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Engaging Advaita

Conceptualising liberating knowledge
in the face of Western modernity

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Abstract

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This dissertation is a study of modern Indian philosophy. It examines three engaging articulations of the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge or *brahmajñāna* provided by three prominent Indian philosophers of the twentieth century, namely, Badrīnāth Śukla (1898-1988), Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya (1875-1949), and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). Particular attention is paid to the existing relation between their distinctive conceptualisations of liberating knowledge and the doxastic attitudes that these authors professed towards the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia and the presence of the Western Other.

In the main, it argues that the profound differences to be found, on the one hand, in Śukla's elucidation of this key Advaitic notion and, on the other, in Bhattacharyya's and Radhakrishnan's take on the same, betray their commitment to two radically different doxastic attitudes. Classifying these into (a) non-dialogical and (b) dialogical in relation to the Western Other as well as into (c) exegetic and (d) hermeneutic in relation to the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia, it contends that, in comparison to the conceptual scheme and the parameters of intelligibility that shaped and underpinned the precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna* in Sanskrit, there is a certain kind of epistemic discontinuity in the dialogical cum hermeneutic stance taken by Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan that is not to be found in the non-dialogical cum exegetic engagement enacted by Śukla. It suggests that this particular sort of discontinuity, absent as it is from Śukla's elucidation of the process of knowing Brahman, reflects the far-reaching commitment of Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan to appropriate the precolonial Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge hermeneutically and to conceptualise it in the face of Western modernity, that is, rendering it meaningful in terms and within the parameters of intelligibility of the Western Other in order to contest what they took to be a troublesome predicament of Western modernity.

By examining their ways of engaging with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge, this dissertation contributes to the on-going debate about the nature and the driving forces of modern Indian philosophy.

Keywords: Indology, modern Indian philosophy, Advaita Vedānta, brahmajñāna, liberating knowledge, Badrīnāth Śukla, Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

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For Lina and Alba

Viure és definir i definir-se.

– Lluís Duch

There can be no doubt that India has produced an extremely rich and complex legacy of ideas, doctrines, methods and practices related to religious, meditational, and in general inner experience. There has been much fascination – expressed at different levels of discourse – with phenomena of immediate awareness, modes of consciousness, and the transformative potential of knowledge and realization, i.e., with the possibility of changing or transforming the subject of cognition instead of merely clarifying and mastering its objects [...] Indeed, this is a rich tradition of “religious” and “inner experience.” But does it support the more specific claims of such modern Hindu thinkers as Radhakrishnan? And is it really a tradition of “mystical empiricism”?

– Wilhelm Halbfass

It is ironic that the real giants of the Bengal renaissance were neither simplistic Westernizers nor traditionalists, but highly sophisticated cosmopolites with subtle, eclectic intellects. The difficulty is that prevailing explanations for the ideological fruits of intercivilizational encounter have been too narrowly confined within the framework of Westernizer-nativist response among the intelligentsia [...] In short, the influence of [Western ethnocentric] imperialism and [Indian] nationalism on scholarship has precluded the study of what may be called philosophies of encounter and acculturation, best expressed in the ideologies of comparativism and universalism.

– David Kopf

We denizens of a postcolonial globalized world are all intellectual hybrids if we are serious intellectuals at all. Philosophy is the discipline that contains its own history, and we constantly – self-consciously or otherwise – refer to our past to create our present and future. We are never intellectually pure in a world in which traditions are constantly interpenetrating one another, and we always find ourselves either moving between languages, or thinking in languages other than those of our interlocutors. By coming to understand these giants of the Indian renaissance who deliberately deployed these gestures and, because of their colonial context, thought them through with care, and debated them both publically and in the academy, we come better to understand ourselves.

– Bhushan & Garfield

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Abbreviations

AiUp Aitareya Upaniṣad
AK Amarakośa
ASS The Advaita and its Spiritual Significance
Bh Bhāmatī
BhG Bhagavad Gītā
BṛhUp Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
BS Brahmasūtra
BSBh Brahmasūtrabhāṣya
ChUp Chāndogya Upaniṣad
CPh The Concept of Philosophy
IVL An Idealist View of Life
KD *karmadhāraya* compound
KUp Kena Upaniṣad
MāṇUp Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad
PD Pañcadaśī
PP Pañcaprakriyā
SF The Subject as Freedom
SI Svaraj in Ideas
SLS Siddhāntaleśasaṃgraha
ŚUp Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad
SV Studies in Vedāntism
SV.Int Studies in Vedāntism, Introduction
TaiUp Taittirīya Upaniṣad
TP *tatpuruṣa* compound
TS Tarkasaṃgraha
TSĀ Tantrasāra
US Upadeśasāhasrī
VC Vivekacūḍāmaṇi
VMR Vidvanmanoraṇjanī
VP Vedāntaparibhāṣā
VP.Upd Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Upodghāta
VS Vedāntasāra
VSS Subodhinī
VSV Vedāntasāravākhyā
VV Vākyavṛtti

