ADHYĀSA AND NĀMA-RŪPA IN
THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA
OF ŚĀṆKARA

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ABSTRACT

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

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

\(^1\)Śaṅkara’s dates are normally given as 788-820 A.D. See for example, S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{Indian Philosophy} (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931), II, 470.

\(^2\)It should be noted that technically the \textit{Bhagavad-
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 vac (speech). The operation of both these principles as explanations of this relationship are dependent upon Śaṅkara's understanding of the nature and function of vac.

The question of the relationship of Brahman to the world of diversity is co-extensive with Śaṅkara's philosophical enterprise and metaphysical quest. Both traditional and contemporary scholarship have largely neglected Śaṅkara's concern with vac (speech, language), failing to appreciate, what I consider to be, the vital importance of vac in his Advaita.

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

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

See Śaṅkara's introduction to the Brahmasūtras.

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 Śaṅkara's commentary)
- **Man.Up.**  Māndūkhyā Upanisad Man.Up.B. (bhāṣya)
- **B.G.B.**  Bhagavad-Gītā Bhāṣya
- **Ch.Up.**  Chāndogya Upanisad Ch.Up.B. (bhāṣya)
- **Mu.Up.**  Mundaka Upanisad
- **Taitt.Up.**  Taittirīya Upanisad Taitt.Up.B. (bhāṣya)
- **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 Vedanta of Śaṅkara 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 Vedanta of Śaṅkara, with a view to answering the questions: What does Śaṅkara 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 Śaṅkara 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 Śaṅkara 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
a direct correspondence (and ultimately identity) between "being" and knowing. To know Brahman is to be Brahman.

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

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

3 B.s.B., 2/1/6.

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

5 B.s.B., 1/1/4.

6 B.s.B., 1/1/4, "Different from merit and demerit, different from effect and cause, different from past and future" (Ka.Up. 1/2/14) moksa, is therefore, the same as
of the existence of Brahman and the characterization of its nature as "partless", "that which is" (sat), there is no necessity for the world of diversity (vyavahara) to be, and yet it is our given experience. How are we to account for this world?

As Śaṅkara's philosophical and metaphysical intention is the removal of all obstacles to the perfect knowledge of Brahman, this entails the determination of the precise "characteristics of this Brahman". The world of "practical distinctions" appears to undermine the given unity of Brahman. Thus the question of the relationship between the non-dual Brahman of śruti and the world of multiplicity.

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

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7 I.e., given in śruti. On the question of Śaṅkara's philosophical presuppositions and their relationship to śruti, see page 12 of this Introduction.

8 B.s.B., 1/1/4.

9 B.s.B., 1/1/2, refer to footnote 2, above. This task, the determination of the characteristics of Brahman, is advocated by Śaṅkara only in the interests of the enquiry.

10 B.s.B., Introduction.
is the fundamental issue for the Advaita Vedanta of Śaṅkara. This issue arises solely from Śaṅkara's philosophy and is not an external philosophical issue posited in terms of Śaṅkara's thought. Much of Śaṅkara's commentary on the Brahmasūtras is devoted to a critical examination of this relationship. The first adhyāya (chapter) proved that the vedānta texts uniformly teach that there is only one cause of the world; this is Brahma and Brahma is of the nature of intelligence. The second adhyāya, first pāda (section) contains a lengthy discussion on the nature of causation with a view to understanding the creation of the world by Brahma. 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 Brahma by śrutī are finally fictitious, they are necessary only in order to facilitate consideration of how Brahma effects the creation of the world. This is made clear in the third pāda which considers the question of whether the multitude of forms which are the world, are eternal as is Brahma, or originate subsequently from Brahma. The analysis there which includes a consideration of the nature of the individual soul.

\[\text{11} \text{This point is of importance in terms of my own methodology, see page 6 of this Introduction.}\]
concludes that the soul's origination is merely due to its illusory connection with the upādhis (the limiting adjuncts, which are the world). The third adhvaryu, 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 problemsŚāṅkara is drawn back to the question of the relationship of Brahman, untainted by duality, and the multiplicity of our experienced world.¹⁴

¹² I have used the words "śruti" and "scripture" interchangeably in this thesis. With respect to the śruti/smṛti 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 Śāṅkara 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 Śāṅkara's commentary, but only to give an indication of the centrality of this relationship.
In the consideration of the question of the relationship between the non-dual Brahman of śrutī and the plurality of the experienced world, that is the basis of our attempt to understand the philosophy of Śaṅkara, 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, śrutī, śabdā, and nāma-rūpa. The ṛevedānta darśana itself is the enquiry into the meaning of śrutī ("that which is heard"; revealed language), for the revealed scriptures are the only source of "the origination of knowledge of Brahman". That which is heard (śrutī) 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 Śaṅkara's philosophical and metaphysical quest.

