

CAUSALITY IN ADVAITA METAPHYSICS

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By

STEPHEN LOMAS GADSDEN

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AUTHOR: Stephen Lomas Gadsden, B.A. (Waterloo)

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

Throughout Śaṅkara's bhāṣyas on the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gītā, and Brahma Sūtra, we are entreated to oft elaborate discussions on the principle of causality. These latter discussions are metaphysical in flavour and seem to have as their intent the establishment of a transcendental ground, Brahman. However, on the other hand, there are arguments adopted and utilized by Śaṅkara that deny the causality principle ultimately. This thesis is an attempt to place these seemingly antithetical positions in proper perspective, and to illustrate that the principle of causality, for the Advaita, is no real hermetical principle of Being (Brahman), but only a tentative proposition adopted within the structure of māyā and avidyā. At most causality is a tentative proposition utilized in a endeavour to appease the gods of reason, and not Brahman.

PREFACE

The task of this presentation is a simple one. It seeks to outline the nature, place and function of causality theory in the Advaita Vedanta of Śaṅkarācārya. No doubt on first reading one might conclude, and in one context rightly so, that causality theory is only an incidental aspect of Advaita metaphysics and that there is in fact no causality theory at all. Śaṅkara's substitute for causality is māyā and avidyā. But we must be careful not to fall prey to a confusion of the various contexts wherein the question of causality is respectively treated. Advaita metaphysics is an intricately connected and unified "whole" which, because of its fundamental ontology, dictates that an investigator consistently frame and reframe the contexts in which the Advaitin is speaking. In this it is characteristically Advaitin to understand and interpret discourse about the world as residing eternally within the structure of Being (Brahman), the Absolute Reality. When the Advaitin speaks of the world he is conversely speaking of Brahman, the ontological ground. Hence the investigator must seek to keep in mind two fundamental attitudes when approaching Advaita metaphysics: he must remember that he is entering the subtle paths of a non-dualist vision and must constantly

bear in mind its fundamental ontology, and at the same time remember that for the Advaita the empirical world (vyavahārika) is undeniably real relative to an empirical consciousness. These two ideas may be reductively understood as both an affirmation of the immediacy of unqualified and non-dual Being (Brahman) and negation of the corresponding reality of the universe. The universe is both real and unreal (anirvacanīya); this latter aspect depending upon one's own consciousness of it.

Causality, generally speaking, is also understood in the same light as the universe. It too is both real and unreal. From the ontological standpoint causality (both in its metaphysical and epistemological contexts) is non-existent (asat) while from the ontic standpoint causality is real (sat) and functions in accord with one's consciousness of it. However, causality, which in the Vedānta is denoted parināmavāda¹, is in the Advaita of Śaṅkara sublated by vivartavāda.² Vivarta is intricately linked to the ontological ground, Brahman. Brahman as the all-inclusive whole precludes the notion

¹Parināmavāda is defined as the concept wherein the effect (kārya) is a real modification of the cause (kāraṇa). Compare also page 36ff

²Vivartavāda is defined as the concept wherein the effect is only an illusory or apparent modification of the cause. Compare also page 57ff

of an onto-ontic diversity. Parināmayāda applies solely to what the Advaita labels "duality", the apparent world (prapañca) of name and form (nāmarūpa); while vivartavāda testifies solely to Being.³ Parināmayāda affirms the co-existence of the effect with its respective cause and denotes ultimately the relational dependency of the effect upon its cause. Vivartavāda, on the other hand, illustrates the illusory nature of the effect as an actual modification of its respective cause. The effect (kārya) for all suits and purposes is unreal (asat) thereby establishing the existence only status of the cause (kāraṇa), in this case Brahman. Ideally the following two ślokas of the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad summarize Śaṅkara's position:

That which is non-existent in the beginning and in the end, is necessarily so (non-existent) in the middle. The objects we see are illusions, still they are regarded as real.⁴

The unreal cannot have the unreal as its cause, nor can the real be produced from the unreal. The real cannot be the cause of the real. And it is much more impossible for the real to be the cause of the unreal.⁵

³Being (Sat) is equalified with the denotation, Brahman, unless specified otherwise.

⁴The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad with Gaudapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, 1974), 4.31.

⁵Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, Nikhilananda, 4.40.

The aspect of temporariness that is attributed to causality as an explanatory principle is entirely incumbent upon the Advaita comprehension of Being. However Śaṅkara's understanding of the essential validity or invalidity of causality theory hinges upon the portrayal of the māyāvidyā complex. Māyā and avidyā may be understood, at this point, as heuristic principles of Being (Brahman). They account for the existence-non-existence status of the manifest universe and our experience of it. Like causality theory though, they too are tentative and conditional "reals". They function, like causality, within an ontic frame of reference and thus partake of the necessary twofold character accorded it, i.e., anirvasanīya. From the vyavahārika standpoint māyā accounts for the appearance of the macrocosm (i.e., the cosmos) and the microcosm (i.e., the individual jīva), while avidyā accounts for the individual jīva's experience of it. But from the ontological standpoint neither māyā nor avidyā exist. That is to say, they have never existed, nor can they exist.

Causality is confined to the māyāvidyā complex and thus functions solely in accord with the component natures that both māyā and avidyā constitute.

This thesis is an analysis of these features that are common to both causality and the māyāvidyā complex. Its primary goal is to extricate and analyse the place and function of causality theory in Advaita metaphysics. It is not concerned to any great degree with māyā and avidyā other than as backdrops to causality. In this regard I have treated the general causality theory sat-kārya within the contexts of metaphysics and epistemology insofar as the latter may be understood relative to a phenomenology of consciousness as is outlined in the first chapter of the Māndūkya Upaniṣad. Vivartavāda I have presented within the context of epistemology as qualified in the above. Although it is true that vivarta may ideally represent a metaphysical causality as such, it is asserted in this thesis that vivarta also may very well find its metaphysical roots sunk deep within the general context of consciousness (cit). If the effect (kārya) is really a merely apparent modification of the cause and no real modification in itself, then the cause which by implication must stand alone may correlatively reveal itself as the ground of the apparent modification, i.e., the effect; in short, that only Brahman is. I have attempted to show this possibility in the section entitled "The Theory", in the second chapter.

To Osiris, that great Egyptian god, who
by advent of his incarnation,
has granted man perfectibility

And to my teachers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Chapter I CAUSALITY IN ADVAITA METAPHYSICS

Introduction 1

Aspects of the Major Causality Theories in the Indian Tradition 22

Causality in Advaita Metaphysics 34

Chapter II TOWARDS AN AFFIRMATION OF BEING

Mayāvidyā and Vivartavāda 63

Mayāvidyā: Śaṅkara's Ideal 67

The Theory 76

Chapter III CONCLUSION

Causality as a Hermeneutical Principle 99

Bibliography 108

CHAPTER I

CAUSALITY IN ADVAITA METAPHYSICS

Introduction

To comprehend the concept of causality in Advaita metaphysics one should first attempt an understanding of Śaṅkara's ontology. As was mentioned in the preface, it is a fact that as one speaks of the world so one speaks correlatively of its ontological ground. J.G. Arapura states:

... the central objective of the Vedānta in the Advaitic form ... is to explain how speaking about Brahman, the ultimate Reality, is made possible. The Vedānta knows that philosophy is about Brahman, not about the world or experience. Knowledge about these latter things arises as modes of the knowledge of Brahman. The inalienable connecting link is discourse itself. Therefore māyā must be understood as discourse about Brahman.¹

The very term, Advaita, means not-dual, and it is precisely because of this ontological non-dualism, i.e., Brahman as Sat, that Brahman is said to be revealed in and through discourse itself (māyā). Brahman precludes

¹J.G. Arapura, "Maya and the Discourse about Brahman", in Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta, M. Sprung, ed., (Holland: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1975), p. 112.

the notions of dualism and diversity. Mysore Hiriyanna says:

(The Ultimate) is not mere unity underlying the diversity of the universe, for unity and diversity are relative to each other, and it is impossible to retain the one as real while rejecting the other as an appearance. Both of them are alike appearances and the advaitic ultimate is what is beyond them - their non-phenomenal ground.²

However, even though the fact remains that discourse about the world reveals Brahman as the ontological ground, it is not a reversal of this characteristically Advaitic tendency when and if we begin with the attempt to delineate the nature and scope of the Advaitic Absolute. Just as discourse about the world is simultaneously discourse about Brahman,³ so also discourse about Brahman reveals Brahman (as the indeterminable Reality). The essential indeterminacy ascribed to Brahman is characterized by Śaṅkara in his bhāṣya on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. He says:

By the elimination of all differences due to limiting adjuncts, the words refer to something that has no distinguishing mark such as name, or form, or action, or heterogeneity, or species, or qualities. Words denote things through one or other of these. But Brahman

²Mysore Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy (Bombay: George Allen & Unwin (India) Private Limited, 1973), pp. 371-372.

has none of these distinguishing marks ... Brahman is described by means of name, form and action superimposed (adhyāsa) upon It, in such terms as 'Knowledge, Bliss, Brahman,' ... and 'Pure Intelligence,' 'Brahman;' and 'Atman.' When, however, we wish to describe Its true nature, free from all differences due to limiting adjuncts, then it is an utter impossibility. Then there is only one way left, viz. to describe It as 'Not this, not this,' by eliminating all possible specifications of It that one may know of.³

This is the paradox of Advaita metaphysics. Discourse itself maintains its indicatory capacity, and yet, at the same moment possesses no ideal indicatory capacity. Discourse is characteristically both revealing and obscuring. The revealing aspect of discourse is made manifest through its inherent capacity to delimit the overt tendency to ascribe to Reality a particular and descriptive characterization. In this, Śaṅkara's Absolute is denoted nirviśeṣa-vastu, the non-phenomenal ground. In its obscuring aspect discourse, when utilized in the positive sense above, that is as a hermeneutical principle, necessarily carries the inherent possibility for confusing the description for Reality itself. As Śaṅkara says:

³The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, trans. Swami Madhavananda (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1950), II.3.6.

The known is that which is very much within the grasp of the act of knowing, that which is the object of the verb 'to know'. Inasmuch as everything is known somewhere by somebody, all that is manifested is certainly known. The idea is that, It (Brahman) is different from that. It should be unknown, from what is opposed to the known, from that which consists of the unmanifest ignorance, which is the seed of the manifested.⁴

The obscuring capacity of language as discourse about Brahman is generally thought to include all testimony with the obvious exception of Śruti.⁵ Śaṅkara says,

For a thing that is perceived by the senses can be taught to another through categories denoting class, quality, and action. Brahman is not possessed of these categories ..⁶

He says, "As Brahman is not an object of perception to these, therefore ... we do not know."⁷ Language, which is a product of perceptual knowledge, cannot fathom the Advaitic Brahman. Śaṅkara again says:

⁴Eight Upanisads: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, trans. Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972), vol. I, Kena I.4.

⁵Refer to footnote 13..

⁶Eight Upanisads, vol. I, Kena II.1.

⁷Ibid., vol. I, Kena II.1.

For the knower cannot be known by the knower, just as fire cannot be consumed by the consuming fire; and there is no other knower different from Brahman to whom Brahman can become a separate knowable.⁸

Śaṅkara is quite emphatic that all forms of cognitive activity cannot apprehend the non-dual Reality.⁹ The Mundaka Upaniṣad states:

This Self is not attained through study, nor through the intellect, nor through much hearing. By the very fact that he (i.e. the aspirant) seeks for It, does It become attainable; of him this Self reveals its own nature.¹⁰

In his bhāṣya on Prasna Upaniṣad VI.2 Śaṅkara states that all forms of knowledge are produced out from the threefold cognitive act comprising the knower, the knowledge, and the object-to-be-known. However, the distinguishing mark of the Highest Reality is a ground consciousness. Śaṅkara says:

⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, Kena II.1, 56.

⁹ Eight Upaniṣads: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, trans. Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1973), vol. 2, Aitareya II.1, 49 & 55n, Mundaka I.1.6, 89-90, I.2.1, 95, II.1.1, 114, III.1.7, 154, III.1.8, 155-156, Prasna IV.11, 468, V.1, 470-471; and vol. 1, Kena I.3, 45, I.4, 46, II.1, 56, Kaṭha I.2.8, 132-133, I.2.9, 134-135, I.2.23, 148-149, II.3.12, 210.

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. 2, III.2.3, 161.

Consciousness is proved to be invariable from the fact that Consciousness remains unchanged even when objects change in their essence, and because anything, that is known in anyway, emerges to consciousness only as such an object of knowledge.¹¹

And:

We hold that things knowable are objects of knowledge, but knowledge itself is not known. The knowable are ever knowable, and so is knowledge ever knowledge.¹²

The twofold character of language is revealed further in Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on the Bhagavad Gītā:

The Self is unknowable, - not determinable by the senses (pratyakṣa) or any other means of knowledge ... the Self is self-determined (svata-siddha). When the Self, the knower (pramatr), has been determined, then only is possible a search for proper authorities on the part of the knower with a view to obtain right knowledge. In fact, without determining the Self - 'I am I' - none seeks to determine the knowable objects. Indeed the Self is unknown (aprasiddha) to nobody. And the Scripture (Sāstra) which is the final authority obtains its authoritativeness regarding the Self, as serving only to eliminate the adhyaropana or superimposition (on the Self) of the attributes alien to Him, but not as revealing what has been altogether unknown.¹³

¹¹Ibid., vol. 2, Praśna VI.2, 484.

¹²Ibid., vol. 2, Praśna VI.2, 487.

¹³The Bhagavad-Gītā: with the Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya, trans. A. Mahadeva Sastri (Madras: V. Ramaswamy Sastri & Sons, 1972), II.18, 39.

The Self (Ātman), which in the Advaita is identical with the Brahman, stands as a self-revealed fact. It is opposed to the ideas of process-in-revelation or dynamic becoming. The unqualified nature of the Self (i.e., Being) stands alone and distinct.¹⁴ Language functions as a mediator between the eternally established fact of Being and our independent understanding. Language points to Ātman by showing the distinct limitations of language itself (e.g., one can never know the knower, nor can one ever think apart from the thinker), and by paradoxically revealing its own inherent limitations as a means of apprehending Reality. Language leads both to the primordial sense of Being insofar as it reveals the ultimate limits of the understanding, and also, to the correlative sense of Non-being insofar as language reveals the conditions of the understanding.

Textual References and the Meaning of Being,

Consciousness and Bliss

In Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on the Īśā Upaniṣad the Self or Ātman is defined as pure, without sin, one, eternal, incorporeal, and omnipresent.¹⁵ The Self is all-pervasive, and

¹⁴Ibid., II.21, 46, II.25, 51, III.42, 117, XIII.2, 324, XIII.2, 334, XIII.12, 344-347, XIII.13, 349, XVIII.50, 488, XVIII.51, 489.

¹⁵Eight Upaniṣads; vol. I, Īśā, p. 3.

unconditioned, devoid of worldly attributes, and immutable.¹⁶ In Kena Upaniṣad Śaṅkara denotes the Self as the eternal cognizer of all cognition, the witness, the power of consciousness, undifferentiated, immortal, and Self-effulgent.¹⁷ The Self is unity, immediate¹⁸, subtle and great - the supreme goal¹⁹, untainted²⁰, and identical to Brahman²¹. The Self is existent, free, transcendental, neither gross nor subtle, changeless, unsupporting, and inexpressible.²² The Self (or Ātman) is the same as Brahman, the first cause and ground of the multiple universe - the imperceptible, unembodied, the source.²³ The Self is beyond all names (nāma), forms (rūpa)

¹⁶Ibid., vol. I, Īśā I.4, 10.

¹⁷Ibid., vol. I, Kena 2.4, 63-65.

¹⁸Ibid., vol. I, Kaṭha I.2.8, 132-133.

¹⁹Ibid., vol. I, Kaṭha I.3.11, 161.

²⁰Ibid., vol. I, Kaṭha II.2.11, 194.

²¹Ibid., vol. I, Kaṭha II.2.16, 198.

²²Ibid., vol. I, Kaṭha II.3.13, 211-212.

²³Ibid., vol. I, Taittirīya II.5.1, 320-322; also Taittirīya II.7.1, 341-347. It is important to note that it is not my intention to evaluate Śaṅkara's characterization. I merely wish to establish Śaṅkara's understanding of the Advaita Absolute as given us in Gambhirananda's translation. It is also not my intention to account for his translation.

and action (karma), all-pervasive, omnipotent, undecaying, conscious (cit), one without a second.²⁴ The Ātman is the thinker behind thought²⁵, "beyond all words and thoughts."²⁶ Śaṅkara says, "Brahman alone is the highest of all high things, by virtue of Its freedom from all defects."²⁷ Brahman and Self are taintless, partless, without ignorance, and "the witness of all intellectual modifications."²⁸ As witness of all intellectual modifications, the Self is the Self-luminous fact of Being²⁹ - it is featureless, super-sensuous, the supreme cause.³⁰ Brahman and Self (Ātman) are without form, unattained and unattainable, unattached, tranquil, without mediation.³¹ Brahman is the abode of all, shining of and by itself.³² In Gītā II.17-20 Brahman, Śaṅkara declares, is and always has been ever-existent; there never has been a

²⁴Eight Upaniṣads, vol. 2, Aitareya I.1.1, 15, 20f.

²⁵Ibid., vol. 2, Aitareya II.1, 48.

²⁶Ibid., vol. 2, Aitareya III.1.3, 73.

²⁷Ibid., vol. 2, Mundaka II.2.1, 129.

²⁸Ibid., vol. 2, Mundaka II.2.9, 139-140.

²⁹Ibid., vol. 2, Mundaka II.2.10, 141.

³⁰Ibid., vol. 2, Mundaka III.1.7, 154.

³¹Ibid., vol. 2, Mundaka III.1.8, 155-156; also Mundaka III.2.1, 159.

³²Ibid., vol. 2, Mundaka III.2.6, 166; also Mundaka III.2.1, 159.

time when Brahman, as the ontological ground, has not existed. The anteriority of Brahman is, for Śaṅkara, an implied condition of all statements expressing the qualitative nature of Brahman. Brahman is the Real (Sat), the Absolute, the Inexhaustible, uncreate, primeval and qualityless.³³ Brahman is homogeneous, without distinction or particulars,³⁴ non-aggregate,³⁵ free from delusion (avidyā).³⁶

³³Bhagavad-Gītā, pp. 38-42.