Preface

This study is the result of the Ph.D. project that I began formally at Uppsala University back in September 2012. Its roots, however, extend well beyond this formal starting date to the timeframe between 2005 and 2009 which I spent in India studying Indian philosophy both at BHU and with several private teachers in Banaras. It was during these years that I discovered and was deeply impressed by the rigorous, critical, and analytically driven word-by-word study of classical Indian philosophic literature in Sanskrit. Moreover, as I progressed in my studies of Sanskrit and classical Indian philosophy, I became increasingly aware of the need to reflect on the nature of the relationship between classical Indian philosophy in Sanskrit and the modern Indian philosophy in English with which I was already acquainted. To the extent that this in many ways problematic relationship dwells at the heart of this study, I would like to begin by extending my heartfelt gratitude to all my teachers in Banaras who guided me into the path of classical Indian philosophy and left on me an enduring impression of their astonishing erudition, sincere commitment to philosophical enquiry, and energising enthusiasm for the subject.

My deepest and most sincere thanks go to my main supervisor Ram-Prasad Chakravarthi at Lancaster University and to my secondary supervisors Heinz Werner Wessler and Christiane Schaefer at Uppsala University. Ram-Prasad has been an invaluable source of moral support and intellectual advice ever since he joined the project. He has been truly encouraging and supportive, boosting my confidence when I needed it most. Thank you very much, Ram-Prasad, I wouldn't have managed without your guidance, words of encouragement, understanding, and solid professional expertise. Many thanks also to Gunilla Gren-Eklund, retired professor of Indology at Uppsala University who, from the very beginning and throughout the entire project, has been very helpful providing me with innumerable fine comments on my Sanskrit translations and my work in progress. I have been greatly inspired by your care and close attention to handling technical Sanskrit terms in translation and I have benefited from your always nuanced and thoughtful remarks on my drafts. My warmest thanks also to Michael S. Allen at the University of Virginia who was a great opponent in my final seminar, making valuable remarks and suggestions that contributed to refining the final version of this text. A word of thanks also to Jolyon Patten who helped me with the copy editing of my rough and rugged English and to Martí Cases for providing me a truly beautiful photograph for the cover.

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Among my friends here in Uppsala, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Oriol Poveda whose friendship kept nourishing the Mediterranean side of my multilayered identity. In the course of these years, and suffering from more than one sort of displacement, we have shared many walks together and have had innumerable conversations about our respective research projects as well as our lives here in Sweden which contributed greatly to the ultimate value of it all. In this regard, I would also like to thank Dimitrios Iordanoglou at Uppsala University and Anna-Pya Sjödin at Mittuniversitetet for their friendship. Besides showing empathy and goodwill, Dimitrios also gave me an excellent feedback on the first draft of my conclusions.

Last but not least, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my partner, Lina, for her loving kindness and enduring support which she kept alive even when things were not going well for me. Because we met each other in those germinal years in Banaras and share so many good memories, friends, and acquaintances from that time, you know better than anyone else how important it has been for me to find my own way of translating all those life experiences into scholarship. I thank you very much for being by my side during all these years.

1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation and purpose of this study

The present dissertation is a study of modern Indian philosophy.¹ Broadly speaking, it engages with the theme of the relation between Self and Other, particularly as it is enacted in cross-cultural encounters, and examines three engaging articulations of the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge or *brah-majñāna* that have been offered by three eminent Indian academic philoso-