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

\[15]\text{B.s.B., 1/1/4; 2/1/11; 2/1/27; 2/3/1.}\]
to answer the questions posed above.

Some interpreters of Śaṅkara attempt to understand his thought in terms of philosophical/methodological distinctions imported from conceptual structures alien to Śaṅkara's philosophy. Paul Deussen in his *System of Vedānta* and S. Radhakrishnan in his *Indian Philosophy* understand the philosophy of Śaṅkara 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 vedānta philosophy, but only that the definitive categories as applied are alien. Both these thinkers understand the Advaita concept of avidyā (ignorance or nescience) as the "principles of mind expressing themselves through the [Kantian] categories of space, time and cause",¹⁶ and Deussen implies that Śaṅkara 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 Śaṅkara Advaita is concerned with a knowledge of the noumenal -- a concept (knowledge of the noumenal) that is expressly denied within

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

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 discussed in this thesis arises solely from within the framework of Śaṅkara's philosophy. I will attempt to understand 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. I have termed the former "cosmological" and the latter "ontological". I use these terms not with the intention of suggesting that this western philosophical distinction is applicable to Śaṅkara's thought, but, rather, that the "absolute" distinction that he holds between the concept clusters, Brahman/Ātman/Moksa (all of which point to "the One without a second" -- Sat -- "that which is" -- Being) on the one hand, and Īśvara/Dharma/Samsāra/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.

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22Śaṅkara's objection to Śāṅkhyān metaphysics is that, without a point of contact between ontos and cosmos (duality), moksa is not possible; there is eternal in-escapable duality.
The ontological "link" is the Brahman-Atman identity ("that thou art", Ch.Up., 6/8/7), for Brahman is the Self of us all,23 freed from the upādhis (the cosmological) the individual soul is Brahman. 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 Brahman by reference to the world of plurality; that is the ontological and cosmological "share" the ground of the jīva.24

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

23 B.s.B., 1/1/1; 1/1/4; 2/3/7.
24 See section on Adhyāsa 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 Ārūti (scripture). It might be charged that, as Ārūti 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 Ārūti 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 Ārūti provides such a base. Reason grounded in Ārūti is a necessary aid in the exegesis of scripture.27

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

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 (pramanās), (perception, inference, etc.) do not apply. No pramāṇa can disprove (sublate) the knowledge given by śruti within its own sphere. The pramanās 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" 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.), using reason in "an independent manner with reference to the vedānta texts", when attacking the positions of other

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


29My 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.

30B.s.B., 2/1/6.
Thus, the philosophy of Śaṅkara can hardly be called blind faith or uncritical in that the acceptance of śrutī (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 auxiliary of intuition".  

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 Brahmān and the world. The intelligibility of this relationship is dependent upon the reasoned exegesis of scripture (śrutī). The comprehension of the relationship rests upon Śaṅkara's understanding of the nature and function of vāc (speech). The centrality of adhyāsa and nāmarāpa 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 śrutī 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 śrutī).
CHAPTER ONE
SANKARA'S TASK: PHILOSOPHICAL AND
METAPHYSICAL SCOPE AND METHOD
OF THE COMMENTARY ON THE
BRAHMASUTRAS

Sāṅkara'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.

Sāṅkara'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, Sāṅkara endeavours to
prove that the "consistent and uniform"³ Vedic passages

¹B.s.b., Introduction.
²B.s.b., 3/2/2; see also 2/3/1.
³B.s.b., 3/2/15.
indicate that nature of the non-dual Brahman and teach the Brahman-Atman identity. This necessitates the determination of whether a passage refers to Brahman or the cosmological. 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 Brahman, Śaṅkara also engages in polemical attacks against the positions held by other schools with the aim of demonstrating their falsity.

With regard to his methodology two related issues require further elucidation. Brahman as "close" to us as the Self of everything must also be understood as "ever"

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4 B.s.B., 1/3/25.

5 As only Brahman exists (sat) the world must necessarily be Brahman, but Brahman as the explanation of the world -- cosmological (saguna) Brahman.