³⁴Ibid., V.18-19, 171-173. See also Eight Upaniṣads, vol. I, Kaṭha I.3.8, 158, II.3.15, 214; Taittirīya II.5.1, 320-325; vol. 2, Aitareya I.1.2, 22-24; Māṇḍūkya II.1.10, 127, III.1.3, 147-148.

³⁵The Chāndogya Upaniṣad: A Treatise on Vedānta Philosophy Translated into English with The Commentary of Śaṅkara, by Dr. Sir Ganganatha Jha (Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1942), III.9.1, 133, III.12.1, 138, III.14.1, 150-152, III.17.7, 164, III.19.1, 172-173, IV.15.5, 210-212, V.10.2, 249-255, VI.8.7, 339-340, VI.11.2, 344-345, VI.14.2, 351-356, VII.26.1, 410, VIII.12.5, 483, VIII.14.1, 486-487.

³⁶The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, trans. Swami Madhavananda (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1950), III.8.8, II.4.11.12, IV.4.23, 24, 25, II.3.1.6, II.3.6, I.4.7, I.4.8, I.4.10, II.1.20, II.5.14-15, II.4.5, II.4.6, III.5.1, IV.3.18, IV.4.6, IV.4.20, IV.4.22, IV.5.15, IV.4.12, IV.3.6, & III.4.2. . . Also, The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad with Gauḍapada's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1936), I.2, I.6.7, I.6.9, I.7, I.7.17, I.12, I.12.26, etc. For further references to the above concept please refer to section three of chapter two, entitled, "The Theory".

In Taittirīya Upaniṣad II.1.1, Brahman is described as Truth (Satya), Knowledge (Jñāna), and Infinity (Ananta). In his bhāṣya on the above, Śaṅkara endeavours to delineate the proper meaning and contexts in which the above formula is to be situated. The Upaniṣad itself runs as follows:

The knower of Brahman attains the highest.
Here is a verse uttering that very fact:
'Brahman is truth, knowledge, and infinite'
[satyam jñānamānantam brahma]. He who knows
that Brahman as existing in the intellect,
lodged in the supreme space in the heart,
enjoys, as identified with the all-knowing
Brahman, all desirable things simultaneously.
From that Brahman, which is the Self,
was produced space. From space emerged air.
From air was born fire. From fire was created
water. From water sprang up earth. From
earth were born the herbs. From the herbs
was produced food. From food was born man.
That man, such as he is, is a product of the
essence of food: Of him, this, indeed, is
the head; this is the southern side; this
is the northern side; this is the Self;
this is the stabilizing tail³⁷

Commenting upon this passage Śaṅkara says, that Brahman as the highest Reality is attained by the realization of it.³⁸ Realization implies the non-recognizance of Brahman originally. This non-recognition of the ontological ground is occasioned by and

³⁷Eight Upaniṣads, vol. I, II.1.1, 286-287.

³⁸Ibid., vol. I, p. 288.

through the mis-identification of one's Self (Ātman) with the apparent reality of the individual and the objective world of name and form (nāmarūpa).³⁹ In realizing the essential non-duality and identity of the Self (Ātman) and Brahman one becomes that ground.

Now the terms satyam, jñānam, and anantam, says Śaṅkara, are meant as definitions of Brahman.⁴⁰ He says:

... the three words beginning with satya are meant to distinguish Brahman which is the substantive.⁴¹ And from the fact that Brahman is the thing intended to be known, it follows that Brahman is the substantive. Since Brahman is sought to be presented as the chief object of knowledge - the knowable must be the substantive. And just because (Brahman and satya etc.) are related as the substantive and its attributives, the words beginning with satya have the same case-ending, and they stand in apposition.⁴² Brahman, being qualified by the three adjectives⁴³, satya etc., is marked out from other nouns. Thus, indeed, does a thing become known when it is differentiated from others⁴⁴

³⁹Ibid., vol. I, p. 289.

⁴⁰Ibid., vol. I, p. 290.

⁴¹The term 'substantive' means a thing maintaining a separate existence; grammatically, a noun as distinct from the noun-adjective or adjective. It essentially implies independence.

⁴²Apposition means the placing of a word in syntactic parallelism with another; that is, adding one noun to another.

⁴³Adjective means additional and dependent, i.e., as in the case of a noun-adjective; an attribute added to the noun to describe the noun more fully.

⁴⁴Eight Upanisads, vol. I, p. 290.

The adjectival function of the formula satyam jñānamanantam is, according to Śaṅkara, strictly (or predominantly) definitive in character, as opposed to the qualitative sense.⁴⁵ The basic difference between the definitive function of adjectival nouns relative to the substantive, and the qualifying function of adjectival nouns relative to the substantive is that in the case of the latter function the adjectives distinguish the substantive (i.e., Brahman) from things of its own class; whereas in the case of the former definitive function it merely seeks to mark "it [i.e., Brahman]" out from everything else."⁴⁶ Śaṅkara states:

The words, satya etc., are unrelated among themselves, since they subserve something else; they are meant to be applied to the substantive. Accordingly, each of the attributive words is thus related with the word Brahman, independently of the others: satyam brahma, jñānam brahma, anantam brahma. As for satya, a thing is said to be satya, true, when it does not change the nature that is ascertained to be its own; and a thing is said to be unreal when it changes the nature that is ascertained to be its own. Hence a mutable thing is unreal So the phrase satyam brahma (Brahman is truth) distinguishes Brahman from unreal things.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid., vol. I, p. 291.

⁴⁶Loc. cit.

⁴⁷Eight Upanisads, vol. I, pp. 291-292.

As J.G. Arapura says:

Sat (Being) is the primary ontological reality, while Cit (Consciousness) and Ananda (Bliss) remain its 'own-signs'. These are called signs because⁴⁸ they are not logical implications or entailments, and because they are the essence, not attributes⁴⁹

Śaṅkara denotes the adjectival noun jñānam as meaning "knowledge" or "consciousness".⁵⁰ The substantive jñāna conveys the idea of the verb root, √jñā, to know - "and being an attribute of Brahman along with truth and infinitude, it does not indicate the agent of knowing."⁵¹ Brahman is distinguished from the ideas of (a) agentship of knowledge, (b) the knowable (i.e., things that comprise the actual content of and for the agent as knowing subject), and (c) knowledge per se. Brahman, while independent of satya (or sat)⁵², is pure undifferentiated Knowledge which may in turn be understood as Consciousness (or Cit).⁵³

⁴⁸Sign may be understood as a symbol or representative denotation of Brahman and not Brahman itself. They represent its essence.

⁴⁹J.G. Arapura, "Language and Phenomena", in Canadian Journal of Theology, XVI (1970)

⁵⁰Eight Upanisads, vol. I, p. 292.

⁵¹Loc. cit.

⁵²Compare footnote 47.

⁵³Compare also Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad IV.4.20, 745.

J.G. Arapura's statement that both satya and jñāna, and ananda, are not attributes but the essence of the ontological Reality, Brahman, is no doubt correct. For all three denotations, Sat, (Being), Cit (Consciousness), and Ananda (or Ananta) are⁵⁴ constituents⁵⁵, or constitutive of Brahman. The term attribute⁵⁶ should not be understood, according to Śaṅkara,

⁵⁴Ananda is defined as joyless and/or cheerless. Ananta, on the other hand, may be understood as endless, boundless, eternal, or infinite. Ananda may be defined as happiness or enjoyment or pure happiness (as in the case of an attributive qualifier of Brahman). In the case of the formula, Satcidānanda, ananda or "bliss" also means inferentially, according to Śaṅkara, the lack of suffering in the form of avidyā or ignorance and wrong views (mithyāvāda). Duality (dvaitavāda) which is the result of this primordial avidyā is sublated in turn by Brahman, the non-dual ontological ground. The term, ananda, as a negative denotation means the negation of specific qualifiers contained within the positive ananda, bliss. The term, ananta, means in turn that which is infinite as opposed to the finite; ananta carries within itself the twofold character of negation and affirmation: (a) ananta denies the inherent particular (as universal constituents of Brahman), i.e., particularizations of form and substance, etc., thereby revealing Brahman as infinite, eternal, and homogeneous; (b) ananta affirms the anteriority of Brahman as the ground of the multiple universe. The interjection of the term, ananda, plays a similar role as ananta in its negative aspect insofar as ananda is not predicative of Brahman, but that it denies only the inherent possibility for predication in the term ananda. To put it another way: if Brahman is ananda, then Consciousness (Cit) must also comprise the agent of Consciousness in relation to the objects of that Consciousness. This militates against the Advaitin notion.

⁵⁵The term, 'constituent', may be understood as meaning essential and/or component part.

⁵⁶The term, 'attribute', has various meanings. Its primary meaning is, characteristic quality, a quality ascribed to any thing. Quality may be entreated as a relative characteristic trait. The distinction between both attribute and quality

to represent a qualifying and denotative function. Sāṃkara states:

... it stands to reason to say that Brahman cannot be expressed in words such as 'sat'; for every word employed to denote a thing denotes that thing - when heard by another - as associated with a certain genus, or a certain act, or a certain quality, or a certain mode of relation. Thus: cow and horse imply genera, cook and teacher imply acts, white and black imply qualities, wealthy and cattle-owner imply possession. But Brahman belongs to no genus wherefore it cannot be denoted by such words as 'sat (existent)'. Being devoid of attributes it possesses no qualities. If it were possessed of qualities, then it could be denoted by a word implying an act It is not related to anything else; for it is one, it is without a second, it is no object (of any sense). It is the very Self. Wherefore, it is but right to say that it can be denoted by no word at all; and the passages of the śruti like the following point to the same thing:

'Whence (i.e., away from Brahman, unable to approach Brahman) all words return,'
- (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2-4-1).⁵⁷

may be further illustrated by (1) entreating the attribute as pertaining to the actual properties of a thing or object, while understanding the quality as that which is a property, characteristic, peculiarity, or inherent property; and (2) by portraying quality as the inherent qualifiers of a finite entity, and attribute as pertaining to the totality of being of an infinite entity, e.g., God. In metaphysics, an attribute is what is indispensable to a spiritual or material substance, or that without which a thing is unthinkable. Sat, Cit, and Ananta are attributes of Brahman only insofar as they indicate or point to the incomprehensible Brahman from a distinctly objective or phenomenal standpoint. Within the structure of Being Sat, Cit and Ananda are not attributes but are its essence.

⁵⁷ Bhagavad-Gītā, XIII.12, 346-347.

The concept of definition is, for the Advaita, a necessary means whereby the truth of the ontological Reality may be reconciled to a degree with a non-ontological viewpoint. Definition serves only to remove those characterizations of Being (Brahman) that seek to denote or depict that Reality. As Śaṅkara makes clear, definition merely separates out those particular aspects of Being which are of a common genus from those that are not. Genus is a common circumscription comprising certain common features. For example, in the case of a clay pot (i.e., Brahman) it is itself comprised of clay, name (nāma) and form (rūpa), pot and pot-ness respectively. Now the clay pot is the common genus, while the common features are clay, pot, form, existence, colour, pot-ness, and variation. The definition, clay pot, infers all of the features while negating in turn all other possible characteristics that might be attributed to it. For example, one might wish to attempt to attribute "horse-ness" or "cow-ness" to the genus "pot-ness". A horse and cow, and clay pot are, obviously, irreconciliable. This, then, is the meaning that Śaṅkara attributes to the concept of definition:

... the sentence ['That is the Infinite in which one does not know anything else. And that in which one knows anything is limited.'] is intended to enunciate a definition of the Infinite. The sentence ... is devoted wholly to the presentation of the distinguishing

characteristics of Brahman.⁵⁸

According to Śaṅkara's interpretation of definition then, by way of the application of the phrase, "satyam jñānamānantam brahma", the Absolute Reality is indicated as (a) existing; (b) as an anterior mode or form of existence; (c) and as neither an existent nor non-existent entity, since to state that Brahman exists is to inferentially state that Brahman does, or may have in earlier times, not-existed.⁵⁹ This latter notation illustrates well the distinction to be made between "essence" and attribute; to say unequivocally that some thing exists is to also infer the possibility of that thing's non-existence either in the past or in the near future. The Advaitic Brahman is beyond attributive qualification, and is at most Being (Sat).

Jñāna (Knowledge as Consciousness or Cit) is, like satya, signs of Brahman. In this jñāna is purely descriptive. Jñāna indicates (a) that Brahman is Knowledge as Consciousness, and excludes all that which may be portrayed as not Knowledge such as cosmic and individual nescience (Māyā and Avidyā, respectively); (b) that Knowledge is also anterior to knowing as in the threefold cognitive

⁵⁸Eight Upanisads, vol. I, Taittirīya II.2.1, 292.

⁵⁹Compare footnote 2 of this chapter.

formula of knowledge, knower, and object to be known; (c) and that Knowledge (Jñāna) is not attributive due to the fact that not-knowing (or ignorance) must in turn exist as an undeniable attribute of Brahman and Brahman-experience. Jñāna, like Sat, is Brahman, or to put it more accurately, the Brahman-essence.

With regard to ananta Śaṅkara says:

Recognizing the well-known principle that one sees something that is different from oneself, the nature of the Infinite ananta is expressed ... by declaring that the Infinite is that in which that kind of action [i.e., knowing something as different from the agent, and as agent apart from Consciousness per se] does not exist. Thus, since the expression, 'anything else', is used ... for obviating the recognized fact of duality, the sentence is not intended to prove the existence of action (the act of knowing) in one's Self. And since there is no split in one's Self, cognition is impossible (in It). Moreover, if the Self be a knowable, there will remain no one else (as a knower) to know It, since the Self is already postulated as the knowable.⁶⁰

... the word jñāna (knowledge), having been used adjectivally along with truth [satya] and infinitude [ananta], is derived in the cognate sense of the verb, and it is used to form the phrase, jñānam brahma (Brahman is knowledge), in order to rule out (from Brahman) all instrumentality as that of an agent, as also for denying non-consciousness as that of earth etc.⁶¹

⁶⁰Eight Upanisads, vol. I, Taittiriya II.2.1, 293.

⁶¹Loc. cit.

The term, ananta, denotes the same function as both satya and jñāna. Its purpose is to distinguish and regulate the functions of satya and jñāna insofar as satya is not limited, i.e., it comprises a different genus type - advaitam-brahma, and jñāna is not limited, i.e., as in the cognitive formula of knower, knowing, known. Ananta is, like its companions, merely definitive, and yet at the same time represents the Brahman-essence.⁶² Śaṅkara again says:

... if they satya, etc. are meaningful, as having the senses of truth etc., they can justifiably differentiate their substantive Brahman from other substantives that are possessed of opposite qualities. And the word Brahman, too, has its own individual meaning.⁶³ Among these words, the word, ananta, becomes an adjective by way of negating finitude; whereas the words, satya and jñāna, become adjectives even while imparting their own positive senses to the substantive.⁶⁴

Agentship that is in the form of the knower, cannot be attributed to Brahman since the transcendental Knowledge (Jñāna) is pure, undifferentiated, homogeneous and self

⁶²Gambhirananda says: "Etymologically, the word satya indicates an existing entity that is not sublated; the word jñāna means the self-revealing cognition of things; and the word ananta is used with regard to something pervasive. Hence they negate opposite ideas by the very fact of their imparting their own meanings to the substances ... they cannot be reduced to mere negation." Eight Upanisads, vol. I, p. 294n.

⁶³Compare Gambhirananda's notation, Eight Upanisads, vol. I, p. 295n.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 295. In his bhāṣya (pp. 296ff) Śaṅkara provides further illustration of the meaning of the phrase

revealing. It is commonly portrayed as self-luminous light (jyoti); and as Consciousness (Cit).⁶⁵

satyam jñānamanantam brahma. In the case of the substantive jñāna (from the verb root jñā, meaning "to know"), it does not imply the meaning of the verb as "knowing". It is Sāṃkara's belief that knowledge per se is the true nature of the Self (Ātman). It is only by and through the apparent diversification of Knowledge (as Consciousness) (e.g., accommodated through Buddhi or Intellect, Ahaṃkāra or Egoity, and Manas or Mind, etc.) that the very term Knowledge (Jñāna) and the verb root jñā ("to know") are entreated as predications of Brahman-Ātman (i.e., as attributive qualifications or qualities). Sāṃkara states, "But the Consciousness of Brahman is inherent in Brahman and is inalienable from It, just as the light of the sun is from the sun or the heat of fire is from fire. Consciousness is not dependent on any other cause for its (revelation); for it is by nature eternal (light)." Eight Upaniṣads, vol. I, p. 296. Brahman is, thus, identical with Knowledge. Jñāna, like Sat, is its essence, and therefore, is not attributive as in the general function or activity of knowing in the mundane sense. This latter type of knowledge is generated knowledge and therefore incomplete and finite. For Sāṃkara this type of knowledge is not true knowledge (satyam jñāna). True Knowledge assumes the form of uncreate, self-manifesting and undifferentiated Consciousness, the esse of Knowledge.

⁶⁵Sāṃkara says, "(Brahman) cannot even be denoted by the word jñāna (knowledge). Because Brahman is not the agent of cognition. Still Brahman is indicated, but not denoted, by the word knowledge which really stands for a verisimilitude of Consciousness as referring to an attribute of the intellect; for Brahman is free from such things as class etc., which make the use of the word (knowledge) possible. Similarly, Brahman is not denoted even by the word satya (truth), since Brahman is by nature devoid of all distinctions. In this way, the word satya, which means external reality in general, can indirectly refer to Brahman (in such expressions) as 'Brahman is truth', but it cannot denote It. Thus the words truth etc., occurring in mutual proximity and restricting and being restricted in turn by each other distinguish Brahman from other objects

Aspects of the Major Causality Theories
In the Indian Tradition

Regarding the Indian philosophical tradition as a whole, there are four major theories of causation. The two main and most familiar are Satkārya-vāda and Asatkārya-vāda. Under the former category are two derivative theories common to the Vedānta tradition. They are Parināmavāda and Vivartavāda. Under the latter category are Ārambhavāda and Pratītya-samutpāda-vāda. Ārambhavāda is commonly held by the atomistic schools (i.e., Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) and Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. Pratītya-samutpāda-vāda is distinctly Buddhist. The remaining two theories of the major four are Svabhāva-vāda or Yadrocchāvāda of the materialist school (i.e., Cārvāka), and Sad-asatkārya-vāda of the Jains and theistic schools of the Vedānta.⁶⁶

denoted by the words truth etc., and thus become fit for defining It as well. So, in accordance with the Vedic texts, 'Failing to reach which (Brahman), words, along with the mind turn back' (Tai. II.iv.1), and '(Whenever an aspirant gets fearlessly established in this changeless, bodiless,) inexpressible, and unsupporting Brahman' (Tai. II.vii.1), it is proved that Brahman is indescribable, and that unlike the construction of the expression 'a blue lotus', Brahman is not to be construed as the import of any sentence." Eight Upanisads, vol. I, pp. 297-298.