¹ I am aware of the tensions and the colonial bias behind the nomenclature ‘Indian philosophy’ (Deshpande 2015: 1-20). I am also sharply aware that there is no scholarly consensus in the periodization of Indian philosophy (Franco 2013), that there is no established terminology upon which scholars may either agree or disagree in this respect (Franco 2013a), and that periodization of Indian philosophy typically reflects the ideology of its author (Franco 2013a). I am also aware that, as a form of classification, periodization is a mechanism of control with a particular aim in mind (Lipner 2013), which is an undeniable issue for the periodization of Indian and Western philosophy alike. On top of that, I am aware that there are alternative nomenclatures by which scholars aim to profile what otherwise is only vaguely hinted at by the label ‘Indian philosophy’, nomenclatures that emphasise language, geography, cast, religion and so on and so forth. Acknowledging this predicament, in this study I will use the locution ‘modern Indian philosophy’ to denote the philosophic mode of discourse that has been written (a) in English as well as in Sanskrit and the Indian vernacular languages, (b) by those Indian intellectuals who were born and educated during the time of British India, particularly from about 1815, within the final decades of the effective rule of the East India Company (1757-1858), to the end of the imperial rule of the British Crown (1858-1947), and (c) who were born to a Hindu family. More importantly, I will take Rammohun Roy’s Calcutta period (1815-1830) during which he wrote the bulk of his work in Bengali, Sanskrit, and English on social reform, law of inheritance, education policy, as well as religion (Killingley 1993) and during which he founded the Ātmīya Sabhā and later the Brahmo Sabhā (1928), leading the reformist movement of the Brahmo Samāj that was so greatly influential in laying the foundations of modernism in India (Kopf 1979), as the key formative period and shaping factor of modern Indian philosophy. Besides stressing the capital role of his reformist commitment during this period and that of the movement he initiated, I think that the increasing use of the English language among Indian intellectuals (Rammohun Roy was arguably the first Indian to write extensively in English on a large variety of topics) and the adoption of the printing press as the means of expressing ideas and forming public opinion contributed greatly to the formation and development of modern Indian philosophy. Although in the following pages I will use the term ‘modern Indian philosophy’ in the aforementioned sense alone, restricting it thus to its Hindu component, by doing so I do not mean to contend that there is no modern Indian philosophy with Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist or Jain background. I mean simply to signal that these areas of modern Indian philosophy are not within the immediate scope of the present study. For the three historical phenomena that shaped Anglophone Indian philosophy in colonial India, see Bhushan & Garfield (2011: xiv-xv). For an insightful case study exploring the link between modern Indian philosophy and the reconstruction of Indian culture, see Ram-Prasad (1992).

phers of the twentieth century, namely: Badrīnāth Śukla (1898-1988), Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya (1875-1949), and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). In doing so, it pays particular attention to the existing relation between their distinctive conceptualisations of the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge and the doxastic attitudes that these authors assumed toward the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia on the one hand and the Western alterity on the other.

In this dissertation, I shall be therefore committed to exploring the deep interplay and confluence between the following three factors: (i) the twentieth century Indian academic discourse on Advaita Vedānta's central notion of liberating knowledge, (ii) the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia, and (iii) the troublesome presence of the Western Other.² I have aimed to reflect this central concern of mine in the title of this study: *Engaging Advaita: Conceptualising liberating knowledge in the face of Western modernity*.

With this key research question in mind, I shall examine in the following pages three distinctive engagements with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge and contend that they entail and illustrate a radically different set of attitudes toward the Western Other and the South Asian intellectual past alike. For the purpose of this study, I will address these doxastic attitudes as being (a) dialogical, (b) non-dialogical, (c) exegetic, and (d) hermeneutic. By calling them dialogical and non-dialogical I mean to address the contrast in attitude toward the presence of the Western alterity. Conversely, by calling them exegetic and hermeneutic I mean to address the contrast in attitude professed toward the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia. Consequently, I take dialogical to be that sort of cultural attitude toward the Western Other which acknowledging its presence – problematic or otherwise – is open to intercultural exchange with it at least in that it is ready to rethink its own identity and its own intellectual past either in terms of contrast or assimilation with/of the Western Other, be it total or partial. Furthermore, I take non-dialogical to be a disposition of the mind which, on the whole, seems to disregard the presence of the Western alterity altogether at least in the sense that it does not allow the presence of the Western Other to inform and interfere in its own process of self-understanding and retrieval of its own intellectual past.