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

7 B.s.B., 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" 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.

⁸Sāṅkara’s use of (empirical) vyavāhāra language when referring to Brahman will be discussed below.

⁹It is this logical necessity that results in Śaṅkara’s insistence that Brahman is the material cause of the world and the designation of the cosmological as Brahman (saguna).
Sankara draws the sharpest distinction between the ontological and the cosmological. When discussing the claim of the *Mimāṃsa* (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 — *mokṣa* — which is beyond time, not the results of action acquiring merit. *Mokṣa*, unlike the cosmological (*dharma*, *karma*, 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 *Brahmān* unaffected by the creation, subsistence, and dissolution of the world, the cosmological process.\(^{12}\)

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

\(^{10}\) *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\textsuperscript{13} (anubhava).

"Brahman is beyond speech and mind",\textsuperscript{14} Brahman transcends all differentiation. Brahman cannot be known by any pramāṇa. 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;\textsuperscript{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".

\textsuperscript{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", Śāṅkara describes the final 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 Śāṅkara to refer to empirical knowledge; B.s.B., Introduction.

\textsuperscript{14}B.s.B., 1/1/19; 1/1/20.

\textsuperscript{15}B.s.B., 1/1/24.
Śruti is but the "origination" of such knowledge. Śruti can but "indicate" Brahman. When knowledge of Brahman arises of itself, the Veda (itself but part of the cosmological) must be disregarded; that is, the Veda is necessary but only instrumental in the realization of Brahman.

Śruti states that "Brahman transcends both Speech and Mind". It is beyond the cosmological/rational. Saṅkara 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. Saṅkara's understanding of the nature of knowledge, "knowledge cannot be made or not made upon vedic statements or the mind of man", leads to the realization that knowledge of Brahman is perceptual rather than conceptual.

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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" (saṃyagdarśana). Moksa is defined as "eternal Self-cognition" (B.s.B., 1/3/19).
The term "darsana" (vision) is derived from the verbal root drk (drs) (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 darsana.

However, even the idea "Brahman transcends Speech and Mind" is expressed in language. 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 Sruti, 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...

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 Śaṅkara 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 gradation of vac (speech), for the world has its origins in speech (as does śruti). Mind (intellect) also has its origins in speech. Human language parallels the body of "food", in terms of its grossness: "ordinary human statements 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

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., 2/377.
which precedes 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 precedes it), śrutī 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. Śrutī can take man only as far as the "indication" of Brahman.

Language is the beginning and end of the cosmological -- 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 vac -- 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

26 B.S.B., 1/1/11; 2/1/14; 3/2/21; 3/2/33.
from it and towards Brahman, sat, mokṣa. Each of the sheaths is ever more subtle until even the body of "understanding" is absorbed into the cosmological. An example of this vedāntic method, taken from everyday experience, is given by Saṅkara\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{27}B.s.B., 1/1/8.
CHAPTER TWO

ADHYĀSA: ŚAṆKARA'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) contradic-
tion 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 link²
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?"

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

²Śaṅkara proceeds from śruti and Brahman, not from
the world.
are answered by \textit{adhyāsa}. To postulate the real as different from our experienced world (the "unreal") can never be philosophically satisfactory in itself because the questions: "Why do we believe this world to be real?"; or "Why do we believe that we are in truth \textit{jīva}?": "Why do we not realize our identity with \textit{Brahman}?" must be answered.

We cannot deny the existence of consciousness in that no one can say "I am not".\textsuperscript{3} We cannot doubt the existence of consciousness because "doubt implies a doubter".\textsuperscript{4} The objects in a dream do not have the characteristic 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.\textsuperscript{5} Consciousness is the "substance" of the link between \textit{Brahman-Atman} and \textit{jīva}. \textit{Brahman-Atman} is pure consciousness. \textit{jīva} is the same consciousness limited by \textit{upādhis}.

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

\textsuperscript{3}B.s.B., 1/1/1.

\textsuperscript{4}B.s.B., 2/3/7.

\textsuperscript{5}B.s.B., 2/1/14.
as "the apparent presentation (avabhāsa) in the form of rememberance (smṛtirūpa), to consciousness of something previously observed (pūrvadrstasya avabhāsa) in some other thing". 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. Adhyāsa (superimposition), like apavāda (sublation), ekatva (unity) and visēsana (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.