⁶⁶For a brief classification of the various causal theories see Mahesh Chandra Bhartiya, Causation in Indian Philosophy (Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakshan, 1973), p. 30.

Sad-asatkārya-vāda or Anekanta-vāda⁶⁷ of the Jaina philosophy is based upon the conception of substance (dravya).⁶⁸ Reality (Sat) is comprised of a certain substantiality which is comprised of both gunas or qualities which stand in relation to substance (dravya) as essential qualities of the substance, and parvāyas or modes which stand as accidental properties, i.e., as changing forms of the substance.⁶⁹ Reality (Satdravya) is both permanent as in the case of the gunas and impermanent as in the case of the parvāyas or modes. Causality is, for the Jains, a direct consequence of the substance aspect of Reality. In an attempt to reconcile the differences between the satkārya-vādins and the asatkārya-vādins the Jains interpret causality as comprising both the partial residency of the effect (kārya) in its cause (kāraṇa), and the partial non-residency of the effect in its cause; the effect is both different and non-different from its respective cause. This is what is meant by the formula sad (existence) asat (non-existence) kārya (of the effect) vāda (theory).

⁶⁷K.H. Potter, Presuppositions of India's Philosophies (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India (Private) Ltd., 1965), p. 114f.

⁶⁸Loc. cit. See also Bhartiya, Causation, p. 106.

⁶⁹Bhartiya, Causation, p. 107.

Svabhāva-vāda or Yadṛochā-vāda is strictly materialist in its origins and application. Bhartiya says that the Cārvākas, who adopt this theory, are extreme materialists:

(they believe) in the validity of only perception as a means of right knowledge and, thus, propounding the reality of only that which is perceptible. They deny also the relation of cause and effect as it cannot be established on the basis of perception. The relation of cause and effect is on that of invariable concomitance (vyāpti)⁷⁰ and perception is not competent enough to establish this invariable concomitance between cause and effect.⁷¹

Antecedent and consequent events occur no doubt; for example when a billiard ball (a) approaches a stationary ball (b) this represents the antecedent event; when billiard ball (b) moves away from billiard ball (a) this represents the consequent event; however we do not actually perceive the concomitance of ball (a) striking ball (b). Also, according to the Cārvākas if actual concomitance does occur there is no reason to view it as occurring universally (e.g., as in the case of erroneous perception).

But for the Cārvākas to account for various events that one perceives they adopted the theories of Svabhāva-

⁷⁰Vyāpti may be understood as pervasion in the sense of inherence and inseparable presence of one thing in another; for example, light in fire.

⁷¹Bhartiya, Causation, p. 33.

vāda or naturalism⁷² and Yadrochā-vāda or accidentalism.⁷³

The former represents the natural inhering trait or characteristic of things found in nature, e.g., the heat in fire, and the wet-ness in rain or dew.⁷⁴ The latter represents the accidental or spontaneous arising of effects that depend on no specific causes; it is the accidental or chance conjunction of two events.⁷⁵

Asatkārya-vāda may be briefly defined as the theory of the non-inherence of the effect in its cause.⁷⁶ That is, the effect does not reside in its cause which is, consequently, an entirely new entity. Asatkārya-ārambhavāda is adopted as an alternative to Satkārya-vāda by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. Causation in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school is a large and intricate system.⁷⁷ According to

⁷²Loc. cit.

⁷³Bhartiya, Causation, p. 33.

⁷⁴See Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad II.2.

⁷⁵See Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad I.2.

⁷⁶Bhartiya, Causation, p. 29. Also Potter, Presuppositions, p. 111.

⁷⁷It would be unfair to the atomist philosophers to pretend that what will be said here represents an adjudicating and fair account of their theories of causation. But for our purposes a brief reduction of the major themes is enough.

Bhartiya there are three types of causes in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system: samavāyi-kāraṇa (inherent cause); asamavāyi-kāraṇa (non-inherent cause), and nimitta-kāraṇa (efficient or instrumental cause).⁷⁸ For our purposes it is enough to elaborate upon the inherent cause as it is of the greatest philosophical import for the atomist thinkers.

C. Sharma defines Vaiśeṣika philosophy as a "pluralistic realism which emphasizes that diversity is the soul of the universe."⁷⁹ The Vaiśeṣikas maintain that the universe is comprised of six padārthas or categories.⁸⁰ Again, for our purposes dravya (substance) and guṇa (quality) are the two categories most important for the concept of inherence. The ground of the material substance of the world are indestructable atoms comprising the gross substances, earth, fire, air, and water. The other five dravyas are ether, time, space, soul, and manas which are eternal as well. Atoms are imperceptible and are the material cause of mahat-parimāṇa (gross and manifest universe); they become larger compounds through a process of a multiple combination of atoms.⁸¹ The second group of substances, i.e., ether, time, space, soul

⁷⁸Bhartiya, Causation, p. 155.

⁷⁹C. Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), p. 175.

⁸⁰I.e., dravya (substance), guṇa (quality), karma (action), sāmānya (universality), viśeṣa (particularity), samavaya (inseparable relation, inherence), and abhāva (or non-existence; a seventh category).

⁸¹Bhartiya, Causation, p. 130.

and manas (mind) are further divisible into two groups: (a) non-psychic, and (b) psychic. Ether, time and space are non-psychic insofar as they are subtle, insentient, all-pervasive and one. They are universals and as such do not possess the padārtha, sāmānya. Space and time are the instrumental causes of all products (e.g., phenomena), while ether is the inherent cause of sound.⁸² Soul and manas are, unlike the latter, psychic; they apply to the general criterion of knowledge. They mutually condition each other since the soul is multiple and all-pervasive, and is respectively accompanied by manas.

Guna or quality is that element which inheres in a substance, e.g., colour (rūpa), taste (rasa), smell (gandha), knowledge (buddhi), etc., : "while a substance can exist independently, a quality cannot do so; it always subsists in a substratum."⁸³

That a quality naturally inheres in a substance is the sine qua non of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy. To understand or comprehend a certain quality as residing in many things is to denote that presence sāmānya (generality or universality). For example, there are many qualities common to cows in general; those qualities, or for that matter, quality, which is

⁸²Ibid., p. 131. Time is the foundation of all notions of priority, posteriority, simultaneity, etc. Space, on the other hand, is co-extensive with time and deals expressly with visible phenomena.

⁸³Ibid., p. 132.

common to many cows, i.e., cowness, represents the universal. Universality of qualities gathers those qualities into a specific class or classes.⁸⁴ Universality is also divided into para (higher) and apara (lower). Para is denoted "being" (satta) and depicts the highest form of universality. Apara-samānya is always related to sattasamānya; it denotes the relation to other universals (examples of aparasamānya are dravya, guna, etc.).⁸⁵ Viśeṣa (particularity) represents the category that allows for the distinction between things (i.e., in both cases of para-avarasamānya).⁸⁶

This brings us to the idea of inherence proper. As we have noted previously there is a natural distinction between substance (dravya) and property which resides in the substance (i.e., quality or guna). They do not exist apart, separately, although from the standpoint of logic we might expect to en- treat them as such. Samavāya (inherence) is "the relation subsisting between things which are inseparable and stand to one another in the relation of the container and the contained, being the cause of the notion 'this is in that.'"⁸⁷ Bhartiya distinguishes between inherence and the idea, conjunction;

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 135.

⁸⁵Sāmānya is common to dravya, guna and karman only, and not to samānya itself, or viśeṣa, samavāya or abhāva.

⁸⁶Loc. cit. ⁸⁷Bhartiya, Causation, p. 136.

whereas conjunction denotes the conjoining of two entities which can subsequently be separated apart, inherence connotes an inseparable relation between two existing entities. Inherence is said to exist in five connections:⁸⁸ (1) quality inhering in a substance; (2) movement (karman) inherent in substances; (3) universal or class inherent in padārthas, substance, quality or movement; (4) particularity inherent in eternal substances, and (5) the "whole" in its parts.

Now returning to the three-fold classification of Cause (kāraṇa), inherency (samavāya) is adopted as a formal causal type. Bhartiya defines the idea of inherent cause (samavāyī-kāraṇa) as "that wherein the effect is produced through the relation of inherence."⁸⁹ For example, the threads of a cloth are the inherent cause of the cloth, while the cloth is in turn the inherent cause of the colour. The actual relation of inherence (samavāya-sambandha) is defined as "'that by virtue of which it may be said of cause and effect that the one is in the other,' i.e., through which the subsistence of effect in the cause is recognized."⁹⁰ Other definitions of samavāya-sambandha are: "the relation between two things which are ayutasiddhas and which bear the character of container and contained and thus, which is the basis of the idea that this is that."⁹¹ Ayutasiddha entities are described as

⁸⁸Loc. cit.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 155.

⁹⁰Loc. cit.

⁹¹Bhartiya, Causation, p. 156.

mutually dependent relations, examples of which are, substance and qualities, individual and genus, eternal substance and particularity (i.e., sāmānya and viśeṣa), and "whole" (avayavin) and part. In reality the "whole" is dependent upon its parts (in keeping with the earlier mentioned mahat-parimāṇa), except during the period of destruction during which the parts are unmanifest, and subsequently, the "whole" also. What is of interest here is that, according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the anteriority of the cause over the effect represents an established and consequential phenomenon of the momentary existence of the effect after its cause has been destroyed. "Thus where a substance in the form of 'whole' is destroyed, first its parts are destroyed, and then after a moment, the 'whole' is destroyed ... for one moment, the 'whole' ... (stays) without any substratum."⁹² Within the context of causality theory, inherence allows for the simultaneous occupation of the same "space" by two different and separate substances, and hence avoids the difficulties arising out from the concept of material cause and its effects.⁹³ The mutual affinity of cause and effect (e.g., as in the analogy of the iron ball and the fire residing in it), although both absolutely different, allows the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika to avoid the

⁹²Loc. cit.

⁹³One such problem is the idea of Brahman as material cause evolving into its effect, e.g., the diverse and multiple universe.

difficulties inculcated by both a realistic and pluralistic vision of Reality, and at the same time maintain the latter.

Asatkārya-ārambhavāda, as is illustrated by the inherence relation, denotes the differences or distinctions naturally residing between the cause (as parts in the form of atoms) and the effect (i.e., the "whole" comprised of its respective parts); also, the non-residence of the effect in its cause (as fully evolved but not yet manifest); and, that the effect has no existence prior or anterior to the existence of the cause.⁹⁴

Asatkārya-pratītya-samutpāḍavāda⁹⁵ is represented in Early Buddhism as the theory of Dependent Origination or Conditioned Genesis. It holds, basically, that the effect

⁹⁴The basic differences between the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Pūrva Mīmāṃsā are: (1) refutation of the inherence relation by Kumārila, and its acceptance by Prabhākara; (2) the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika three-fold causal relation required to accomplish an effect is refuted by the Mīmāṃsā and understand the effect as having any one cause and not a plurality of causes; (3) Mīmāṃsā refutes abhāva (non-existence) as an instrumental causal agency (nimitta kāraṇa); (4) whereas the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika regard the avayavin (or "whole") to be completely different from its parts, the Mīmāṃsā holds that the avayavin is both different and non-different from its parts; Kumārila accepts the concept of identity, whereas Prabhākara accepts inherence, and (5) that "potency" (śakti), the distinct category that resides in the cause (as distinct from the cause), e.g., fire, and the burning power of fire (the latter representing śakti), is accepted by both Prabhākara (understood as separate and distinct, residing in the cause) and Kumārila (understood as a quality); while the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika do not accept the distinction between potency and cause.

⁹⁵In the Early Hinayana (Theravāda), causality was understood in the context of Dependent Origination (Pratītya-sam-utpāda). See Th. Stcherbatsky, The Concept of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, p. 39 (Bibliography). I quote him here:

arises out from its initial and respective cause, and that with the emergence of the effect, the cause ceases to exist. The effect is an entirely new entity, and thus is non-resident in its respective cause.

Satkārya-Parināma is, like its title suggests, two-fold in its nature and application. Satkārya depicts the effect as dependent upon an existent cause, and, that the effect resides respectively in its cause prior to its manifestation (i.e., the effect). The effect is two-fold in nature: it is potentiality insofar as it necessarily resides in the cause, and, it is actualized through the process of causal uniformity (or causal process). Parināma denotes an actual process of causation wherein the

"(Early Buddhism) contained an analysis of existence into its component elements, and established a certain number of ultimate data (dharma). Every combination of these data was then declared to represent a nominal, not an ultimate, reality. A substantial soul was thus transformed into a stream of continuously flowing discreet moments of sensation or pure consciousness (viññāna), accompanied by moments of feeling, of ideation, volition (vedāna-samjñā-samskāra) etc. Matter (rūpa) was conceived on the same pattern, as a flow of momentary flashes without any continuant stuff, but characterized by impenetrability, and representing the senses (āyatana) and sense-data The categories of substance, quality and motion - for momentary flashes could possess no motion - were denied, but the reality of sense-data and of the elements of mind, was admitted. All these elementary data were conceived as obeying causal laws. But the conception of causality was adapted to the character of these entities which could neither move nor change, but could only appear and disappear The

initial cause assumes the shape and character of the effect. It is often translated as an "actual transformation."⁹⁶

Satkārya-Vivartavāda is peculiar to the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. In its satkārya aspect it differs in no great extent from the satkārya theory propounded by the Sāṃkhyas. The Advaita innovation is, however, that the

meaning of (causality) was that every momentary entity sprang into existence, or flashed up, in coordination with other moments. Its formula was 'if there is this, there appears that.' Causality was thus assumed to exist between moments only, the appearance of every moment being coordinated with the appearance of a number of other moments. Strictly speaking it was no causality at all, no question of one thing producing the other. There could be neither a causa materialis, since there was no continuant substance, nor could there be any causa efficiens, since one momentary entity, disappearing as it did at once, could not influence any other entity. So the formula was supplemented by another one 'not from itself (causa materialis), not from something foreign (causa efficiens), nor a combination of both does an entity spring up', 'it is coordinated, it is not produced'. Apart from these momentary entities the system admitted eternal unchanging elements, Space and Nirvāṇa, the latter representing some indefinite essence (dharmā-svabhāva) of these forces which were active in phenomenal life, but are now extinct and converted into eternal death. Thus both the phenomenal world and this kind of an absolute, both samsāra and nirvāṇa, were conceived as realities somehow interconnected, linked together in a whole (sarvaṃ), but an ideal whole, having as a combination of elements, only nominal existence." See pages 39f.

⁹⁶ Sāṃkhya and Yoga both adhere to satkārya-pariṇāma-vāda. A cause, according to Sāṃkhya, is merely the unmanifested or potential state of the effect which is already pre-existent in the cause prior to its formal existence. Also the general theory of causation is denoted pariṇāma-vāda (or

effect is ideally only an unreal manifestation of the cause. there is, essentially, no effect - only cause. In this, ultimate Reality (Brahman) is without change, i.e., the cause sine qua non, while that which seems subject to modification (parinama) is naught.

Causality Theory in Advaita Metaphysics

The Two Senses of Causality

When we enter most Indian philosophical systems in the context of causality theory we are at once drawn into what seems to us a distinctly metaphysical tendency that is structurally situated 'round and about each respective causal viewpoint. This fact is not tautological. It is an important distinction. Whereas the non-advaitic Vedantas fall within this distinction, the Advaita does not. Or at least the Advaita differs in its treatment of the seeming conformity of a metaphysics to a causal viewpoint. Rather than representing an antithetical position to the non-Advaitic Vedantas' treatment, we might be inclined to treat the Advaita

vikara-vada) which asserts that the material cause itself transforms or changes into its respective effect via the causal process. Parinama denotes real change. However, the essence of the cause (karma) does not change throughout the process of transformation; paradoxical as this may seem the essence continues to be the same throughout the entire process. The cause is not really different from the effect nor vice versa. In the most fundamental sense, the effect is identical with the cause. For example, the cloth is not entirely different from the threads, although distinct from the vantage point of the cloth.

theory as both different and non-different from the former. Whereas causality, as a heuristic principle, assumes a central place, perhaps even a heliocentric one, within certain metaphysical systems, in the Advaita causality (as a heuristic device) assumes a secondary and incidental role while at the same time conforming to a heliocentricity of similar magnitude. This two-fold qualification of the Advaita is what is meant when it was mentioned in the preface that a reader must continually frame and re-frame the specific contexts in which the Advaitin is speaking. It is only the result of a fundamental confusion of these two senses of causality theory that gives rise to such conclusions as, say, that the Advaita propounds an "illusionist philosophy", etc.

The two senses of causality in the Advaita are revealed in the paradoxical formula satkārya-vivartavāda. (It is important to note that both these senses are metaphysical by nature.) Satkārya is distinctly metaphysical in its application as a heuristic device. Vivarta is, on the other hand, both metaphysical and epistemological.⁹⁷ This epistemological import carries with it an inseparable

⁹⁷It is true that Sankara utilizes a certain epistemological element in his "proof" of satkārya-parināmavāda, while vivarta is ideally a purely metaphysical concept. However, in the vyavahārika context satkārya-parināma endeavours to establish and portray the metaphysical structures

relation with the Advaita notion of avidyā (of which we shall speak in the next chapter).

Recalling Śaṅkara's portrayal of the ontological ground, Brahman, it is possible to seek out and distinguish these two senses from each other. In its metaphysical context, causality as satkārya has as its sole purpose the affirmation of Brahman as the ultimate ontological absolute. Without Brahman as the primordial and first cause of the cosmos, Brahman as a transcendental aspect of existence is forever in jeopardy. Brahman, as the ultimate ground, could then be transformed by a simple series of juxtapositions into, say, Sāṃkhyan dualism. This, of course, Śaṅkara would avoid at all costs. His reaction is to adopt the satkārya doctrine and argue for the supremacy of Brahman as the first and only ontological Reality.