In addition to these two, by exegetic attitude toward the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia I mean to denote that intellectual engagement which aims to fulfil its task of elucidation without challenging and exceeding the limits of the conceptual framework provided by that same intellectual past. Finally, by hermeneutic attitude I mean that theoretical activity which in the course of its engagement with the Sanskrit intellectual past is not committed

² With the locution 'Western Other' I do not mean to denote any sort of real and specific entity among others or any number of traits that together would constitute a distinctive identity to be found out there in the world. In this study, I will mainly use this term to refer to the conceptions that Śukla, Bhattacharyya, and Radhakrishnan respectively had of modern Western culture, particularly European.

to stay, invariably, within the limits of intelligibility and expectancy provided by that same intellectual past. Instead, it engages with that past in order to retrieve and interpret it hermeneutically in such a manner as to render it meaningful and relevant in the present and in relation to the concerns of the present, i.e., in order to contest the presence of the Western Other and its troublesome modernity.

Within the logic of these four categories, in this study I will portray Badrīnāth Śūkla's engagement with the notion of *brahmajñāna* that he avowed in his Hindi commentary on *Vedāntasāra* by Sadānanda Sarasvatī as being non-dialogical and exegetic. I will contend that it is non-dialogical insofar as it does not engage with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge with the explicit aim of mediating, celebrating, or contesting the encounter with the Western alterity and her modernity. This non-dialogical attitude is, additionally, complemented by the one professed toward the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia which I will call exegetic in that it aims at engaging with that past with the sole purpose of elucidating its many intricacies on its own terms, respecting always its own rules of discursivity, expectancy, and parameters of intelligibility. Putting these two attitudes together, I will suggest herewith that Badrīnāth Śūkla's conceptualisation of *brahmajñāna* exemplifies a frame of mind which does not look at the South Asian intellectual past in general and the Advaitic notion of *brahmajñāna* in particular as a resource for problematising the Western Other, its modernity, and its self-proclaimed cultural hegemony.³

Conversely, and in stark contrast with this outlook, I will claim that the dialogical and hermeneutic voice, represented in this study by the English writings of Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, is

³ What I contend in the following is that Badrīnāth Śūkla does not explicitly claim that his elucidation of the process of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*), which I conceptualise here as enacting a non-dialogical cum exegetic attitude, is intended to contest the cultural presence of the Western Other. However, I leave the discussion open whether, in its incommensurability with the Western Other and its undeniable effort to elucidate VS on its own terms as well as in the terms provided by its precolonial Sanskrit commentaries, such elucidation of the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge may pose a challenge to modern Western culture that is even greater than the challenge of those like Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan who engage with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge in dialogical attitude towards the Western Other. That is, I will not aim to answer in the following whether the non-dialogical cum exegetic attitude entails a more powerful and effective way of contesting the challenge of the Western Other than the dialogical cum hermeneutic. I will contend, however, that whatever be the case, Śūkla does not explicitly claim that his specific way of engaging with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge is meant to contest the Western Other. Indeed, it is because (a) he does not seem to conceive, nor formulates it unequivocally, that the purpose of his elucidation of VS is to confront the Western Other, and because (b) he does not seem to allow the Western Other to interfere in his elucidation of VS that I regard Śūkla's engagement to be 'non-dialogical' with regard to the Western Other. Furthermore, it is also worth emphasising here that in the present study I will not aim to pass value judgements on the four doxastic attitudes presented herewith. Hence, I will not aim to claim here that any one among these attitudes is somewhat 'better,' more 'convincing' or 'adequate' than another.

anxious and willing to negotiate with the South Asian intellectual past and the Western alterity alike when it articulates its discourse on Advaita's ideal of *brahmajñāna*. More to the point, I will argue that both Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan engage with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge in order to mediate, contest, and remedy the damages of the asymmetric cultural encounter with the Western alterity and its troublesome modernity as it was enacted within the predicament of British colonialism. I will suggest that, in resistance to the one-sided hegemony of the West and Eurocentrism, the dialogical and hermeneutic voice mindfully overlooks and dispenses with some deep-seated features in which the notion of *brahmajñāna* has been embedded in the Sanskrit precolonial past and comes to rethink the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge in what are, to large extent, terms, discursive practices, knowledge disciplines, and parameters of intelligibility and defensibility laid out by the Western Other. In other words, I will suggest that the dialogical and hermeneutic voice turns to, and looks at, the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia as a resource for problematising the Western Other, its distressing modernity, and its self-proclaimed hegemony while at the same time it betrays important epistemological concessions to the Western Other. I will, therefore, submit the idea that it is concerned with retrieving and appropriating the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia in the face of Eurocentrism and the troublesome predicament of Western modernity at the prospect of an alternative model of modernity which it sought to underpin by reformulating the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge within the parameters of intelligibility provided by the Western Other.