Śaṅkara 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

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) Brahma superimposes itself upon the idea of name, the latter idea continues in the mind and is not driven out by the former".
of "I" (asmati). 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" to superimpose the visaya [non-Self (anatma)] upon the visayan ["whose Self (atma) is intelligence (Brahman)" and vice versa. In spite of this, it is man's "natural procedure" (naisargika) to mutually superimpose the atma and the anatma, thus "coupling" (mithunikrtya) the real and the unreal.

Saṅkara 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. Saṅkara also gives two examples of adhyāsa from our everyday experience, the shell that appears

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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 Śāṅkara 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 (visāya) and "placed before" the subject (purovasthīta), that is, presented to the senses. Śāṅkara then asks how the Self, which by definition cannot be objectified [for it is visayin, 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 Śāṅkara'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, Śāṅkara then asks if it is not unreasonable to understand this logically inexplicable relationship as a special case of adhyāsa.

¹¹See 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

Sāṅkara 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 internal organ, are superimposed upon the Self. This internal organ etc. is superimposed upon the Self, which is, in reality, witness to all the modifications (vṛttis) 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.

¹²B.s.B., 1/3/2 and Introduction.

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

¹⁴The five sheaths, Taitt. Up. (2/1-5), B.s.B., 1/1/11-12.
Saṅkara concludes his Introduction by stating that
this adhyāśa 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".

Saṅkara accepts the presupposition of the scriptural
Brahman and its identity with ātman. He then uses the
concept of adhyāśa to explain why we do not realize our-
selves to be the non-dual Brahman. The consequent need
for moksa becomes the rationale for the whole vedāntic
enquiry. Adhyāśa explains why the non-dual Brahman appears
as the world and why we believe the world to be true.
Adhyāśa 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 adhyāśa. 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, have understood this concept of adhyāśa as a

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Vivarana and Bhāmatī.
general theory 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". 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 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 Śaṅkara'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 which is not Brahman.

The ontological explanation must utilize what is not ontological, that is, the cosmological, for our given world is diverse. The non-Self, that which is not consciousness, is presumed to exist within Śaṅkara'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 Atman-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 vac for Śaṅkara is (of the) cosmological.
to "effect" mokṣa 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 nāma-rūpa is superimposed upon Brahman by avidyā."¹⁹

CHAPTER THREE

NAMARūPA (NAME AND FORM): ŚAṈKARA'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 presupposition of the nature of the Real (Brahman 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.

Śankara 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 Śankara's analysis of nāmarūpa three distinct levels can
be detected, the third standing as the synthesis and
resolution of the two preceding levels. [1] The cosmo-
logical, 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.

1See 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 differentiated 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 differentiated 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:

²_B.s.B., 1/1/2; 1/1/5. See Ait.Up.B., Introduction, for equation of saguna Brahman and hiranyagārba.


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 construction 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 Śaṅkara to be that of vṛtti (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. Śaṅkara criticizes adherents of other theories as any other relationship between cause and effect besides non-difference [e.g. (asatkāryavāda)-Buddhism, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika] must logically lead to an anavasthā (regressus ad infinitum).

9 See below.

10 B.s.B., 2/1/8.
Thus, nāmarūpa, before its evolution as the world of effects, must not be understood as non-existent but only as nāmarūpa unevolved, that is to say, before creation nāmarūpa existed in the state of potentiality\textsuperscript{11} or in a germinal condition.\textsuperscript{12}

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

Thus, the plurality of effects originates solely from vāc,\textsuperscript{15} that is to say, nāmarūpa originates from vāc.\textsuperscript{16} For

\textsuperscript{11} B.s.B., 2/1/17; 2/1/27.

\textsuperscript{12} B.s.B., 1/1/5; 1/4/9; 1/4/2; 1/4/14; 1/4/15.

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

\textsuperscript{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 nāmarūpa ... by intelligence".

\textsuperscript{15} B.s.B., 2/2/11.

\textsuperscript{16} B.s.B., 2/1/23.
Śaṅkara the phrase "having its origin in vac", is a declaration of the unreality of all effects. 17

How are we to understand language (vac) in this world creating sense? How are we to resolve the apparent contradiction 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 constitutes 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

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

18 B.s.B., 1/3/28.
that creation is preceded by the word from both revelation
(srutî) and inference (smrtî) 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,
Prajâpati 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


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 per-
ception 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 (Vacaspâti) 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 relationship of thought to language.\footnote{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 (1976), 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. 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 Śaṅkara 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 (paryaksa) as the vṛtti 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

\footnote{For further discussion on Śaṅkara's rejection of this doctrine, see Datta, ibid., pp. 259-60 and Dave's article "Śrī Śaṅkarācārya and Šphota", Sarada Pitha Pradipa, VI (1966), 19-27.}
vṛtti 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, itself 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 Prajāprati. Vāc exists prior to its organisation 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

²³B.s.B., 4/1/5.