Satkārya: Meaning and Metaphysics

In his bhāṣya on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad I.2.1, Śaṅkara argues for the pre-existence of the cause, Brahman, as against the nihilist⁹⁸ assertion, that says that prior to the existence of the manifest universe there was ideally only void. It is of course natural to understand Śaṅkara's defence of the satkārya doctrine. He says:

and connections between world (prapañca), man (jīva) and Brahman. In this case it is metaphysical. Vivarta, although metaphysical too, ties in closely to a general "phenomenology of consciousness" and which circumscribes the purported reality of causality theory in its metaphysical context.

⁹⁸We infer that Śaṅkara is referring to the Buddhists, more specifically the Mādhyamika.

... the cause which covered, and the effect which was covered, were both existent before the origin of the universe We can infer the existence of the cause and effect before creation. We observe that a positive effect which is produced takes place only when there is a cause and does not take place when there is no cause. From this we infer that the cause of the universe too must have existed before creation, as is the case with the cause of a jar, for instance.⁹⁹

Śaṅkara denounces the asatkārya theory (i.e., the effect does not pre-exist in its cause). Recalling that asatkārya has two forms, the one - that the cause continues to exist after the production of the effect, and the other - that the cause ceases to exist after the production of the effect, Śaṅkara proceeds to challenge both. Within the context of both the adherents state that just as a clay jar (the effect) becomes manifest, so the original lump of clay (the cause) ceases to exist. Brahman, then, represented as the first cause and anterior to the production of the universe ceases to exist as the universe becomes manifest as the effect. This would parallel the Buddhist's position.¹⁰⁰ Śaṅkara states, however, that even though the form, i.e., the original lump of clay, was re-manifest in the form (rūpa) of a clay jar it is nevertheless true that the original clay lump was the first and material cause of the clay jar: "(the) particular form is not the cause of the jar and the necklace ... when

⁹⁹Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, trans. Madhavananda. From now on this translation will be used and will be referred to as Br. Up.

¹⁰⁰I.e., the Early Hīnayāna (Theravādin).

the clay and the gold are absent, the jar and the necklace are not produced" and "which shows that these materials, clay and gold, are the cause, and not the roundish form."¹⁰¹ The pervasiveness of the cause throughout its effects is adopted by Śaṅkara. The cause destroys its previous transformation as an effect in order that another effect be produced, but it does not necessarily follow that the initial cause is simultaneously destroyed; the form of the cause may change but the causa materialis continues as before.¹⁰² To utilize an analogy, it is possible to understand the pervasiveness of the cause per se distinct from its form, e.g., the clay lump; in the case of the clay jar we perceive the initial material cause, i.e., the clay, however we do not perceive its original form (rūpa), e.g., the lump. If the counter-charge, i.e., that the seeming persistence of the cause be due primarily to similarity (that is, of the clay itself), be raised, Śaṅkara on the other hand resorts to the defining of the materia or substance of the cause, e.g., the particles comprising the clay lump, as adhering to one's perception of the cause's persistence and continuity. The cause cannot cease to exist on account of its producing the effect solely because of the idea that

¹⁰¹Br. Up., p. 17.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 18.

what one infers as the continuity of the cause is merely due to the similarity of the cause and its effect; the doctrine of momentariness, which results out from the idea of similarity, necessarily results in a regressus ad infinitum. Only effects exist, since there never could have been an initial cause. According to pratītya-samutpāda, anteriority is a myth. For Śaṅkara, then, it is not possible to affirm the doctrine of asatkārya without in turn (and inevitably) destroying its inherent sense of causal continuity, and thereby destroying itself as a principle.¹⁰³

Śaṅkara develops a further argument to establish the reasonableness of the satkārya theory. As a secondary argument in opposition to the Buddhist ideal, Śaṅkara asks how and by what are the notions of similarity between the perceived cause and the perceived effect accommodated. There is by definition no possibility of affirming a subject of and for the perception of similarity (due to the Buddhist concept of anatta, or no-soul); therefore, the purported connection inherent in the idea of similarity between cause and effect cannot be maintained. Further, if the notion of similarity be affirmed then this notion proper has as its ground that of non-agentship. And that,

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 18-19.

says Śaṅkara, is absurd. In possible response to the Yogācāra school of Buddhism, Śaṅkara states:

There your view that everything is an idea would also be based on a non-entity If all notions are false, your view that all notions are unreal cannot be established. Therefore it is wrong to say that recognition takes place through similarity.¹⁰⁴

It must, therefore, be, says Śaṅkara, that the cause exists before the effect is produced. Now in establishing the full consequences of the satkārya theory Śaṅkara proceeds to outline that not only does the cause per se pre-exist anterior to every respective effect, but that the effect too pre-exists in the cause. The argument simplified runs as follows:

- (1) the pre-existence of the effect in its cause can be established by way of the effect's manifestation (i.e., within the range of perception); a clay jar hidden by darkness is not initially non-existent (because of the obstructing darkness); it is merely unmanifest; when darkness is removed the clay jar is said to be manifest (or existent). But it cannot be said that previously it did not exist at all or en toto: "For a jar that is non-existent is not perceived even when the sun rises."¹⁰⁵
- (2) an effect is always existent whether or not it is

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 20.

perceived, but it is a fact that just as the effect can exist in different forms, e.g., a lump or a jar, it nevertheless exists as an effect arising out from its cause.¹⁰⁶

(3) the manifestation of one effect necessarily obstructs the manifestation of all other possible effects. Therefore the appropriate effect, as in respect of the desired result (or utility), is respectively made manifest and is thereby said to exist in its cause, e.g., the clay. For example, a lump of clay may be formed into a clay pipe, pot, jar, etc. These have, as their respective ground, clay proper. Their forms are the effects.¹⁰⁷

(4) relative to a temporal sequence, i.e., the successive periods of past, present, and future, the effect, as present in its cause, is established through the manner in which a non-existent jar (i.e., a past jar) is not set upon solely because it is non-existent; and a future possibility of a jar as made actual through one's setting upon its manufacture - Śaṅkara says; "We do not see people strive for things which they know to be non-existent."¹⁰⁸

(5) non-existence is not (e.g., as in the case of a non-existent (past existence) jar) an object of perception¹⁰⁹,

¹⁰⁶Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁷Br. Up., p. 22.

¹⁰⁸Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁹Br. Up., p. 23.

while the future jar is.

(6) To say that the effect is at once non-existent, i.e., that a jar is at one and the same moment non-existent (as in the case of a potter creating a jar out from clay) and then existent (as the potter finishes the product, the jar) it amounts to saying that the non-existent jar is non-existent and forever will remain so. But, says Śaṅkara, if one means by non-existence that the jar is not yet fully a jar as intended by the potter, then it is acceptable to say that the effect is non-existent in its cause, the clay. Non-existence is then, for Śaṅkara, not absolute non-existence but non-existence in terms of potential and the consequent actualization of that potential (i.e., in the form of the jar).¹¹⁰

(7) Negation, as in the four types¹¹¹, of the effect (i.e., the jar) does not in any of the four cases negate the existence per se of the jar; the negation, in fact, inculcates the affirmation of the jar. The concept of a jar (or the universal of the jar, or 'jar-ness') cannot be negated although a particular form (rūpa) of jar, or a particular jar, can (i.e., by way of the four types of negation). Śaṅkara states:

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 23-24.

¹¹¹They are (a) mutual exclusion - a cloth is not a jar; (b) previous non-existence - a jar before it is made; (c) non-existence - due to the destruction of a jar (i.e., a particular jar is broken, etc.); and (d) absolute negation - there is no jar and never has been nor will be.

Moreover, of the four kinds of negation relating to, say, a jar, we observe that what is called mutual exclusion is other than the jar: The negation of a jar is a cloth or some other thing, not the jar itself. But the cloth, although it is the negation of a jar, is not a non-entity, but a positive entity. Similarly the previous non-existence, the non-existence due to destruction, and absolute negation must also be other than the jar; for they are spoken of in terms of it, as in the case of the mutual exclusion relating to it. And these negations must also (like the cloth, for instance) be positive entities. Hence the previous non-existence of a jar does not mean that it does not at all exist as an entity before it comes into being.¹¹²

If, however, you say that the previous non-existence of a jar means the jar itself, then to mention it as being 'of a jar' (instead of as 'the jar itself') is an incongruity. If you use it merely as a fancy, as in the expression, 'The body of the stone roller,' i.e., The stone roller has no body, it is the body then the phrase 'the previous non-existence of a jar' would only mean that it is the imaginary non-existence that is mentioned in terms of the jar, and not the jar itself.¹¹³

(8) Likewise, for example, if the jar (as an effect) prior to its manifestation be absolutely not existent (like the son of a barren woman), the effect cannot be in any way connected to the cause (i.e., the lump of clay) - "for connection requires two positive entities."¹¹⁴

... we cannot conceive of an inseparable connection between an existent and a non-existent thing. Separable or inseparable

¹¹²Br. Up., p. 24.

¹¹³Loc. cit.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 25.

relation connection is possible between two positive entities only, not between an entity and a non-entity, nor between two non-entities. Therefore we conclude that the effect does exist before it is manifested.¹¹⁵

Similarly in Chāndogya Upaniṣad II.2.¹¹¹⁶, Śaṅkara states that the effect (as product) resides in the cause just as clay (the cause) subsists in the effect (the jar). The effect testifies to the existence of a cause; so also where there is no evidence of a product there is no cause.¹¹⁷ In his bhāṣya on VI.1.4¹¹⁸ Śaṅkara says, that the effect is also not different from its cause - the clay jar is not different from its cause (causa materialis), the clay. For Śaṅkara, again, the anteriority of the cause to its respective effect and the pre-existence of the effect in its cause is established:

... the product - (effect) is non-different from its (material) cause. You think that the knowledge of one thing cannot make another thing known. This would be quite true, if the product (effect) were something totally different from the cause. As a matter of fact, however, the effect is not entirely different from the cause.

In Taittirīya Upaniṣad II.2.¹¹¹⁹ Śaṅkara says that Brahman is the ground or ultimate cause of all. Brahman is

¹¹⁵Loc. cit.

¹¹⁶The Chāndogya Upaniṣad, trans., Ganganatha Jha. From this point onwards reference to this text will be thus denoted Chand. Up.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 73. ¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 293-294.

¹¹⁹Eight Upaniṣads, vol. I, pp. 301-302.

not produced and thereby unlimited; Brahman exists as the infinite cause of all effects as products. In this, Brahman is not different from anything because all things as products are dependent upon Brahman as the first cause.

Similarly in Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on the Brahma-Sūtras¹²⁰ Brahman is defined as the first cause. The ātman is the ultimate cause as well.¹²¹ Brahman as the supreme cause inheres in its effect:

Brahman ... is the cause of the universe
and inheres in its effect ... (the effect)
has non-difference from that Brahman ...
the effect is non-different from its
material cause.¹²²

In his extensive commentary on Brahma-Sūtra I.4.14 Śaṅkara declares that Brahman is the creator or source-ground of the create universe.¹²³ The multiplicity of the causes of creation anterior to those effects have Brahman as their cause sine qua non.¹²⁴ The effects are, essentially, portrayed as non-different from the cause insofar as these effects (many as they are) all have the first cause, Brahman as their respective and common ground.¹²⁵ Similar references

¹²⁰Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, trans. Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972), p. 12. Cf. also I.1.5, p. 49.

¹²¹Ibid., I.1.22, p. 84; also I.2.1, p. 108.

¹²²Ibid., I.1.25, p. 94. ¹²³Ibid., p. 271.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 272. ¹²⁵Ibid., I.4.15, pp. 273-275.

to Brahman as the first cause identical with its effects are found in Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya¹²⁶ I.4.22, the identity of the cause and the effect¹²⁷; I.4.23-28, Brahman as the material cause, Brahman as the efficient cause (i.e., the force or agent producing the effect), Brahman as not different from the effect (insofar as the efficient cause is conducive to the effect), etc.; in II.1.4¹²⁸ Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the manifold universe wherein the manifold universe maintains a dependence relation upon Brahman. Śaṅkara states:

... even as today, the effect (universe) has existence only in identity with its material cause (Existence-Brahman), so had its existence in that very way even before creation. For even now, this creation does not exist independently of the Self that is its material source But the existence of the product as the cause before creation is in an indistinguishable form.¹²⁹

The importance of the last line in the above quotation is important for Śaṅkara's interpretation. One of the major charges levelled at the satkārya doctrine is that if the effect truly pre-exists in the cause then the cause by its very identification, must surely become the effect, that is, the cause must transform itself into the

¹²⁶From this point onwards all references to Gambhīrenanda's translation of the Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya will be denoted B.S., unless indicated otherwise.

¹²⁷B.S., p. 288.

¹²⁸B.S., pp. 311-315.

¹²⁹B.S., p. 316.

effect and henceforth no longer maintain its anterior existence in the form of the cause; thereby reverting to the position of the asatkāryavādins, that is, the position of the Buddhists, pratītya-samutpāda-vāda. The possibility of such a reversion to, say, the ārambhavāda of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, is also possible since the charge that the effect is identical with its cause infers that the effect is an entirely new entity due to the anteriority of only that cause. If the effect derives its essence from the cause, and Śaṅkara as we shall see, admits this, then the possibility of the reversion to the asatkārya position above can be avoided; Śaṅkara states "(as) for the argument that when the effect merges in the cause, it will tarnish the cause with its own drawbacks, that is unacceptable."¹³⁰

... there are illustrations to substantiate this; there are illustrations to show that even though the effects merge in their causes, they do not pollute the latter with their own peculiarities. For instance, such products as plates, etc., fashioned out of the material earth, have the peculiarities of being high, medium, and flat during their separate existence; but when they become re-absorbed into their original substance, they do not transfer their individual features to it Resorption itself will be an impossibility if the effect should persist in the cause together with its peculiarities. And though cause and effect are non-different, the effect has the nature of that cause and not vice versa¹³¹

¹³⁰B.S. II.1.9, p. 317.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 318.

In a metaphysical context, that the effect derives its essential being from the cause (and not vice versa) means basically that the anterior and formal ground of the world (as the first and only cause) is Brahman.¹³² That the effects by themselves may appear different in nature from Brahman as in, say, the elongated shape of a clay dish, nevertheless that does not mean to say that the elongated effect of the clay dish does not affirm its non-different ground-cause, i.e., the clay. To think otherwise, says Śaṅkara, would be a contradiction and an absurdity. The effects (or products) are non-different from their respective cause (Brahman), and are entirely capable of being reabsorbed into their cause, because they are essentially non-different from it.¹³³

¹³²B.S., II.1.13, pp. 324-326.

¹³³In an elaborate discussion of the satkarya theory, Śaṅkara undertakes to refute all of the many objections raised by his opponents. In over forty pages of his Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya Śaṅkara outlines in detail the many implications arising out of the satkarya doctrine and its effects for a metaphysics of being. Because of its fundamental importance I will summarize his arguments in this footnote. I do not think it appropriate to include this discussion in the body of the thesis due to the fact that it does not add anything directly to our endeavour; at best these arguments are of interest to those who require further substantiations of Śaṅkara's adherence to the satkarya doctrine.

In his commentary on B.S. II.1.14 Śaṅkara deduces that in no instance can the effect, e.g., the diversified universe, exist anterior to its cause, for if it be that the effect exists (or had existed) in isolation from its cause it would then mean essentially that the necessity of requiring any further cause, e.g., Brahman, would be superfluous (p. 326). Śaṅkara states:

Interim

It is necessary at this point to rethink Śaṅkara's arguments and once again present these arguments in terms of metaphysics. Having once completed this analysis we

"When a lump of clay is known as nothing but clay in reality, all things made of clay, for instance pot, plate, jar, etc., become known, since they are non-different as clay, because of which fact it is said, 'A modification, has speech as its origin, and exists only in name.' A modification, e.g., a pot, plate, or jar, etc., originates from speech alone that makes it current by announcing, 'It exists'. But speaking from the standpoint of the basic substance, no modification exists as such (apart from the clay). It has existence only in name and is unreal. As clay above it is real ... from the standpoint of (Brahman), no modification has any existence separately apart from Brahman." (p. 327)

For Śaṅkara, the effects cannot exist apart from their cause or ground; they are dependent upon Brahman insofar as they are produced by and through definite causes; they, as effects, cannot exist as insular products since all modifications (which are transformations) resulting in effects must have a sustaining cause. In II.1.15 Śaṅkara establishes satkarya by way of perception, pratyakṣa. One perceives the effect as product and at the same time perceives the cause for, as Śaṅkara says, it cannot be otherwise - just as we infer the existence of the cause from the existence of the effect so too we perceive the cause (i.e., the material) just as we perceive the effect (p. 335). Śaṅkara states, "... the pot is perceived when the clay is there, and the cloth is perceived when the yarns are there. But it is not an (usual) invariable fact that something is seen when something other than it is present, for it is not the case that a cow which is different from a horse, is seen only when a horse is present. Nor is it a fact that a pot is perceived only when the potter is there, even though there is the relation of agentship and effect; for they are different. (pp. 335f)

will initiate an enquiry into the second and complementary half of Śaṅkara's causality theory - vivartavāda.

Similarly in B.S. II.1.16, Śaṅkara illustrates that the effect arises out from its identity with its respective cause. If it were not so then oil could be extracted from sand, etc. The major thrust of his argument, here, is that before the manifestation of the universe (as effect) it necessarily had to exist potentially within its cause, Brahman; in this, it must have existed potentially in identification with Brahman. Further, if the universe is identical with Brahman then in its manifested state the universe must be permeated, i.e., maintained, by Brahman as the cause. Therefore the effect exists in identification with its cause potentially prior to its manifestation, while after the manifestation of the effect, the cause continues to exist. Also, for Śaṅkara, the effect (as existing prior to its manifestation) can never be comprehended as absolutely not existing. Name and form (namarupa) as actualized or manifested, are different from name and form residing potentially within their cause, Brahman. Hence it is said that the effect is non-existent prior to its manifestation. The gist of the argument is, that denoting (in the manner of naming something and becoming formalized) requires that some thing become existent, e.g., as in the case of the mind, a concept, etc.; it is also said that "that particular something" must not exist if it is not conceived as such (via name or nama and form, rupa) (pp. 338-339). To say that something exists inculcates qualification, but to say that something does not exist means its opposite, non-conception. It does not necessarily follow that a peculiar thing does not exist en potencia.