Furthermore, I shall suggest in this study that despite largely sharing their doxastic attitude toward the Sanskrit intellectual past, and notwithstanding their immediate concern for the troublesome presence of the Western Other, the dialogical cum hermeneutic stances professed by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya were substantially different as to the matter of method and its putative outcome. Hence, in my conclusions I will float the idea that while Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya practiced a sort of hermeneutics of difference which seeks to understand the Western alterity beyond the uncompromised commitment to convergence, synthesis, and assimilation, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan professed a sort of hermeneutics of similarity which, committed to the idea of a preestablished and transcultural harmony, tends to understand itself as well as the Western Other by engulfing and superseding important aspects of their mutual alterity. In consequence, the immediate promise of these two hermeneutic projects was quite different. For Radhakrishnan, it was the emergence of a new world harmony in which the otherness of Advaita's Other (Western and otherwise) was systematically provincialized and assimilated within itself. For Bhattacharyya, the promise was the creation of a new cultural space for the modern – then still colonial – India that he defined as distinctively Indian and whose self-awareness was achieved by a systematic practice of critical confrontation with the Western Other.

Finally, by contrasting the dialogical and hermeneutic attitudes professed by these two modern Indian philosophers I wish to flag up herewith that Bhattacharyya's project of rethinking the Advaitic notion of *brahmajñāna* illustrates one important variant in which the comparative method was applied by Indians in India during the terminal phase of the colonial period. I mean to say that K. C. Bhattacharyya's 'confrontative' philosophy challenges in many ways the assessment that Wilhelm Halbfass made in 1985 when he wrote that "In Neo-Vedānta in particular 'comparison' remains covered by an inclusivist absolutism; it tries to reconcile or identify different religions or philosophies by extrapolating and universalizing traditional and fundamentally metaphysical, Vedāntic schemes of 'concordance' (*samanvaya*)" (Halbfass 1985: 13).

1.2 Out of Orientalism: Assessing modern Indian philosophy

Similarities and differences aside, the dialogical cum hermeneutic voices are an important source of creativity and innovation within modern Indian philosophical thinking.⁴ Scholarship on modern Indian philosophy seems to acknowledge unanimously its vigorous output and creativity. Notwithstanding this acknowledgment, however, opinion is significantly divided when it comes to assessing the sort of novelty and innovation that arose within Indian philosophy in response to the many pressures that were at work within the colonial predicament. In the face of this discord, it seems pertinent to ask: What is the criterion of assessment? Whose criterion is that? Who performs the assessment? What is at stake in the assessment?

1.2.1 Entering the realm of the dialogical: From Paul Hacker (1913-1979) to Wilhelm Halbfass (1940-2000)

Paul Hacker (1913-1979) was a German Indologist who offered a powerful, influential as well as controversial interpretation of modern Hinduism and Vedānta. His views on classical and modern Vedānta were expressed originally in several independent articles which were first collected and published together in his *Kleine Schriften* (ed. by Lambert Schmithausen. Wiesbaden, 1978). An English translation of fifteen of these articles was edited and published in 1995 by Wilhelm Halbfass under the title *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta* (Hacker 1995).

In his influential article "Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism" (1995: 229-255) Hacker distinguished between

⁴ As I will argue herewith, the sort of creativity displayed by Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan is altogether different from the one enacted by Śukla.

Neo-Hindu thinkers and their forerunners on the basis of Indian nationalism, which he regarded as “the chief impulse of typical Neo-Hindu thinking” (1995: 233). For Hacker, “Neo-Hindu literature begins around the 1870s. Prominent among the writers are Bankim Candra Caṭṭopādhyāya (1838-1894), Vivekananda (1862-1902), Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), Mohandās Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1947), and Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). Some others, beginning with Rām Mohan Rāy (1772-1833), may be described as forerunners. What distinguishes these from the writers of Neo-Hinduism proper is mainly the fact that Indian nationalism was not yet developed at their time” (1995: 231). In this article, Hacker offered a far-reaching and telling definition of Neo-Hinduism. He professed that:

Neo-Hinduism is not a unified system of ideas. In fact, it is chiefly because of one common trait that I classify religious thinkers as Neo-Hindus. Their intellectual formation is primarily or predominantly Western. It is European culture, and in several cases even Christian religion, which has led them to embrace certain religious, ethical, social, and political values. But afterwards they connect these values with, and claim them as, part of the Hindu tradition. (1995: 231)