²⁴B.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 adhyyasa is dealt with at length only in Sākhara's Introduction, the concept is implicit in all subsequent discussions. In the section of this paper on adhyyasa 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). Ātman the essence of jīva is one with Brahman 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.

The individual soul is to be limited by the various upādhis, the mind, the internal organ (antahkarana).

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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, the senses and so on, due to the mutual adhyāsa of the Ītman with these adjuncts. "The embodied soul (jīva) realizes its own nature when the expanse of nāmarūpa, which avidyā superimposes (on Brahman, is dissolved). When the individual's nāmarūpa is broken . . . he becomes immortal", 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". These sense organs, result in the specific cognition of diversity. When these obstacles are removed there results the perfect true cognition (of) Brahman.

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.
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 namarupa and Brahman are finally imposed, a line is drawn between the ontological and cosmological, "excepting Brahman there is nothing whatsoever different from namarupa".36

In section (1) above the questions of creation, causation and Lordship were discussed. In this section Sankara'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 (Iswara), the creator?

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

37 B.s.B., 1/1/11.
this is in fact what takes place.\textsuperscript{38} Īśvara, in order to be Īśvara, depends upon the upādhis of nāmarūpa.\textsuperscript{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 mūtal superimposition of nāmarūpa and Brahman).\textsuperscript{40}

The creator from whom nāmarūpa evolves is himself continuous with nāmarūpa.\textsuperscript{41} Īśvara is inseparable from vāc (speech). Everything but the non-dual Brahman is inseparable from vāc (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.

\textsuperscript{38} B.s.B., 1/2/14.

\textsuperscript{39} B.s.B., 2/1/14.

\textsuperscript{40} B.s.B., 2/1/14.

\textsuperscript{41} Brahman is sometimes spoken of as being identical with this unevolved nāmarūpa but it must not be assumed that this is \textit{saguna} Brahman. See B.s.B., 1/1/5.
The modification of language, vac, 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, from vac to vac. Nāmarūpa abides not in Brahmān or the individual soul but is Ṣvāra, in itself, that is, vac, abides in vac.  

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

The ontological status of nāmarūpa is discussed by Śaṅkara 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.

"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 vac as nāmarūpa. Śaṅkara uses the designation vac 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?\(^{49}\)

\(^{45}\) 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* usually translated as "indefinable"). In three places in his commentary *namārūpa* is "described" as *anivacaniya*. In two other places he uses a similar format ("is/is not") to describe the reality of *māyā* and that of the *jīva*.

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

*namārūpa* . . . which can be defined neither as being identical with *Brahman* nor as different from it, evolved but about to be evolved . . .

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

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 *anirvacanīya-khyāti*, 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.*, (2/2/3); 1/4/3.

52 *B.S.B.*, 2/3/50.

53 *B.S.B.*, 2/1/14.

54 *B.S.B.*, 1/1/5.
namarupa, which is evolved as well as unevolved, which is not to be defined as sat or asat.56

It must be understood that Saṅkara 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 Saṅkara defines namarupa 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. Māya (illusion) is namarupa,57 "for māya 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 atma and anātma, of Brahman and vāc, is "indefinable" in

56 B.s.B., 2/1/27.
57 B.s.B., (2/2/3); 1/4/3.
58 B.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 (vac) is indefinable but only that, with reference to Brahman, vac cannot be described. Given the nature of vac, 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 vac and negates the expanse of nāmarūpa (vac) -- the final stage in the vedāntic method of Śaṅkara.