In B.S. II.1.18 it is noted that by way of common experience the effect is seen to exist potentially in its cause. The logic is that no one wanting a clay jar utilizes milk (for example) in its production; the effect exists or inheres in its appropriate cause. Further, the effect is not non-existent because if it is conceived as non-existent then there is absolutely no reason why the respective effect, e.g., sesame oil, should not be produced from any cause, say, from a rock (p. 339). An important development occurs at this point for Śaṅkara and the satkarya doctrine. If it be maintained that each particular cause has a corresponding "potency" (śakti), not a latent effect, but a characteristic "potency" to make manifest the appropriate effect, that is to say, says Śaṅkara, that the effect resides or pre-exists in its cause (just because the cause possesses a potency that pertains to the manifestation of the appropriate effect).

To summarize the most important aspects of Sāṃkara's satkārya-vāda and its place within a meta-physical context: (a) that through the satkārya doctrine

"... when some potency is assumed in the cause, to determine the effect, that potency cannot influence the effect by being different (from the cause and effect) or non-existent (like the effect), since (on either supposition) non-existence and difference will pertain to that potency as much as to the effect. Therefore the potency must be the very essence of the cause, and the effect must be involved in the very core of the potency. (pp. 339-340) If it be maintained that the non-difference between the cause and the effect is caused by the notion of inherence (i.e., the relation of invariable concomitance), and that there is no real identity between cause and effect, Sāṃkara states (1) that the idea of inherence results in an infinite regress of relations; (2) that if inherence not be admitted then there is no connection between cause and effect whatever; (3) if inherence ideally exemplifies the relationship between the cause and the effect, thus qualifying the effect as distinct from the cause, the whole (or cause) must be comprised of an entirety of component parts (cf., Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika); if this is the case, says Sāṃkara, then in what manner will the effect (or the products) inhere in those component parts - does the effect reside in the parts as a whole or only in them in part?

Sāṃkara's critique is here directed at the asatkārya-ārambhavāda of the Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika school. As we have noted, it is Sāṃkara's intention to uphold the satkārya doctrine as it attests to the confirmation of an ontological absolute or ground in the metaphysical sense. The doctrine of inherence, however, threatens the monistic overtones of the satkārya formula. Ārambhavāda threatens this monistic vision insofar as the effect (i.e., the universe) as an entirely new product, must exist in its own right even though, unlike the Buddhist position, Brahman (or the ground-cause) exists along side of the effect - in other words, ārambhavāda precludes the necessity of Brahman and leads inevitably to a fundamental dualism.

the anteriority of Brahman is established; Brahman is, to use Aristotelian terminology, (1) the material cause, insofar as Brahman contains the pre-existent effects

To continue Śaṅkara's argument, if the effect resides in all of the component parts comprising the "whole", then there is no possibility of one envisioning the "whole" as effect, e.g., one cannot see the threads apart from the cloth, nor vice versa (p. 341). If on the other hand, the effect exists in each part correlatively (i.e., part by part), then this condition will result in an infinite regress, since the effect which resides in each of the component parts (i.e., the cause) must, to be an effect different (or distinct) from the cause, have other parts which are responsible for the effect. Again, if the effect exists successively (i.e., in uninterrupted succession) in each one of the parts of the "whole" (i.e., cause), then activity or the manifestation of the effect in that particular part, will exist relative to only that particular part and not in others; and if manifestation (i.e., presence of the effect) exist in all parts at the same moment it would mean, essentially, proposing a multiplicity of causes, thus undermining the original whole (p. 341). Śaṅkara resorts to a supplementary argument of non-spontaneous origin: it is a fact that should the effect not pre-exist prior to origination then there will be no agent (material) through and by which the creative activity may be enjoined (p. 342). It is not the idea or concept of, say, a pot itself that is thought of in such a statement as 'the pot is originating'; it is the agent behind the pot (p. 342). The entire question of inherence (samavāya) hinges upon two existing entities, and not on being non-existent or both; inherence demands that the cause and effect 'exist' mutually and consistently, thus establishing the pre-existence of the effect in the cause. Śaṅkara states: "Were it possible for the son of a barren woman to emerge into being after the accessories of production (causal agents) were activated, then it could be equally asserted that the effect, non-existing (before origin), would originate after the activity of the causal agents. But as a matter of fact what we find is that since the son of a barren woman and the non-existence of the effect (before

prior to these effects as actualized products in turn sustained by the cause; (2) the final cause insofar as Brahman is the sine qua non of existence (sat) proper into which, at the time of absolute dissolution, all of

origin) are equally non-existent, the non-existent effect cannot spring into being even after the causal agents become activated, just as much as the barren woman's son does not after the operation of the causal agents. (p. 343) If the effect does not reside in the cause there will be no need to posit an agent responsible for the production of the effect which would "land" one in the position of having no effects and hence, no cause - void. And this, says Saṅkara, is contrary to everyday experience (p. 344). (Note also B.S. II.1.19, II.1.20, and II.1.23)

Having established the cogency of the satkarya doctrine, Saṅkara then proceeds to analyze satkarya-vāda in the light of the ontological ground, Brahman; for as we have already intimated, that the effect necessarily resides in the cause in turn establishes the pre-eminent status of Brahman as the transcendental ground of the manifest universe. Brahman as the cause and agent of the universe, the effect, is established on the analogy of milk and curd; if it be maintained that the instrumentality of God, i.e., the prima materia required for the production of the universe, and the lack thereof be said to illustrate the essential non-causal capacity of Brahman, then this, says Saṅkara, may be countered by noting the inherent capacity of milk to turn into curds (even though the instrumental causes, e.g., heat and fire, etc., are required). The latter are merely catalytic and subsequently do not determine the inherent efficacy of the milk to give rise to curd (p. 351, compare also pp. 352-353).

If, however, Brahman is ideally the cause of the universe, the effect, and that Brahman spontaneously make manifest the effect, then Brahman must undergo some form of transformation or partial transformation and thereby violate its primordial character of homogeneity and wholeness (Cf., B.S. II.1.26, pp. 353-354). In his bhāṣya on B.S. II.1.27 Saṅkara refutes this latter possibility, and subsequently brings us to the second aspect of causality theory in the Advaita. In response to the seeming irreconcilableness of the multiple and the "one", Saṅkara states:

the effects are resolved; the effects are contained in and non-different from the cause; (3) the efficient

"That is nothing damaging, since it is admitted that this difference of aspects i.e., notions of diversity and unity is created by ignorance i.e., avidya. For a thing does not become multiformed just because aspects are imagined on it through ignorance. Not that the moon, perceived to be many by a man with blurred vision (timira-diplopia), becomes really so. Brahman becomes subject to all kinds of (phenomenal) actions like transformation, on account of the differences of aspects, constituted by name and form, which remain either differentiated or non-differentiated, which cannot be determined either as real or unreal (anirvacanīya), and which are imagined through ignorance. In its real aspect Brahman remains unchanged and beyond all phenomenal actions. (p. 356) (Note also B.S. II.1.28, II.1.29, II.1.30, and II.1.31, etc.)

Should the argument be forwarded, that Brahman cannot be the cause of the universe owing to the need of a motive, Śaṅkara's counter-argument is, that for those who still wish to maintain the reality of plurality Brahman therefore creates the universe out of sheer joy or sport (līla): "... (as fulfilled) God can have activities of the nature of mere pastime out of His spontaneity without any extraneous motive Although the creation of this sphere of the universe appears to us to be a stupendous task, yet to God it is a mere pastime, because His power is infinite. (p. 361)

And finally, should partiality and cruelty be levelled at Brahman due to its being the cause of the world (a standard charge in Indian metaphysics), this charge too may be avoided on the grounds that Brahman is not the creator (as in the sense of efficient cause) due to his unmitigated passivity (cf., B.S. II.1.33). Being self-fulfilled Brahman upholds the universe in accord with the respectively bound jīva's karma. Individual works are the products of individuals and not of Brahman. The distinction to be made here is between the macrocosmic or ground (material) cause, and the microcosm; man or jīva. Brahman is the ground of all, while man is the ground of man. Note also the following references: B.S. I.1.1, pp. 1,7,9,10,11,12; I.1.2, pp. 17,18; I.1.10, pp. 60-61; I.1.21, p. 81; I.3.30, p. 220; I.4.24-27, pp. 294-296; II.2.37-38, pp. 434-435; II.3.5, p. 449;

cause¹³⁴, insofar as Brahman is the ground pertaining to all the effects; because Brahman is the ground, then the consequences embodied in and by way of the actualization and manifestation of the effects pertains to that ground-cause, Brahman; and (4) the first cause, insofar as Brahman is anterior to all manifestations of both the potential and actualized effects, i.e., the universe in its subtle state (as Īśvara) and in its gross physical state; (b) that existence (sat) or being is the common aspect implied in the satkārya doctrine. If one resorts to the idea of material cause, it is obvious from the beginning that each particular type of material cause will have its respective and appropriate effect, for example, milk will give rise only to curd, and combustion to heat (in the form of fire), etc. Irregardless as to whether or not there actually exists a multiple number of causes and their respective effects, they exist (sat). It is this "existence" aspect (Sat or Being)

II.3.6, p. 450; II.2.42, p. 505. Bhāgavad Gītā p.3; II.27, p. 52; III.1, p. 87; IV.18, p. 154; VIII.28, p. 237; IX.19, p. 250; XV.1, p. 397; XV.7, pp. 402-403; XVIII.48, p. 478. Chandogya Upaniṣad pp. 2,4; I.1.10, p. 14; V.1.15, p. 227; VI.24.2, p. 354; VII.15.1, pp. 393-394; VIII.4.1, p. 432. Mundaka Upaniṣad II.2.5, pp. 133-134. Praena Upaniṣad VI.1, p. 481. Kaṭha Upaniṣad II.3.12, pp. 210-211. Taittiriya Upaniṣad II.1.1, pp. 301-302; II.6.1, p. 327; II.7.1, pp. 342-343.

¹³⁴It would be better to understand the phrase "efficient cause" in the scholastic sense, i.e., that force or motivating aspect or agent that causes change in the order of execution.

that, as J.G. Arapura shows, is the most important idea underlying Advaita metaphysics and ontology;¹³⁵ (c) that the Advaita portrayal of satkārya inculcates the twofold context in and through which the nature of the effect in relation to its cause is to be understood - namely, that (1) the effect is identical with its cause relative to their common link (sat), and (2) that the effect is different from the cause relative to their respective forms (rūpa). The form, i.e., each respective cause and effect, for example, the milk (karāṇa) and curd (kārya), is responsible in the phenomenal sense for the change and distinction between the cause and the effect. In the latter case, Śaṅkara adopts the satkāryaparīṇāma doctrine which states that the cause actually undergoes a modification of its own essential being or essence, and becomes an effect. Parīṇāma means that a change actually occurs in the purported causal process, and that the cause assumes the shape of the effect; and (d) that Brahman as the only agency through which an effect can arise, does not require any instrumental or external agency to conclude the causal process; the potential for the milk to turn into curd is inherent, and all that the instrumental cause accomplishes (as an external agent) is to accelerate the process.

¹³⁵See footnote 49.

Vivarta-vāda: Meaning and Transcendence

We have seen how Śaṅkara wishes to maintain the satkārya doctrine in order to establish a logical transcendental principle, Brahman. It is, I maintain, Śaṅkara's sole purpose in the latter regard to establish Brahman as a metaphysical and transcendental principle of Being. However there is evidence in his bhāṣyas that mitigates against the universal adoption of the satkārya formula.¹³⁶ Satkārya is a metaphysical ideal. The hermeneutical principle of Being is thus recast in the form of the vivarta doctrine.

In Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI.1.4 he says that "there is no real entity in the shape of the Product (i.e., the effect), it exists in name only, being based upon words; in reality the Clay (i.e., Brahman) is the only real thing." In Bhagavad Gītā II.16 Śaṅkara

¹³⁶Śaṅkara states: "the intelligent one (Self) - intelligent because Its nature of consciousness is never lost ... is not born - It is not produced ... nor does it die. An impermanent thing, that has origination, is subject to many modifications in the Self, the first and last of these modifications, in the form of birth and death are ... denied ... the Self ... did not come from anything - did not originate from any other cause; and from the Self Itself ... nothing originated ... as something different from It. Therefore ... this Self (is) ... birthless ... eternal ... undecaying A thing is said to be new now which emerges into being through the development of its parts, as for instance, a pot, etc. The Self, however, is opposed to them (Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on Kaṭha Upaniṣad I.2.18, pp. 143-144)

explains, "every effect is unreal because it is not perceived as distinct from the cause." Also, "Every effect, such as a pot, is unreal, also because it is not perceived before its production and after its destruction." And "likewise the cause, such as clay, is unreal because it is not perceived apart from its cause." The apparent paradox in saying, on the one hand, that the effect pre-exists in its cause, is reconcilable when we understand that Śaṅkara is now engaged in a process of disengaging himself from a strictly metaphysical defence of causality whereby he endeavours to establish the pre-eminence of Brahman. In the section Interim it was noted that Śaṅkara's adherence to the satkārya doctrine was solely within the context of establishing the ontological ground, Brahman in opposition to those philosophies that sought to supplant their own ideologies, e.g., Sāṃkhya, Cārvāka, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Jainism, Buddhism, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, etc.¹³⁷ Metaphysical argumentation Śaṅkara would relegate to the level of tarka, or reasoning - reasoning utilized in an endeavour to establish the limits and bounds of cognitive understanding of Reality (Brahman). As Śaṅkara says,

(For it) (i.e., the Ātman) cannot be argued out - cannot be known through mere reasoning (tarka) called up through

¹³⁷ Śaṅkara's refutation of these various schools can be found summarized in his Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya, II.2.1 through II.2.45.

one's own (independent) intellect. For if the Self be regarded as an object of argumentation and postulated to be atomic in quantity, someone else may hold it to be subtler than that, while still another may hold it to be the subtlest. Thus there is no finality about sophistry.¹³⁸

Also in his bhāṣya on Aitareya Upaniṣad II.1 Śaṅkara denotes all discourse having as its object, for example, ideas of creation, destruction, etc., as merely eulogistic,¹³⁹ (artha-vāda) and which emphasizes some thing (i.e., in this case Brahman) other than that conveyed by the idea literally.¹⁴⁰ Recalling our previous discussion of Śaṅkara's ontology and its relation to language we can readily understand the reluctance on Śaṅkara's part to remain solely within the realm of dogmatics as expressed in and through metaphysical discourse per se. Śaṅkara states:

... it stands to reason to say that Brahman cannot be expressed in words such as 'sat', for, every word employed to denote a thing denotes that thing - when heard by another - as associated with a certain genus, or a certain act ... or a certain mode of relation But Brahman belongs to no genus wherefore It cannot be denoted by such words as 'sat' (existent). Being devoid of attributes, It possesses no qualities. If It were possessed of qualities, then It could be denoted

¹³⁸Kātha Upaniṣad I.2.8, pp. 133-134.

¹³⁹Aitareya Upaniṣad, p. 47.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 47n.

by a word implying a quality. Being actionless It cannot be indicated by a word implying an act.¹⁴¹

The consequences of and for causality presented within the context of metaphysics are twofold: (1) for the Advaita, the import of metaphysical discourse lay in its ability to establish a clearly defined and coherent formula wherein the indicatory "marks" of reality (world and Brahman, respectively) may be placed and be subsequently understood relative to an empirical consciousness. Satkārya, then, applies solely within the confines of vyavaharika reality¹⁴² which Eliot Deutsch defines as that level of being comprising an "empirical point of view" or "(the) world that is distinguished from true reality (sat) and from complete non-reality (asat) ... an apparent or practical reality."¹⁴³ Satkāryavāda applies to both the world which is anirvacanīya or "indescribable in terms of being and non-being"¹⁴⁴, as well as to Brahman (paramarthikabrahman). In the case of the former, satkārya applies to the experiential realm where an effect is seen

¹⁴¹Bhagavad-Gītā with Śaṅkara's bhāṣya, XIII.12, pp. 346-347.

¹⁴²Eliot Deutsch, Advaita Vedānta, A Philosophical Reconstruction (Hawaii: East-West Center Press, 1969).

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴⁴Loc. cit.

to arise from a cause, etc., and at the same time, to Brahman insofar as it discriminates an ontological ground from others of the same genus, and establishes this ontological ground as anterior to the world or universe (vyavaharika). Satkārya-vyavaharika-vāda establishes, also, the fact of existence (vyavaharika-sat) of Brahman as the transcendental cause from pratibhasika-asat or absolute non-existence, the unreal, non-being; (2) causality as metaphysics, i.e., satkārya, also delimits the structures of Being (Sat, Sat-Asat, and Asat) from each other, thus illustrating the inherent limits of both pratibhasika and vyavaharika realities, and correlatively revealing Brahman as it actually is. Śaṅkara, however, while noting that satkārya, although establishing the anteriority, transcendence as well as pre-eminence of Brahman, also threatens Brahman's "transcendence" as Being by inculcating a necessary and inevitable transformation of the essential aspects of Brahman, i.e., Brahman as cause, into the universe as the effect; the relations between the cause and the effect although identical, are nevertheless (in terms of the effect's manifestation), a peculiar and correlative manifestation of the cause (pariṇāma). To avoid the confounding of the "transcendental" ground (Brahman) with its purported manifestations (i.e., the universe as effect),

Śaṅkara states that the effect is an illusory manifestation. This case of an illusory manifestation or transformation of the cause into an effect is known as vivarta-vāda, "the theory of unreal change."¹⁴⁵ Vivarta-vāda, while affirming the whole and changeless nature of Brahman, establishes the essential non-dual nature of Reality (Brahmaparamārthika).

¹⁴⁵Bhartiya, Causation, p. 29.

CHAPTER II

TOWARDS AN AFFIRMATION OF BEING

Mayāvidyā and Vivarta-vāda

We have outlined briefly in the first chapter the two basic senses of causality theory in Advaita metaphysics. To recapitulate: we can understand causality theory as comprising (a) satkārya, and (b) vivarta-vāda. Satkārya is utilized by Śaṅkara in both a metaphysical and epistemological sense to establish (1) the primordially and anteriority of Brahman in apposition to the cosmos as an unified whole; (2) the ontological non-distinction between Brahman (the cause) and the universe (as effect) (i.e., the effect as non-different from its cause);¹ (3) the illusory sense of modification (pariṇāma), i.e., name (nama) and form (rūpa), of the effect (the effect is viewed as different from the cause only because of the form which it seems to assume (e.g., clay-clump becomes a clay-jar, the effect being the form, jar, while still being clay); (4) that ultimately the cause itself does not exist along with its effect if both are construed as existing in differentia (or opposition to each other); the continuity that is

¹Refer to p.56, this thesis: common ground (re., material cause and effect) of satkārya is "existence" (sat).

established between the cause and the effect via sat (existence) is disbarred if the effect is seen as an entirely new entity; (if the effect exists as a new entity then the maintenance of the cause is superfluous); the latter, as we have already seen, would lead to an inevitable infinite regress.

