman</u>, this cognition is "pure self cognition".

Given the nature of the non-dual <u>Brahman</u> cognition can be nothing other than immediate (<u>aparoksa</u>). Cognition in the empirical world, although of the unreal, must logically still depend on the <u>vastu</u> (thing, itself) and not upon the "mind of man".

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[16] <u>B.s.B.</u>, 1/1/4.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis the question of language has been discussed in terms of the relationship of the non-dual Brahman to the given world. It has been shown that Sankara proceeds from the presupposition of the existence and nature of the non-dual Brahman and his position remains consistent within the context of this absolute unity. The sharpest distinctions are drawn between "that which is" and the world of diversity in which man finds himself. Within the realm of the cosmological there are gradations which allow Sankara to postulate his "vedantic method". It was noted however, that sat must always remain "above and beyond" the last member of any cosmological order. The cosmological can only return to itself leaving Brahman.

This world originates from vāc (speech). All that is not the non-dual Brahman is vāc. Vāc as nāmarūpa is the world. This world of diversity is name (nāman) and conception (rūpa).[1] As mind (manas) is dependent on vāc so

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[1] That this is so is best proved by the example of inference which is only possible if the "word" is recollected subsequent to perception.

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rūpa is dependent upon nāman. Thus, nāmarūpa conceptually structures "existence" and renders it intelligible, meaningful. Our world is revealed by language (vāc), it is through the word that the "object" comes near to us. Given the priority of the linguistic over the psychological, it is the word which sustains the "thing" in its "being".

The creation of the world is only the modification of the "word" (vāc). The phenomenality of man is the product of vāc and his relationship to the world is linguistic (vāc), for perception is dependent upon language. Adhyāsa and nāmarūpa, Śankara's principles for explicating the nature of the relationship between Brahman and the world, both rest upon vāc.

Śankara designates the world as "illusion"[2] and considers its "annihilation"[3] to be necessary in order for Brahmajñāna to be possible.[4] At the same time he insists that "no man can actually annihilate this whole existing thing",[5] for, if that were the case, "the first

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[2] B.s.B., 2/1/22.

[3] B.s.B., 3/2/21.

[4] B.s.B., 2/1/9; 3/2/21; 2/1/23; 3/2/4.

[5] B.s.B., 3/2/21.

released person would have done it for once and all",[6]
and thus the world would "empty" while, in fact, it is
filled with names and forms. How then are we to understand
the "unreality" of all that is vāc?

The world is spoken of as being sat in a figurative[7]
fashion. Given that only the non-dual Brahman is sat there
can be nothing besides or beyond Brahman. Thus it becomes
a logical necessity to render the world as anirvacanīya
(indefinable), as on the one hand it is not Brahman but
on the other it cannot be anything but Brahman. The answer
lies in Śankara's understanding of the ontological-
cosmological connection, is the microcosmic Jīva and the
macrocosmic world.

Vāc the cosmological abides in itself, it is the
"reflection" of nothing upon nothing. The cosmological
forms a complete "hermetically" sealed circle, never
touching Brahman.

The concept of adhyāsa provides us with the
rationale for the whole enquiry; man's separation from

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[6]B.s.B., 3/2/21.

[7]See pages 48-9 of this thesis.

Brahman giving rise to the need for moksa. The mutual
superimposition of the Self (Brahman) with vāc gives rise
to both the jīva and the world. As jīva is neither Brahman
nor-different from it, so the world-has the same indefinable
status. In the fourth adhyāya Śaṅkara discusses the
"mechanics" of the realization of jñāna. He describes the
dissolution of the nāmarūpa of the jīvanmukta. This process
is an exact parallel of the creation of vāc in reverse order,
for man and the world are one (vāc). Both are the mysterious
combination of the real and the unreal. The world is not
dissolved at the mukti of the first man, for every jīva is
the world. The whole of vāc is dissolved into vāc, unreality
into unreality. The apparent entering into connection with
Brahman does not affect either vāc or reality.

The complete revealing of nāmarūpa, is vāc
brought back upon itself, leaving nothing but Brahman.

There is no logical necessity for the categories of
the ontological and cosmological to be mutually exclusive,
as in Śaṅkara. In the crude pantheism of Ramanuja this
is certainly not the case. Vāc in the Rg Veda[8] is a

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[8]See Rg. Veda, 8/41/3-5.

manifestation of the highest reality revealed to worthy
ṛṣis can can be seen as the means by which he could
"take hold" of the whole cosmos. Vāc was both ontos
and cosmos. It was through the power of name to realize
the essence of things (reality) that vāc, manifest
as the revealed word, led to the transcendent. It is
this very equation of cosmology and ontology that is
rejected by Śankara. Brahman is sat, all else is asat;
Brahman is ātma, all else is anātma, the logically in-
explicable fact of the apparent "being" of asat is the
mystery of "existence".

I have used the word "ontological" throughout in a
very specific way -- to refer to sat. The usual under-
standing of the word as denoting the levels of "being",
postulated by man in order to account for his experience,
is not applicable to the thought of Śankara. However, I
have used the word as he discusses the nature of "being",
the basis of these discussions being the total demarcation
of sat from vāc (the cosmological).

In terms of philosophy, it is necessary to attempt
to conceptualize the level of ontos and this requires the
use of language. In this way man, standing in the midst
of the cosmos, can see Vāc as the only means to the
realization of Brahman. All language (vāc) points beyond
itself not as the positing or denial of the reality of

its own construction but as asserting its own limits by
pointing to its own dissolution -- and this is <u>Brahman</u>.
In this way all words can be seen as "pointing" to <u>Brahman</u>.
Sankara asserts nothing of the world except its unreality
and this is inexplicable for it can be nothing but <u>Brahman</u>.

Man bound within the closed circle of the cosmo-
logical (<u>vāc</u>) can only exhaust its possibilities for it
is only his consciousness that can reveal <u>vāc</u>. The
world of non-self is only intelligible due to the subject
of which it can become the object (<u>visaya</u>) due to
superimposition (<u>adhyāsa</u>).

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