This definition features three fundamental claims: first, there is the claim that Neo-Hinduism is not “a unified system of ideas.” Because of this lack, the term “Neo-Hinduism” cannot designate any doctrinal unity. Second, there is a claim concerning the lack of intellectual autonomy according to which “the one common trait” (which is not doctrinal) of Neo-Hindu thinkers is their intellectual affiliation with the “West,” that is, European culture and Christianity from which they “embrace” certain values. Third, there is a claim of appropriation according to which these essentially Western (European and Christian) values are then connected and claimed as part of the Hindu tradition. In other words, Hacker defines Neo-Hinduism as a *process of appropriation* and *assimilation* which entails absorbing *alien* values, “extraneous elements” (1995: 232), or “foreign ideas” (1995: 236) from the “West” and presenting them as *native*. The consequences of this cultural process are not hard to envisage: what at first glance looks genuinely Indian is actually deeply otherwise or, as Hacker assessed Radhakrishnan’s intellectual performance, it is “Western or Christian ideas in a Hindu garb” (1995: 248).⁵ As he himself notices:

⁵ To be sure, and for the sake of the argument, it is necessary to state here that Hacker saw Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan as the embodiment of Neo-Hinduism, as it becomes clear from the following statement: “I now turn to another and perhaps the most striking representative of Neo-Hinduism: Radhakrishnan. I feel that hardly any other writer combines the characteristic traits of the modernistic way of Hindu thinking in such an outstanding and comprehensive manner as he does. There can be no doubt that the most original Neo-Hindu thinker is Aurobindo; but Radhakrishnan seems to be the most typical” (Hacker 1995: 244). He also referred to these two figures as “representing a pure form of Neo-Hinduism” (1995: 252).

The results of this process of assimilation are very similar to analogous events in the history of modern Indian languages. To a very large extent modern Indians think in concepts associated with English words. Even when they write in an Indian language, their mind is moving in the framework of these concepts. But loanwords from English, though abounding in the colloquial language, are taboo in writing. Especially when a writer is dealing with modern life, he is in need of Indian equivalents for English words. So Sanskrit terms are chosen to express the meaning of English words. The result is a language which outwardly looks purely Indian but which by its conceptual contents belongs to the type that an American linguist has described as ‘standard average European.’ (1995: 231)

Hacker concludes this analogy with the following remark: “Similarly, typical Neo-Hindu concepts at first sight appear to be perfectly Indian, but closer analysis reveals that they include European contents” (1995: 231).

In his attempt to distinguish Neo-Hinduism from contemporary traditional Hinduism, which he found in “a number of tracts in Hindi which originally appeared in the monthly *Kalyāṇ* and were then published in book form by the Gīta Press in Gorakhpur” (1995: 231), Hacker remarks that: (a) such a differentiation cannot be done in the area of doctrine, since “traditional Hinduism is in no higher degree a unified and coherent doctrinal system than Neo-Hinduism” (1995: 232); (b) such contrast can be found in term of “openness for outside influences” (1995: 232). According to him, although both modalities of Hinduism “assimilate extraneous views” in unequal measure – “Neo-Hinduism essentially lives on such assimilations” (1995: 232) – the *real difference* between them is the *manner* (not the *amount*) in which such assimilation is accomplished. Here is how he defines both modalities of Hinduism which he is inclined to treat as distinct “mental attitudes” rather than as “two definite systems” (1995: 232):

Traditional Hinduism assimilates and absorbs extraneous elements in a manner characteristically distinct from Neo-Hinduism. Unlike the latter, it maintains a living continuity with the past. Even in the past, Hindu groups often absorbed foreign elements. These certainly changed the appearance of the religion of the respective groups. But at the same time most of the old values retained their previous vitality. In Neo-Hinduism, on the contrary, the continuity with the past is broken. The typical Neo-Hindu has at some period of his life lost his confidence in his native religion. (Hacker 1995: 232)