However in the Advaita the satkārya doctrine does not provide the true characterization of the relationship per se between the ontological ground, Brahman, and the cosmos. Even from the aspect of continuity established within and by the sat aspect, it is essentially untrue to conceive by the latter the ideal representation that Śaṅkara would wish to present regarding the idea of relation. Satkārya merely establishes the metaphysical possibility of Brahman and the dependence of the universe upon Brahman. At this point in his thought Śaṅkara introduces the doctrine of vivarta.

As we have noted vivartavāda introduces the notion of unreal change or modification. It means, basically, the theory of the unreal manifestation or appearance of the effect. For Śaṅkara, the world (prapañca) is merely an appearance, an illusory existent (pratibhāṣika).² At this point we enter Śaṅkara's

²Deutsch, Reconstruction, p. 26.

theory of mayāvidyā, and its substitution for causality theory. In this we may say that vivarta-vāda is by no means a causal theory strictly speaking, but more so an affirmation, like that of māyā, (or testimonial) of the ontological ground. Vivarta is not the structure in which mayāvidyā is framed: vivarta arises out from mayāvidyā.

... difference of aspects is created by ignorance (avidyā). For a thing does not become multiformed just because aspects are imagined on it through ignorance. Not that the moon, perceived to be many by a man with blurred vision ... becomes really so.³

But just as in the same way māyā and avidyā reveal the structure and content of satkārya-vāda, so also does vivarta reveal the nature of the world and Brahman, and the relationship between them. Insofar as vivarta reveals the nature of Reality, so it also possesses the capacity to abrogate the necessity of enquiry into other metaphysical notions such as creation, destruction, etc., and thereby steers a course solely towards the experience and affirmation of Being (Brahman).

In order to understand the Advaita notion of causality it is necessary to illustrate what is meant by the formula mayāvidyā generally. J.G. Arapura says:

Śaṅkara ... thought of māyā as the structure of discourse about Brahman, keeping in view the character of Brahman revealed in Śruti.

³Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya, II.1.27, p. 356.

and therefore as the logos of the world, and, on the other, thought of avidya as that which informs maya Avidya must be regarded as an existential phenomena ... as it is essentially consciousness confronting itself under the conditions of the assumption of absolute knowledge without which it cannot be what it is Avidya must not be understood as talk about the conditions and character of human experience independent of śruti. It is really nothing but the individual (saksi) modality of the talk about Brahman which in its universal modality is denoted by 'maya'.⁴

It is crucial to note that both māyā and avidyā function in an inseparable relation to each other. Māyā is the cosmic aspect and avidyā the microcosmic or individual modality of the cosmic. What is revealed in individual human experience is consequently revealed in the collective or transpersonal māyā, the universal experience contained in the cosmic "structure". This aspect of totality inferred by the māyā principle is the foremost implication of the mayāvāda doctrine. Through the inseparability of both māyā and avidyā the individual experience of the world provides a clue to the nature of Brahman, not the cosmos nor the individual. From the ontological standpoint māyā and avidyā represent the vortex, the net, in which all experience is cast (aparavidyā). Brahman alone is true (Sat) and it is only in self-knowing (parabrahma vidyā) that māyā and avidyā are averted.

⁴Arapura, Māyā, pp. 116-117.

Māyāvidyā: Śaṅkara's Ideal

What is māyāvidyā? This question is really a double entendre. For on the one hand, as we have noted previously, discourse is always framed within the structure of māyā; māyā is the over-arching modality containing within it all individual modes of experience. It is the structure accounting for the fact of consciousness reaching out and embracing itself - on the cosmic level, the universe's perception of itself, and on the microcosmic level, the individual's perception of himself relative to the cosmic. In this, it would hardly be possible for us to define and set before our eyes the facticity and definableness of māyā. As J.G. Arapura has shown the vortex is a self-defining structure, an experience that does not seek to materialize itself - for it is itself, a self-formative principle that in so forming itself in terms of itself reveals Brahman as its ground. On the other hand, how can one grasp this principle, māyā — avidyā? The key to this dilemma, I think, lay in the treating of māyāvidyā in the light of a prescription of a prescription. In this, we position ourselves slightly up and behind this principle. We may treat māyā and avidyā as tentative components of the understanding, to treat them as definable structures comprising the understanding. From this standpoint we

infer that consciousness is capable of defining itself. That consciousness is capable of turning back on itself and subsequently able to define itself through itself, which, as we shall see, is not the case. Be as it may, we will obviate the problem by seeking to explain what māya and avidyā are, and thereby return to the question of causality showing how the latter finds its roots in mayavidyā, and showing how that for the Advaita, causality theory is a necessary consequence of the māya doctrine. It will also become apparent that vivarta is a consummation of the Brahman doctrine, and like māya, reveals Brahman by resolving itself into Brahman.

Śaṅkara says, "Brahman is hard to comprehend, being, as it is, devoid of differentiating qualifications, and comprehensible only through such negation of qualifications."⁵ The world, in short, is an effect of Brahman and is, as such, a modification characterized by name and form (nāmarūpa).⁶ He says:

... at the present moment, (the universe) is Being, but it is accompanied by differentiation of Name and Form Before birth - in the beginning, - however, it was answerable only to the idea and term 'Being' Before its birth, no object can be apprehended as being such and such

⁵Chānd..Up., III.12.1, p. 138.

⁶Ibid., VI.2.1, p. 296.

in name, or having such and such a form; it is exactly as during the time of deep sleep (prajña-susupti). What is meant is that immediately on waking from deep sleep, all that one is conscious of is mere existence (of things), while during deep sleep, he is conscious of Being alone as the only entity; and so also in the beginning - before the birth of the universe.⁷

The importance of the above resides in Śaṅkara's usage of the word sat. Sat or Being represents Brahman and is that transcendental as well as existential mode through which the concept of Brahman as the ontological ground of the world may be grasped. However we note too the ontological status of the (manifest) universe relative to Brahman.

Whereas the term sat denotes the characteristic grounding of the cosmos in Brahman, namarūpa denotes that characteristic and distinguishing factor that, in turn, distinguishes the universe in terms of sat (being) from Brahman. Name and form are, according to Śaṅkara, the characteristic qualifications of Being (Brahman), and represent again the fundamental modifiers conforming to or inherent in the universe. In reality however, the universe (as we have seen vis a vis the satkārya doctrine) is not different from Brahman. However, because Brahman is denoted the "only existent", that is, the non-dual ground, the

⁷Loc. cit.

universe is, out of natural consequence, unreal when compared to Brahman. Because the universe is conceived as having its roots (via the existence-aspect: sat) in Brahman, (that the effect is non-different from its cause) means that the universe as Being is Brahman; but the universe, in the case of its manifestation as a diversity of forms, must and is, says Śaṅkara, unreal (mithyā: false). This is not to say that the universe is not real (asat), because the universe is seen or experienced as existing, albeit only tentatively.⁸ Because Brahman is "existence" as Being (Sat) and therefore the impartite ground, the cosmos is denoted mithyā because of the distinctions relative to their respective esse between each other.⁹ However the individual experience of the universe cannot be denied outright. It is subsequently said to exist. This paradox is denoted anirvacanīya, literally, "indescribable". The universe is neither real nor unreal, neither wholly existent in one context, nor non-existent in another. Mayā, then, may be understood conditionally as an existential and cosmic paradox. Śaṅkara says:

Of the indivisible Being also, it is possible for modified forms to appear

⁸Chand. Up. VI.2.1, p. 298.

⁹I mean, here, namarūpa and not the Being-aspect sat. Sat is the common ground of both.

out of those (illusory) component parts of Being which are created by the imagination of man; just as the serpent appears out of those component parts of the rope which are created by the imagination (as being those of the serpent). Because after all 'all modification is a product of words, existing in mere name, and the Clay is the only Reality; and thus really speaking Being alone is real, one, without a second, -- even at the time that there is perception of 'this' (this perception being purely illusory).¹⁰

R. Das, in his "The Theory of Ignorance in Advaitism",¹¹ lists five fundamental characteristics traditionally attributed to māyā (or ajñāna): they are (1) anādi (without beginning or beginninglessness), (2) bhavarūpa (natural positivity), (3) āvarana (power of veiling), (4) viksepa (power of producing or production), and (5) upādāna (material cause). Of the second Das says:

Ajñāna is no doubt spoken of as positive (bhavarūpa). But it is positive only in the sense that it is not nothing. Ignorance ... is positive in this sense. Our ignorance of things, giving, as it does, rise to false conceptions about them, is not mere nothing.¹²

Śaṅkara's statement on the matter corroborates Das' analysis:

... the natural tendency to perceive outwardly the things that are not the Self is the cause of the obscuration of the vision of the Self;

¹⁰Ibid., p. 304.

¹¹G.R. Malkani, R. Das, and T.R.V. Murti, Ajñāna (London: Luzac & Co., 1933), p. 86.

¹²Das, Ajñāna, p. 87.

and it is ignorance, since it is opposed to that (vision).¹³

In the case of the man who possesses discriminative knowledge and whose knowledge has become steady, his experience of all matters, temporal and spiritual (laukika and vardika, sensuous and supersensuous), cease on the cessation of nescience (avidya); for it is the effect of nescience¹⁴

Note also B.S. I.1.19 (pp. 71-72)¹⁵ wherein māya is denoted as corresponding to the kosas, annamaya (physical body), prāṇamaya (vital airs of the bio-physical entity), manomaya (the mental faculties), viññānamaya (the intellectual faculties), and ānandamaya (the "bliss" body) or suṣupti (the third ontic state). In B.G. VII.14 (p. 213)¹⁶ māya is defined as comprising the three guṇas (or potentialities) and as residing in Īśvara (saguṇabrahma). In B.G. VII.25

¹³ Kaṭha Up. II.1.2, p. 172. Compare also: Chāṇḍ. Up. II.23.1, III.17.7, III.19.1, VI.2.2, VI.2.3, VI.13.3, VI.14.2, VI.15.2, VIII.12.1, VIII.12.3; Isā Up. I, III, XII, & XIII; Kena Up. I.1, II.1; Kaṭha Up. I.1.1, I.1.19, I.2.6, I.2.20, I.2.22, I.3.11, II.1.9, II.1.10, II.1.14, II.2.11; Taittirīya Up. II.1.1, II.6.1, II.8.5; Aitareya Up. I.1.1; Mundaka Up. II.1.1, II.1.2; Bhagavad Gītā IV.6, IV.24, VII.14, VII.25, XIII.2, XIII.14, XIII.19, XIII.21, XIII.29, XIII.31, XV.1, XVIII.48; Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya I.1.5, I.1.12, I.2.8, I.2.20, I.2.22, I.3.3, I.3.19, I.4.3, I.4.6, II.1.14, II.1.27, II.3.47; and Māṇḍūkya Up. I.1, I.3, I.6.7, etc.

¹⁴ B.G. II.68, p. 77.

¹⁵ Gambhirananda's trans.

¹⁶ Sastri's trans.

(pp. 218-219), māyā (as the three guṇas) is portrayed, by Śaṅkara, as the veil spread out as the world and which both hides and deludes the true Reality underlying it. On page 323 of his bhāṣya on the Gītā, Śaṅkara asserts that avidyā is a positive category residing (as an inherent aspect) in the non-self (anātman).

As regards the third and fourth characteristics of mayaviḍyā, Das states:

The powers of avarana and viksepa may be ascribed to ignorance also, in the sense that when there is a misconception about the true nature of a thing, there is a lack of knowledge as well as a false idea about it.¹⁷

In corroboration of Das' assertion Śaṅkara says:

God (Brahman) conforms to the limiting adjuncts - name and form - created by nescience. And within the domain of empirical existence, He rules it over the selves which identify themselves with the (individual) intellects and are called creatures, and which though identical with Himself, conform, like the spaces in pots etc., to the assemblages of bodies and senses created by name and form that are called up by nescience. Thus God's rulership, omniscience, and omnipotence are contingent on the limiting adjuncts conjured up by nescience; but not so in reality can such terms as 'the ruler', 'the ruled', 'omniscience', etc., be used with regard to the Self shining in its own nature after the removal of all limiting adjuncts through illumination.¹⁸

¹⁷Das, Ajñāna, pp. 87-88.

¹⁸B.S. II.1.14, p. 334.

Māya, as expressed in the above context, hides the Reality of Brahman in its cosmic aspect (i.e., the external universe). Avidyā or the individual mode of māya also hides Brahman due to the individual's cognizant identification with the world. Māya, as the supreme cause (kāraṇa) of diversity, both obscures Brahman and distorts Brahman (vikṣepa) through name and form (nāmarūpa) to give rise to the apparent reality of the universe and the individual.¹⁹

As for the upādāna aspect, the material cause of the universe, māyāvidyā is the fact responsible for the various and differing forms (rūpa) comprising the cosmic and individual modes of being (e.g., the physical universe and physical body or jīva). Māya in its upādāna aspect is the material cause of the universe and name and form its transformed (pariṇāma) effects. Asaḍas again says,

¹⁹Compare: (1) āvarana - Chānd. Up. III.14.1, III.19.1, VI.1.6, VI.2.1, VI.2.2, VI.2.3, VI.4.1, VI.4.4, VI.8.1, VI.8.4, VII.1.3, VII.1.4, VII.2.2, VII.4.1, VII.17.1, VIII.1.5, VIII.5.4, VIII.12.1, VIII.12.3; Isa Up. I, III, XII, XIII; Kena Up. II.1; Kaṭha Up. I.1.1, I.1.19, I.2.20, I.2.22, I.3.11, I.3.12, II.1.2, II.1.9, II.1.10, II.2.11; Taittiriya Up. II.1.1, II.6.1, II.8.5; Aitareya Up. I.1.1; Mundaka Up. I.1.8, II.1.1, II.1.2, II.1.3, II.2.10; Prasna Up. V.1; Bhagavad Gīta II.68, IV.6, IV.9, VII.13, VII.14, VII.25, XIII.2, XIII.31, XVIII.48; Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya I.1.5, I.1.12, I.2.8, I.2.20, I.2.22, I.3.19, I.3.42, I.4.3, I.4.6, II.1.14, II.1.27, II.1.33, II.2.2; Māṇḍūkya Up. I.1, I.2, I.4, I.5, I.6.2, I.6.6, I.7, etc. (2) vikṣepa - Chānd. Up. III.14.1, III.19.1, VI.2.1, VI.2.2, VI.2.3, VI.3.2, VI.4.1, VI.8.1, VI.8.4, VII.1.3, VII.17.1, VIII.5.4, VIII.12.1, VIII.12.3; Isa Up. I, IV; Kena Up. II.1; Kaṭha Up. I.2.20, I.2.23, I.3.11, I.3.12, II.1.2, II.1.10,

Earth is the material cause of a jar, because a jar is in substance nothing but earth. Similarly ignorance is the material cause of the world only in the sense that the different forms in which the world appears to us are nothing but forms of ignorance. Their reality is the reality of ignorance.²⁰

Mayāvidyā is also without beginning precisely because it is describable as neither existent nor non-existent (anirvacanīya):

Its (Samsara) form as such is perceived by nobody here; for it is very much like a dream, a mirage, a gandharva-nagara (an imaginary city in the sky) produced by a juggler's art; indeed, it appears and disappears. It has therefore no finality, no end (i.e., in the absence of Brahma-vidyā). Neither has it a beginning ... Its existence - i.e., its nature between the origin and the end - is perceived by nobody.²¹

II.2.11; Taittiriya Up. II.1.1, II.6.1, II.8.5; Aitareya Up. I.1.1; Mundaka Up. I.1.6, II.1.1, II.1.2; Bhagavad Gītā II.68, IV.6, IV.9, IV.13, IV.24, VI.35, VII.14, VII.25, XIII.2, XIII.15, XIII.26, XIII.31, XVIII.48; Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya I.1.5, I.1.12, I.2.8, I.2.20, I.2.22, I.3.19, I.3.42, I.4.3, I.4.6, II.1.14, II.1.27, II.1.33, II.2.2; and Māṇḍūkya I.1, I.2, I.4, I.5, I.6.2, I.6.6, I.6.7, I.7, etc.

²⁰Das, Ajñāna, p. 88. Compare also: Chānd. Up. III.19.1, VI.2.1, VI.2.2, VI.2.3, VI.3.3, VI.8.1, VI.8.4, VI.13.3, VI.14.2, VI.15.2, VII.24.1, VII.26.2, VIII.1.1, VIII.5.4, VIII.6.3, VIII.12.1, VIII.12.3; Īśa Up. I, IV, VIII, XII, XIII; Kena Up. I.1, II.1; Kātha Up. I.1.1, I.1.19, I.2.6, I.2.20, I.2.22, I.3.10, I.3.11, I.3.12, II.1.2, II.1.9, II.1.10, II.1.14, II.2.11; Taittiriya Up. I.1.1, II.1.1, II.6.1, II.7.1, II.8.5; Aitareya Up. I.1.1; Mundaka Up. II.1.1, II.1.2, III.1.1; Bhagavad Gītā II.68, IV.6, IV.24, VII.13, VII.14, VII.25, VIII.20, IX.8, X.3, XIII.2, XIII.14, etc.; Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya I.1.1, I.1.5, I.1.12, I.1.19, I.2.20, I.2.22, I.3.3, I.3.19, etc.

²¹B.G. XV.3,4, pp. 400-401. Also Chānd. Up. III.19.1; Mundaka Up. I.1.8; B.S. I.3.30.

Das states:

I was ignorant of many things which I have now learned. But can I or anybody else determine the date (or moment) from which my ignorance of those things began? My ignorance of things which I never knew and do not know is as beginningless as the non-existence of an object before it is created Moreover ignorance is beginningless in the sense that there is nothing objective prior to ignorance. All things, including time among them, being products of ignorance must necessarily be thought of as without a beginning, i.e., as being no effect of anything else.²²

The Theory

Having outlined the five chief characteristics of mayavidyā, as understood by Śaṅkara, it is necessary at this point to attempt to reframe the specific implications issuing out from the mayavidyā doctrine and to re-contextualize them within the context of Advaita causality theory.