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

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

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

is spoken of as the "reveler of \tilde{n}\text{amar}\tilde{u}\text{pa}".\textsuperscript{62} Brahman is the ground of the world's "existence", "the entire body of effects has no existence apart from Brahman".\textsuperscript{63} The complete revealing of \text{vac} cannot be accomplished except by Brahman.\textsuperscript{64} "Brahman becomes the basis of this entire apparent world with its modifications, etc."\textsuperscript{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".\textsuperscript{66} That is, "as the distinctions of \text{namarupa} originate entirely from \text{vac} (speech, and thus, are unreal) it does not mitigate against the partless Brahman".\textsuperscript{67}

It should be understood that this designation of \text{vac} as neither sat or asat is not a postulation of ontological levels. The world still arises from speech and thus is asat but given Brahman as sat, which it (vac) is

\begin{footnotes}
\item[62] B.s.B., 1/1/22.
\item[63] B.s.B., 2/1/14.
\item[64] B.s.B., 1/3/42.
\item[65] B.s.B., 2/1/27.
\item[66] B.s.B., 2/1/14.
\item[67] B.s.B., 2/1/14.
\end{footnotes}
not, it cannot be any other than anirvacaniya (indefinable) when "compared" with Brahman.
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALOGY AND METAPHOR—BRAHMAN AND THE WORLD

Śaṅkara’s philosophical writings abound with illustrations taken from everyday experience which are "extended" and used to refer to the relationship 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 relationship of Brahman to vac.

Śaṅkara 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 relation which gives rise to the comparison".¹ Thus, analogical relationships are dependent upon both similarity and difference.

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

¹B.s.B., 3/2/21.
the empirical, "analogies of ordinary experience cannot be applied to something learnt from scripture".  

A good example of this point concerns the question of apavāda (sublation). It is defined as occurring 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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4From where else could examples be drawn.
5See p.22 of this work.
6B.s.B., 1/3/19.
"truer" or more complete empirical knowledge. Then, given the nature of Brahman (in this context, in terms of the concept of adhyāsa), only knowledge of Brahman can be said to be unsublatable. However, it should not be considered that knowledge of Brahman stands at the end of a series of apavādas but only as illustrating that empirical knowledge is incomplete, insubstantial and inconclusive, in terms of the knowledge of Brahman.

When discussing the question of what happens to avidyā when knowledge of Brahman 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 apavāda 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 jñāna must thus necessarily be a transformation of pramaṇa fails to recognise the nature of analogy, that is only allowing the analogue to stand as an analogue.\(^8\)

\(^7\) B.S.B., 1/3/19.

\(^8\) Sastri accuses Śaṅkara of inconsistency over this issue, see Collected Papers of S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri (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 apavada. 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 upāchīs, 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 avidya 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.
Sāṅkara 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 mokṣa 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 conscious cannot but exist . . . 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 Sāṅkara insists on the "reality" of the external world we must consider his "model" of perception and his understanding of the nature of knowledge.

Pratīyakṣa (perception)15 is immediate "knowledge". The mind is in direct contact with the object (vṛtti). This knowledge is immediately "valid" for Sāṅkara makes no distinction between truth and validity. All cognitions are svapramāṇa (self-luminous). That is, perception is not of the simple "empiricist" type but yields perceptual knowledge.

13B.s.B., 2/1/14; 1/1/4.

14B.s.B., 2/2/28. See also B.s.B. 2/1/14 for reality of dream object in consciousness.

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

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

¹⁶B.S.B., 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 Śankara 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 Śankara to postulate his "vedāntic 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 vac (speech). All that is not the non-dual Brahman is vac. Vac as nāmarūpa is the world. This world of diversity is name (nāman) and conception (rūpa). As mind (manas) is dependent on vac so

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¹That this is so is best proved by the example of inference which is only possible if the "word" is recollected subsequent to perception.
rupa is dependent upon naman. Thus, namarupa 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 namarupa, Śaṅkara's principles for explicating the nature of the relationship between Brahman and the world, both rest upon vāc.

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

\[ \text{B.S.B.}, 2/1/22. \]
\[ \text{B.S.B.}, 3/2/21. \]
\[ \text{B.S.B.}, 2/1/9; 3/2/21; 2/1/23; 3/2/4. \]
\[ \text{B.S.B.}, 3/2/21. \]
released person would have done it for once and all", 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 vac?

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

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

The concept of adhyasa 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 vac gives rise to both the jiva and the world. As jiva 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 vac 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. Vac in the Rg Veda is a

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8See Rg. Veda, 8/41/3-5.
manifestation of the highest reality revealed to worthy beings 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 Śaṅkara. Brahman is sat, all else is asat; Brahman is ātma, all else is anātma, the logically inexplicable 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 understanding 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 Śaṅkara. 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 Brahman.

In this way all words can be seen as "pointing" to Brahman. Saṅkara asserts nothing of the world except its unreality and this is inexplicable for it can be nothing but Brahman.

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