As has been pointed out previously, whereas satkārya establishes the ontological non-distinction between the cause and the effect, i.e., that the effect is merely a difference in form (rūpa) and a difference in name (nāma) and not essentially different in terms of esse (as sat)²³, vivarta affirms in conjunction with satkārya-vāda the "appearance only" status of the effect, thus resolving

²²Das, Ajñāna, p. 87.

²³S. Chatterjee and D. Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1968), p. 378.

the effect (as comprehended within the context of mayāvidyā and comprising name and form) back into the cause, Brahman.

Existence is ... found to be one undeniable reality through all states, internal and external. It can, therefore, be accepted as the substance, and material cause of which all determinate objects and mental states are the diverse manifestations.²⁴

Now according to Das²⁵ there are two aspects contained in the general concept of "illusory appearance" or māyā: (1) māyā, and (2) avidyā or ajñāna. He says:

... ajñāna is the ground of all objectivity. And since we believe in objective existence far beyond the range of our actual knowledge, we cannot but also believe that there must be ajñāna beyond individual knowledge and existence, to provide ground for objective being.

As the material and causal principle of illusory appearance en toto we understand that, as māyā, for only within the comprehensive structure of māyā can all forms of diversity arise. Both the external forms of experience (perceptual experience - pratyakṣa), i.e., objects, etc., and the internal or subjective experiences (i.e., one's own cognitive states, e.g., conscious impressions of objects, dreams, deep sleep, etc.) fall within the structure of māyā; however the latter subjective states pertaining

²⁴Ibid., p. 379.

²⁵Das, Ajñāna, p. 80.

to the individual consciousness are relegated to the individual mode of māyā, namely, avidyā. What applies to and within māyā reciprocally holds true for avidyā. Māyā is beginningless and it obscures Reality (Brahman); and it projects external forms that accounts for the distortion of Reality (rūpa); māyā maintains an apparent form of reality and is the ground of all individualized forms of avidyā. Avidyā, on the other hand, maintains a more epistemological character than does māyā insofar as avidyā pertains to an individual and conscious jīva; avidyā obscures Reality by way of the jīva's identification with his idea of himself; the individual jīva also distorts Reality by identifying himself with the objects of the external world; the jīva considers himself as part and parcel of the illusory world.

In the Māṇḍūkya Bhasya Śaṅkara resorts to an analysis of individual consciousness, i.e., the jīva or embodied ātman. While māyā applies to the metaphysical category²⁶ and which needs no essential verification by itself (for there is no proof of māyā other than śruti), avidyā or individual nescience applies more exclusively to the epistemological.²⁷ In this, although māyā may stand alone and by itself as a cosmical principle or

²⁶Chatterjee and Datta, Philosophy, p. 387.

²⁷Deutsch, Reconstruction, p. 30.

metaphysical assumption, avidyā, which is the individual and existential mode of māyā, incorporates an epistemological element that, because of avidyā's reciprocal identity with māyā, may very well inform māyā and in so doing reveal their common ground, Brahman.²⁸ As such, Śaṅkara's investigation of the individual mode is ideally an investigation of the possibility of Reality (Brahman).

According to the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad²⁹ the individual jīva is said to possess four states of consciousness or pādas: (1) Vaiśvānara (the waking conscious state); (2) Taijasa (the inner dream state); (3) Prājña (the transcendental cognitive state of deep sleep); and (4) Turiya (the fourth non-cognitive 'being' state). Corresponding to the latter individualized states of consciousness are, respectively, (1) Virāt (the external world of objects - the universe as a physical reality); (2) Hiranyagarbha (the subtle state of mind or cosmic consciousness that, for all suits and purposes, is the cohesive bond conjoining all diversity in the form of physical being together as one determinate reality); (3) Īśvara (the extra-subtle principle of determinating 'being' that contains within itself the cosmic laws that govern both the subtle Hiranyagarbha and physical universe; and (4) Brahman (the indeterminate and all-comprehending Being).

²⁸See Arapura, Māyā, p. 109 and p. 112.

²⁹Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad I.3, I.4, I.5, and I.7.

The Vaiśvānara is the Self (Ātman) constituted of and limited by the adjuncts³⁰, and the Self as experiencer of the external as well as internal states of being. Its correspondence with Virāt illustrates the intricate and necessary identification of the jīva with, in, and of the physical world.³¹ Taijasa corresponds to the dream state of the individual and to the cosmic mind-state of the universe. It is important to note here that, as we have already said, that māya can be entreated as the universe's perception of itself (in terms of consciousness). The Taijasa state of the individual is comprised essentially of residua corresponding to the activities of the waking state:

He is called the Taijasa because he appears as the subject through this (dream) consciousness is without any (gross) object and is of the nature of the essence of light.³²

It is identical with the macrocosmic Hiranyagarbha.³³

The third pāda, Prājña, is the non-objective, non-dream state:

... deep sleep (susupti) signifies ... sleep as characterized by the absence of the knowledge of Reality (and) is the common feature

³⁰Comprised of (1) five organs of perception (Buddhindriyas): sight, smell, sound, taste & touch; (2) five organs of action (Karmendriyas): hands, feet, speech, generation & evacuation; (3) five aspects of vital breath: Prāṇa, Apāṇa, Samāna, Vyāna & Udāna; (4) mind (Manas); (5) intellect (Buddhi); (6) egoity (Ahaṁkāra); (7) mind-stuff (Citta).

³¹Māṇḍūkya Up. I.3, p. 13.

³²Ibid., I.4, p. 18.

³³Ibid., p. 76

of those modifications which are associated with (waking, that is) perception (of gross objects) and (dream, that is the) non-perception (of gross objects).³⁴

In this state prāṇa-susupti is conditioned by the mere absence of objects and dream objects as referends. It is a state in which the subject and object are merged into one, and thereby may be tentatively understood as a condition of pure subjectivity. Its macrocosmic aspect is the Īśvara and is denoted the Lord (of the subtle and gross universes). Īśvara is the antaryāmin or "inner controller" insofar as the Īśvara is said to represent the material and efficient cause of the universe.³⁵

Turiya, the fourth pāda, is beyond perception and therefore, beyond immediate comprehension.³⁶ Ideally, Turiya is not a state or condition; it is, says Śaṅkara, Reality, and may be spoken of as "the fourth" only insofar as we can only understand it as anterior to the other three states of consciousness. Its macrocosmic aspect is, of course, Brahman.

It is important to note that what has occurred in the Māṇḍūkya is the attributing and correlation of the microcosm with the macrocosm, to become the makranthropos. The individual psyche is the mirror of the universe, of Brahman. But the individual, like the

³⁴Māṇḍūkya Up. I.5, p. 20.

³⁵Ibid., I.6, pp. 24-25.

³⁶Ibid., p. 42.

universe, may further be sub-divided into micro and macro-cosm: i.e., the Jīva and Ātman respectively. Ātman, in its individualized aspect (i.e., in the context of individual limiting adjuncts) corresponds to the microcosmic Brahman, or, the differentiated aspects pertaining to Being (Sat); while the macrocosmic Ātman (i.e., the pure undifferentiated Being common to all individual Jīvas) corresponds to the macrocosmic Brahman. It is, essentially, a more comprehensive rendering of the mahāvākya "Tat tvam asi" (literally, "that thou art"). The above brings to the fore the fundamental axiom of the Advaita: that there is a fundamental Reality behind the appearances, that Brahman alone is the real actuality while the manifest and unmanifest (or gross and subtle) universes are unreal when compared to Brahman.

Thus far, then, Śaṅkara has by way of a sort of phenomenology of consciousness endeavoured to correlate Reality (as the ontological ground) with Reality in its limited or individualized aspect, Ātman. In having done so, Śaṅkara has, perhaps more through implication, correlated Non-reality³⁷ of the universe with the Non-reality of the "container".³⁸ On the one hand, the metaphysical reality of the universe, as it applies to a structured ontology, is established, along with the reality of the

³⁷The universe in its gross, subtle & causal states.

³⁸The Ātman as limited by and through the adjuncts.

individual. In contradistinction to the ontological character of Turiya, the apparent levels of being that go to structuralize the universe and the apparent levels of being comprising the individual jīva's consciousness, are when viewed from the Turiya state not real ontologically speaking. The macrocosm, that is Virāt, Hiranyagarbha and Īsvara, is denoted māyā; while the microcosm, that is the individual consciousness comprised of Vaiśvānara, Taijasa and Prājña-susūpti, is denoted avidyā.

The concept avidyā is the individual mode of the universalized māyā. Avidyā reveals both its own nature as well as its macrocosmic ground (māyā), and in so doing consequently reveals their common ground Brahman. How does this occur? It is by and through the analysis of consciousness. But we have already hinted that consciousness cannot turn back on itself, that is, that ego-consciousness cannot reveal its own ground, for that ground is, as we shall see, non-cognitive in nature and resides beyond the capacity of ego-consciousness as a conscious entity perceiving itself. To use a timeless analogy - how can one know the knower? This, then, is Śaṅkara's advaita in a nutshell - knowing, and the process of the understanding, is an exterior function that is part and parcel of the net of māyāvidyā: one does not "know"

Reality, nor does one understand Reality; for Śaṅkara one is Reality. By the analysis of consciousness, then, one is able to arrive at a tentative understanding of the primordial ontological ground Brahman.

Avidyā is the experience of the individual consciousness, as consciousness turned towards the world of name and form. The three most important of the limiting adjuncts are: (1) Antahkarana (the internal organ), (2) Buddhi (the intellect), and (3) Manas (the mind). The mānomāyakośa or "mind sheath" Deutsch defines as:

the sense-mind ... an instrument, sometimes taken as a sense organ itself, which assimilates and synthesizes sense impressions and thus enables the self to make contact with external objects ... (it lacks) discriminating objectivity³⁹

The viññānamāyakośa or "intellect sheath" Deutsch, again, defines as:

... an instrument of discrimination, a faculty of judgement; it determines (one's) intellectual attitudes, fortifies (one's) beliefs, and makes understanding possible. Whenever one is aware of oneself, then, as a rational being who is capable of intellectual insight and judgement, one is involved in this viññānamāyakośa.⁴⁰

As for the antahkarana, Deutsch says, that it is "the psychological expression for the totality of mental functions in waking-dream consciousness."⁴¹ In other words the antahkarana comprises the totality of both the buddhi and manas.

³⁹Deutsch, Reconstruction, p. 60.

⁴⁰Loc. cit.

⁴¹Loc. cit.

In his bhāṣya on the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad Śaṅkara says of the Vaiśvānara state, "that consciousness appears, as it were, related to outward objects on account of avidyā.⁴² Vaiśvānara is comprised of the relation between ego-consciousness and the external world of objects (rūpa). Taijasa, on the other hand, is ego-consciousness as it exists in relation to dream-objects which in themselves derive their being in the majority of cases from waking-day residua. This fact is attested to by both Freud and Jung wherein they say that ego-consciousness is not fully negated but exists in a relaxed state. Ego-consciousness, then, still exists as a fact of experience in consciousness but in a sublimated or secondary sense. Śaṅkara says:

Waking consciousness, being associated as it is with many means, and appearing conscious of objects as if external, though (in reality) they are nothing but states of mind, leaves in the mind corresponding impressions.⁴³

By and through the subject-object relationship, or the instrumentality of the subject-object relation as manifested through the sense-organs (Buddhīndriyas), the antahkarana reconstructs the objects of the waking state as impressions to form the content of the Taijasa condition. In this, the impressions or general content of the dream state are creations of the mind (antahkarana); in accord with footnote

⁴²Māṇḍūkya Up. I.3, p. 13.

⁴³Ibid., I.4, p. 16.

forty-one the activity of the antahkarana comprises the activity of both the buddhi and manas. In the dream state we grant the dream objects a real existence. For like the illusory snake in the rope, dream objects evoke similar responses in the mind of the beholder or subject.

In the Taijasa state, consciousness comprises the subjective awareness of dream objects which are, by nature, internal mental conditions.⁴⁴ This is not opposed to the Vaiśvanara, says Nikhilananda⁴⁵, as there exists no awareness of external or internal objects apart from the cognising subject; that is, awareness (as it stands in the subject-object relation) as comprised solely of mental states or ideas in the mind:

From the standpoint of dream, dream objects are as gross and material as those experienced in the waking state. From the viewpoint of the waking state alone, one may infer that the dream objects are subtle, that is, composed of mere impressions of the waking state inasmuch as in the dream state no external (that is, gross) object exists at all.⁴⁶

In his bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya I.6.2 Śaṅkara⁴⁷ says, "Taijasa the perceiver in the mind within, is merely the same as viśva ... Both Perception and memory⁴⁸ are forms of thought."

⁴⁴Ibid., I.4, PP. 18-19.

⁴⁵Ibid., I.4, P. 19, 13.

⁴⁶Loc. cit.

⁴⁷Māṇḍūkya Up. I.6.2, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁸Memory is part of both Taijasa and Vaiśvanara.

He says also, "Taijasa is identical with Hiranyagarbha on account of its existence being realized in mind. Mind is the characteristic indication (of both)."⁴⁹ However, in the case of Prājña-susupti, there is no relation of cogniser, object-to-be-cognized, nor the knowledge (or thought) arising out from the subject-object relation. Prājña is that state in which the subject-object relation characteristic of the Taijasa and Vaiśvānara conditions is unified so as to become, so to speak, a condition of pure "subjectivity". It is characterized as "the absence of knowledge of Reality".⁵⁰ It is also the one common feature of the other two states:

... it is called Ekībhūta, i.e., the state in which all objects of duality, which are nothing but forms of thought, spread over the two states (viz., the waking and the dream), reach the state of indiscrimination or non-differentiation without losing their characteristics, as the day, revealing phenomenal objects, is enveloped by the darkness of night.⁵¹

Prājña-susupti is, thus, that condition of undifferentiated consciousness in which no object arises as prescriptive of knowledge, i.e., knowledge arising out from the subject-object relation. It is a state in which the ego-conscious element is lost in or is resolved back into the ground of pure "subjectivity" - not ego-I but sheer "I" without any exterior locus by which to make the distinction between

⁴⁹Māṇḍūkya Up. I.6.2, p. 28.

⁵⁰Ibid., I.5, p. 20.

⁵¹Ibid., I.5, p. 21.

the pure "I" and itself. At most one can say that Prājña conforms to the psychoid condition residing within the more total psychic economy. Extreme "subjectivity", wherein both the absence of Knowledge as Reality (Paravidyā) and the absence of relative knowledge (Aparavidyā) as qualifying aspects of the former, may also be depicted as a case of relative non-cognition wherein the āhamkāra or egoity (the "I") exists as the only residium:

Deep-sleep consciousness is not 'transcendental consciousness', the spiritual consciousness in which oneness is obtained, but it is not to be construed as void on that account. Defined initially in negative terms as an absence of objects, of desires, and of activities, it is then described in positive terms as a state of joyous consciousness. It is, writes Samkara, 'an abundance of joy caused by the absence of the misery involved in the (usual) effort of mind⁵²

Distinctions are not abolished, but more so, they reside as potentiality in the "form" of potential forms; this state is resplendent of a stage of "pure" avidyā.⁵³

The Advaitin argues that in the state of deep sleep, consciousness is present, that deep sleep is a state of consciousness and not of non-consciousness, although there are no objects there with which it relates or interacts. And this is because upon returning to waking consciousness one does affirm that 'I had a wonderful sleep'. If consciousness were absent altogether in that state, no memory affirmation of it would be possible. Consciousness, it is believed,

⁵²Deutsch, Reconstruction, p. 61.

⁵³Loc. cit.

thus persists even in the absence of all of the instruments of sense and cognitive experience.⁵⁴

Unlike Taijasa and Vaiśvanara, Prājña is not a form of thought (i.e., ideation as knowledge arising out of the common subject-object relation).⁵⁵

Earlier it was mentioned that both māya and avidyā were comprised as it were of both name (nāma) and form (rūpa).⁵⁶ Hiriyanna states:

By rūpa is here meant the specific form or nature of a thing; and by nāma, the name or word that serves as its sign. By the two terms together we have to understand, in the case of any object, its particularity or 'determinate character'; and the emergence of the world from Brahman is conceived as the differentiation of names and forms.⁵⁷

Pratap Singh says regarding nāmarūpa:

'Name and form are the limiting adjuncts of the Supreme Self, of which, when they are differentiated, it is impossible to tell whether they are identical with or different from It (Ātman) It is name and form in all their stages that constitute relative existence.' Maya or the Divine Creative Power is but the antecedent condition of that state of the world in which names and forms are evolved. In this antecedent condition names and forms lie unevolved.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Deutsch, Reconstruction, p. 61, 24.

⁵⁵Māṇḍūkya Up. I.6.2, p. 31, 9.

⁵⁶Hiriyanna, Outlines, pp. 63f.

⁵⁷Loc. cit.

⁵⁸Ram Pratap Singh, The Vedānta of Śaṅkara (Jaipur: Bharat Publishing House, 1949), p. 322.

Namarūpa is said to exist only in the Vaiśvānara and Taijasa quarters. Prājña is devoid of name and form in the same sense as they are in the previous two states. For all suits and purposes, rūpa resolves itself into nāma and nāma into Prājña. Prājña, as a rarified state of homogeneous consciousness, a state of mere ego-presence, lacks the subject-object distinction and in this context, Prājña is denoted the state of pure potencia, as the cause (kāraṇa) of Taijasa and Vaiśvānara.⁵⁹ It, unlike Turiya which transcends namarūpa and the causal potential of Prājña, is still the causal state of avidyā. As cause, Prājña is responsible for the re-manifestation of the effects, i.e., the differentiated states of Taijasa and Vaiśvānara. In Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad Śaṅkara⁶⁰ depicts Prājña as the cause for the manifestation of name and form.⁶¹

Prājña represents the pure state in and by which Brahman is obscured (āvaraṇa) as well as distorted (vikṣepa). In the Prājña condition Brahman is not apprehended nor is Brahman's true "form" perceived.⁶² Now, according to our analysis thus far the first two states of consciousness conform to ego-consciousness in which the distinction

⁵⁹Māṇḍūkya Up. I.6.1, 24, 25.

⁶⁰Ibid., I.6.2, p. 30.

⁶¹Ibid., I.6.2, 26, p. 33.

⁶²Ibid., I.6.2, 27, p. 33.

between subject and object is maintained. In Maṇḍūkya Upaniṣad I.6.2 name and form are treated respectively as subject and object. Insofar as Prājña is the common ground of both Taijasa and Vaiśvanara and because Prājña is characterized as the condition in which no cognition of objects is possible, then the previous two states are interpreted as the effects of Prājña. Śaṅkara states:

The generic and specific characters of Visva etc. (i.e., Taijasa and Prājña)⁶³ are described with a view to determining the real nature of Turiya. Karya or effect is that which is done, i.e., which has the characteristic of result. Karana or the cause is that which acts, i.e., it is the state in which the effect remains latent. Both Visva and Taijasa ... are known as being conditioned by cause and effect, characterized by both non-apprehension and mis-apprehension of Reality. But Prājña is conditioned by cause alone. Cause characterized by the non-apprehension of Reality, is the condition of Prājña. Therefore these two, cause and effect, i.e., non-apprehension and mis-apprehension of Reality, do not exist, i.e., are not possible in Turiya.⁶⁴

But as effects, both name and form comprise cause as well as effect, first of all, relative to their respective contexts - i.e., name interpreted as "subject" or subject-consciousness (or ego) consists of both āvaraṇa and vikṣepa; the subject-consciousness always exists in inseparable relation with its object of perception. Likewise, form repre-

⁶³The generic quality is the common aspect to both Taijasa and Vaiśvanara: cause (āvaraṇa) as underlying both, and effect (vikṣepa) as comprising both name and form. The specific quality of Prājña is āvaraṇa.

⁶⁴Maṇḍūkya Up. I.7.11, p. 57.

sents the distorting element (viksepa) and may be understood as the effect from within the context of nāma, as subject. However to reverse our position, form (rūpa) as the "object-referend" is always the effect (kārya), conditioned as it is by its inherent capacity to appear as the "form-object" of and for "subject consciousness" (nāma). But rūpa is too qualified by the condition āvaraṇa or non-apprehension (of Reality). But not because it can be conceived as the cause in the same sense as nāma.⁶⁵

Prājña-susupti, as we have seen, is characterized by the absence of name and form; at most name and form are undifferentiated (or resolved) potential. Prājña is pure āvaraṇa; the non-apprehension of Reality.⁶⁶ As Gauḍapāda says in his karika on Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 1.7:

The first two (Viśva and Taijasa) are associated with the conditions of dream and sleep. Prājña is the condition of sleep without dream.⁶⁷

And:

Svapna or dream is the wrong cognition of Reality. Nidra or sleep is the state in which one does know what Reality is. When the erroneous knowledge in these two disappears, Turiya is realized.⁶⁸

⁶⁵We shall return to this a little later, p. 96f.

⁶⁶See Māṇḍūkya I.7.11, p. 58, note 3.

⁶⁷Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad I.7.14, p. 60.

⁶⁸Ibid., I.7.15, p. 61.

Prājña is, then, the supreme cause (Prājña-kāraṇa); the cause of the other two quarters of consciousness. It is, as indicated by ahaṁkāra, egoity, in the sense of extreme "subjectivity".⁶⁹ In the absence of a knowing subject which stands in inseparable relation with the object of the knowing relation, there is only non-apprehension (āvaraṇa) or cause in the meta-psychological or meta-physical sense. The epistemological category as illustrated by the three-fold cognitive formula of knower, knowledge and object-to-be-known, is resolved into the category of unconscious "knower", that is, "knower in potencia". As der grund or ground of Taijasa and Vaiśvanara, Prājña is the cause, and the latter two the effect. The underlying and common reality of all three is āvaraṇa. Prājña as the cause, is avidyā in its pure form, and thus, is said to be the cause of one's non-apprehension and misapprehension of Brahman. I think that, although name and form as subject and object, are resolved into a non-differentiated state, nāma within the contexts of Taijasa and Vaiśvanara, is to be understood as the subject inextricably bound to the world of external

⁶⁹Antahkarana comprises the totality of waking and dream consciousness thereby excluding the immediate idea of "subject-ego" experienced in all relations of subject and object and the consequent knowledge arising out from the relation.

objects or objectivity in general. However as transcendently conceived, nāma might very well denote that state of pure "egoity"⁷⁰ wherein the objects do not exist as ideas and consequently, represents the state devoid of subject-ego awareness.

Two levels of thought are apparent here. Avidyā is, in a metaphysically qualified sense, the cause (Prājñā-karana) of the other two states because it lacks distinguishing characteristics in the form of objects presented, and thus the cognizing subject which conceives of those objects giving rise, in turn, to disparate knowledge. Āvarana gives rise to avarana conditioned by vikṣepa. Thus vikṣepa exists in the cause as a dependent criterion of and for the appearance of knowledge. In this context, the effect resides in and is non-different from the cause. However, in the second aspect, from the standpoint of the nature of namarūpa, it may be evidenced that the effect resides in and is non-different from the cause; and, that the effect is ideally an "apparent manifestation" of the cause (vivartavāda). In his bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad I.12, Śaṅkara states:

⁷⁰"Egoity" is a term that I have coined specifically to denote the Prājñā state. It is comprehensive term meaning root-consciousness as the cause for ego-consciousness (i.e., the thinking subject) and the foundation of self-centredness.

This partless Aum which is fourth, is nothing but Pure Atman. It is incomprehensible, because both speech and mind which correspond to the name and the object disappear or cease, the name and the object (that is indicated by the name) which are only forms of speech and mind cease or disappear (in the partless Aum). It is the cessation of the illusion of phenomena and all bliss and is identical with non-duality.⁷¹

Nikhilananda says⁷² that all objects are "forms of mind". And we must agree here that the corresponding "reaching-out" of mind towards objects⁷³ conforms (along with the buddhi or intellect which discriminates and fortifies via judgement the "raw" sense-forms acquired by manas) to the object as it is presented, or as it presents itself to mind, because subject as mind exists in inseparable relation with the object of perception. However, this is not to say that at the point of "reaching-out" of manas to the objects themselves, that the objects are not present as corresponding external referends relative to manas. This would lead to a subjective idealism, i.e., that the external world is comprised of nothing but one's own ideas of it, and that the world does not exist apart from those ideas. As is the case of the dream state, the objects as impressions of waking-

⁷¹Māṇḍūkya Up. I.12, p. 77.

⁷²Ibid., p. 78. ⁷³Deutsch, Reconstruction, p. 60. 32.

day consciousness are merely ideas as impressions. Ideation thus requires a subject as well as an object.⁷⁴ The states of consciousness in the Taijasa and Vaiśvānara quarters are, hence, conditioned by forms (rūpa) as objects. The subject of those forms, namely, nāma (because the subject identifies itself with those forms) is also comprised of ideas as impressions, thereby indicating that the whole of the effect (kārya) (as nāmarūpa) as vikṣepa is merely an apparent manifestation in the form of an effect. Thus the effect is merely a condition of apparent being (sat) and is not real in itself. Prājña, in its āvaraṇa aspect, does not and cannot admit of form-content as such (i.e., the subject-object relation), thereby negating the ideational element. Therefore, the effect is merely an apparent manifestation (vivarta), and is, in essence, non-different from its cause. Whereas āntahkaraṇa comprised of buddhi and manas, does not exist as a component of Prājña, Prājña as pure undifferentiated "egoity"⁷⁵ remains as the causal condition of all individual "experience" of both internal and external states.

Earlier it was mentioned⁷⁶ that nāma in both its transcendental and mundane senses is the cause. In the case of the transcendental context nāma as "egoity" (i.e.,

⁷⁴Mandukya Up. I.6.5, pp. 35-36.

⁷⁵Deutsch, Reconstruction, p. 27, n. 4.

⁷⁶Refer. to p. 92 this thesis.

as Prajñā-susupti) is interpreted by way of its āvarana aspect as the ground only of Taijasa and Vaiśvanara which are in turn conditioned further by the viksepa aspect.

Nāma, in its mundane context, is viewed as the cause insofar as it is the subject of the knowledge arising out from the knowing relation of subject, and object. Nāma is the cause because of its anteriority to external objects. It is, even in the dream state, anterior to those dream-objects, even though it is only theoretically that one may separate the subject from the object to be known. But in reality, the objects (i.e., those external objects as they exist in the world), are real-in-themselves;⁷⁷ that is, insofar as they are presentable to the subject consciousness in the Vaiśvanara state.⁷⁸ Objects of perception exist as a matter of daily experience.⁷⁹ In this, the objects of experience (i.e., rūpa) are the cause of individual knowledge or nescience. In the macrocosmic context, rūpa as cause of individual delusion, is denoted māyā. Rūpa or form-object, as a principle of reality, is, like its counterpart as an integral component-datum of individual experience, a component-datum in and of the macrocosmic experience of cause, Īśvara or Sagunabrahman, or Brahman

⁷⁷This does not conform to the Kantian notion.

⁷⁸Māṇḍūkya Up. I.7.12, p. 59.

⁷⁹Ibid., I.7.18, pp. 64-66.

as diversified through nāmarūpa. Pratap Singh says of māyā:

The doctrine of māyā not only emphasizes the origin of the world from Brahman and the latter's subsistence in its eternal purity and absolute integrity; it also summarizes the peculiarly baffling nature of the world of name and form. Samkara characterizes the universe as anirvacaniya. Nama and rupa are everywhere said to be ... neither Brahman nor something other than Brahman. Brahman is the absolute value.⁸⁰

We only mention this characterization of the world as anirvacaniya incidentally. Rūpa, although from the standpoint of māyā, it is a cause of individual delusion, is nevertheless a tentatively existing real. For on the one hand, an individual perceives the form or external object, and yet upon resolution into Taijasa the external objects reside not as causal agencies but merely as modifications of mind (antahkarana). To utilize Samkara's "rope-snake" analogy (adhyāropa), one superimposes (adhyāsa) his idea of a non-existent snake upon the rope (the substratum). The external object is real from the empirical standpoint, but from the non-empirical level, i.e., from the locus of Brahman (advaitam), it is not real. The external object is sublated by dream-consciousness, dream-consciousness by Prājñācit, and Prājñācit by Turiyabrahman.

⁸⁰Singh, Samkara, p. 349.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Causality as a Hermeneutical Principle

The theory that was proposed in the previous chapter makes no pretension to explain the paradox of Being versus Māyā. Indeed to even begin by formulating the Advaita ontology in terms of a fundamental opposition of Being and Non-being is to destroy the intricate and subtle character of the former. From the standpoint of Brahman, says Śaṁkara, there is no conflict whatsoever. Being is non-dual. Language, in the ontological context, or nāma, name, is incapable of revealing Brahman save for Śruti, literally "that which is seen". We have already indicated the powerful, albeit central place, that revealed scripture has within Śaṁkara's Advaita. But to repeat our position here, nāma as a fundamental component-datum of the understanding, i.e., knowledge revealed through the word, reveals to our conscious-understanding the orientation of our thought that comprises our knowledgable understanding. In other words, language is that mode through which our faculty of comprehension or understanding is made available to our individual selves and to others. Within an ontological context, language seeks to denote Brahman by turning away from Brahman, e.g., just as one may depict Brahman as the totality of auspicious qualities

so may another conceive and depict Brahman as the sum of inauspicious qualities, thus reducing the concept of Brahman, that is, by way of a confrontation within the structure of language itself, to a category of the "totally other". This latter point insulates Śaṅkara's Advaita from the Buddhist "dialecticians" who, while beginning with no revealed scripture as such, work towards the concept of no-ground, nirvāṇa. The crux is this: that for Śaṅkara, language, which reveals its highest capacity in the form of Śruti, provides us with the key to the question as to the nature of the "abstract existent". Brahman is Being, Consciousness and Bliss, as opposed to either nothing or something.

Although the above is most important in the Advaita it is not and cannot be the contending point in this paper. It is, for our purposes, more important to see what possibilities there may be for re-thinking causality in the context of a metaphysics of language; that is, to situate the phenomena of language within a general framework of consciousness as was done in the previous section in chapter two. The question naturally arises - is the principle of causality capable of revealing the possibility of Brahman? Or, can an analysis of causality reveal only the possibility (and/or impossibility) of causality?

These questions are vast in themselves, and would require a great deal of thought and introspection on the philosopher's part. To a certain extent such was the endeavour of Kant in his Kritik Der Reinen Vernunft. However I think that we can acquire a glimpse into the nature of the solution to our questions if we understand firsthand that, as noted in the section "The Theory", the individual jīva is ideally the microcosmic reflection or counterpart to the macrocosm, Īśvara. The correlation between the metaphysical structures of the manifest-unmanifest cosmos and the individual structures comprising human consciousness provide us with a link between the jīva and Brahman. Īśvara is, for the Advaita, the face of Brahman turned towards the world. Īśvara represents the phenomenal aspect of Brahman, the ultimate characterization or plenum, māyā. As seen through and by way of māyāvidyā Brahman "appears" (vivarta). Īśvara, as was already hinted at, is the totality of name and form, subject-object, "I and Thou". It is the totality of the potentiality of and for disparate consciousness. Īśvara is Prājña-susupti (as per the individual jīva). Īśvara is the cosmic "seed" (bīja), the unmanifest potential for the creation of the universe. Name and form, nāmarūpa, are mutually composite components comprising the nature of Īśvara.

Now if interpreting name and form in the context of a general metaphysics, we can see that form in its external context is the power (māyāśakti) of manifestation of external objects, while in its internal aspect form is the individual's power of apprehending that external form (rūpa). Name, on the other hand, is, in its internal aspect, the consciousness or knowledge that arises out from the revelation encountered in the written word, Śruti. Radhakrishnan says:

The forms are manifestations of the Real, not arbitrary inventions out of nothing. Form, rūpa, is the revelation of the formless a-rūpa. Nama, name, is not the word by which we describe the object, but is the power or the character of reality which the form of a thing embodies. The infinite is nameless for it includes all names¹

Īśvara, or Sagunabrahman, is the cosmic extension or all-encompassing canopy to individual experience in and of the world. Consciousness, which for the Advaita is an undeniable fact in our experience, is intricately bound up with avidyā or individual nescience which is, in turn, the mere individualized cosmic māyā. Māyā and avidyā, while co-determinate with each other, are comprised of both name and form. Nāmarūpa (as understood as the unmanifested as well as manifested conditions subsumed under

¹Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upaniṣads (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953), p. 87.

the general principle Īśvara) then, may be re-interpreted as conforming to differing states of consciousness. In this, also, name and form may be re-defined in terms of consciousness (cit). The external objective world is undeniably real (vyavahārika), according to Śaṅkara, and thus is the externalized "cosmic" (manifest) aspect of Īśvara. Our individualized consciousness or awareness of the external world is consequently real as well. The intricate relationship between the subject-consciousness and the object-presentation (i.e., caused by Īśvara as the material mode of universal causality) conforms closely to the intercourse between name and form comprising the individual jīva's consciousness, and the name and form comprising the cosmic Īśvara. Īśvara, we recall, is the totality-principle, the comprehensive "all" encompassing all individuated forms of Being (Sat); all jīvas and their experiences are contained under Īśvara. Now, as we saw, the individual consciousness is structured into two fundamental metaphysical levels - the external and internal. The former is comprised of waking-day consciousness, the dream-state, and the hyper-dream-or-psychoid state (Prājñā). The internal is denoted Turiya. Waking-day consciousness, it seems, in accord with Śaṅkara's notation that māyā and avidyā are really synonymous, is a peculiar admixture of the manifested name-form

complex comprising the external, visible universe which rests immediately upon Īśvara as its source (the universe is the effect), and the individual jīva's own peculiar name-form complex. One perceives the external world. The world is comprised of name and form peculiar to itself. One, by way of one's apprehension of the world, then re-translates the reality of the external in terms of one's own peculiar name-form complex. The latter is perhaps more understandable from the standpoint of dreams. Just as one creates and fashions his dream-objects during dream-sleep, so one re-fashions the external and visible world in terms of his individual conscious predilections (i.e., name-form complex). However, in the third state consciousness of dream and waking-day objects ceases, and becomes an extra-subtle "being-state" in which consciousness of and for objects rests en potencia.

Causality may be understood, here, in a strictly metaphysical sense. If the individual jīva's consciousness of the world is a confrontation with the manifested name-form complex of Īśvara, it is, as Dr. Arapura states, the individual consciousness extending outward and endeavouring to become conscious of itself.² But it is not possible for consciousness to confront itself, for con-

²Arapura, "Māyā", p. 112.

consciousness as an extension comprised of the name-form complex (i.e., Īśvara as the over-arching canopy, or māyā), first of all, seeks definition through extension whereas in Reality (Brahman) the need is superfluous, and secondly, that this extension of consciousness, i.e., per the external three states of consciousness (cit), is a constriction of Parabrahman, and incapable of revealing Brahman.

Causality, then, must always arise as an incidental mode of māyāvidyā, of name and form. Externality of consciousness, of the individualized name-form complex (avidyā), whether conceived either epistemologically (i.e., whether or not causality exists as an observable phenomenon) or metaphysically (i.e., in the restricted sense of cognizing awareness) must always be viewed as, firstly, a testimonial to avidyā, and secondly, to māyā. Causality cannot be a distinct and direct hermeneutical principle of Being. But insofar as māyā is ideally discourse about Brahman, māyā burns itself up in revealing the prescripts to its own potential transparency and destruction. Causality, whether conceived metaphysically or epistemologically, can only reveal Brahman by destroying itself. On the one hand, in the world causality as a heuristic principle functions as a prerequisite to the assumption of all change, while when lifted into the metaphysical realm it may illustrate

the existential possibility of the relationship of the manifest universe to an extra-subtle principle, Brahman. In so doing, however, it must inevitably give way to the predominance of the non-dual Brahman. For as Dr. Arapura says:

Tat tvam asi means then that the transcendent-essence of consciousness is atman but whenever this truth is verbally expressed there will be a logical contravention of the existential fact of consciousness confronting itself, although the facticity of the fact cannot be intentionally purported. Distinction will not have to be presupposed if the truth remains strictly implicit... implicit truth is what is intended in śruti statements, but stated truth presupposes extension and therefore distinction. But there seems to be no direct way whatsoever. Nevertheless the irony of having to make implicit truth explicit may sometimes be dramatically expressed in silence.³

And: The difference between speech and silence is the analogical measure of the difference between Brahman with distinction and Brahman without distinction. The difference measured thus is maya: here is the significance of the etymology of the word, from ma, to measure. It thus becomes very instructive to note that Śaṅkara himself concludes his narration of the episode with an explanatory quotation from smṛti. 'The cause, O Nārada, of perceiving me as possessing the qualities of all beings is the maya produced by me; (but) thou shouldst not know (think of) me as such.'⁴

³Ibid., p. 115.

⁴Loc. cit.

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