As this definition has it, Hacker believed that the fundamental feature that distinguishes these two mental attitudes is the way they assimilate endogenic cultural elements. That is, whereas the former accomplishes it maintaining a “living continuity with the past” in the latter that “continuity with the past is broken.” Thus, Hacker’s rather normative contrast between Neo-Hinduism and surviving Traditional Hinduism boils down, ultimately, to the issue of continuity and discontinuity with the past. Although Hacker does not provide in this article any explicit definition of what one is to understand by continuity

and break with the past, this can be easily guessed from the content of Hacker's article. As an academic Indologist, Paul Hacker thought of continuity and discontinuity with the past from the angle and in terms of semantic history. Accordingly, his efforts to define Neo-Hinduism as a mental attitude characterized by the discontinuity with the past are oriented toward detecting and highlighting the drastic semantic shifts that occur in foundational Sanskrit terms such as *dharma*, *svadharma*, *sevā*, *ahiṃsā*, *karman*, *saṃsāra* and so on when they appear in Neo-Hindu discourses from around 1870 onwards.

A perfect example of what he meant can be found in the notion of *dharma*. As Hacker unequivocally remarked after sketching the meaning of this term in "present-day Traditional Hinduism" where "the addition of the new value does not imply transmutation of the traditional concept of *dharma*" (1995: 238) and in "most of the prominent Neo-Hindus" who "have reinterpreted *dharma* more or less radically according to Western models" (1995: 238):

It is not surprising that precisely in the conception of *dharma* the divergence of modernistic from traditionalistic Hinduism is widest. For the practices of *dharma* are the very core of Traditional Hinduism, and Neo-Hindus ordinarily have no active or living connection with these practices. (1995: 239)

In fact, Hacker devoted an entire article to the Neo-Hindu notion of *dharma* contrasting it with the standpoint of "Traditional Hinduism" (1995: 257-272). Hacker's assessment of what happens to such terms as *dharma* in the context of a Neo-Hindu discourse is telling. After revising the ideas of Bankim Chandra Chattopādhyāya who "was perhaps the first to offer such a reinterpretation" (1995: 238) he concluded that "Like a container it [the term *dharma*] has been emptied and then filled with a new content" (1995: 238).

In sum, Hacker conceived Neo-Hinduism to be a "mental attitude" in which "the continuity with the past is broken" (1995: 232), which entails a radical semantic transformation in the major terms of Hinduism, and which is deeply indebted to "Western or Christian ideas." His appraisal of the dynamics of Neo-Hindu discourse is perhaps best formulated in what is "certainly one of Hacker's most intriguing and provocative studies" (1995: 352), namely, his article on "Schopenhauer and Hindu Ethics" (1995: 273-318). In this article, he engaged with the issue concerning the *tat tvam asi* ethics. Towards the end of that study, Hacker summarized his findings in the following terms:

From the historical point of view, the *tat tvam asi* ethic appears as a curiosity in the history of ideas: a European philosopher [Arthur Schopenhauer] imputes an association of ideas to the ancient Indians; his posthumous disciple [Paul Deussen] tries to justify his master's notion, and presents his version of it to Indians in general and to a Hindu monk [Swami Vivekānanda] in particular; the European philosopher's idea becomes widely accepted in India, so much so that many Indians today take it to be actually Hindu. (1995: 305)

To be sure, Hacker believed that such ill-starred dynamism was not confined to a few isolated cases. It was, rather, the most characteristic feature of Neo-Hinduism. As he himself suggested towards the end of his genealogic engagement with the *tat tvam asi* ethics:

These examples could easily be multiplied. In each case some kind of impulse from a Western philosophical system or concept, or from Christianity and its theology, causes something in Hinduism to be recognized as valuable, and to appear as notable, worth propagating, useful for solving a current problem, or suitable for use in apologetics. (1995: 308)

Thus, beside the case of Vivekānanda who “learned the pseudo-Vedāntic ethic during his conversations with Paul Deussen and from Deussen’s Bombay lecture” (1995: 297), among such examples we can find in Hacker’s writing the case of Bankim Candra Caṭṭopādhyāya who “remodeled Hinduism according to what he had learned from the positivists Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill” (1995: 238). He also refers to Gandhi who, because he was “so willing to learn from Tolstoy’s interpretation of the gospel, it is obvious that this doctrine [the commandment not to resist evil] must have influenced him. But he could at once identify it with a Hindu practice [of *ahimsā*]” (1995: 242). And there is Radhakrishnan whose idea that “mysticism is the very peak of religion, could have been drawn from [William] James” (1995: 246).

Finally, it seems that Hacker lamented such dynamism of Neo-Hinduism and hoped for its future new orientation: “It is to be hoped that Indian thought will soon outlive the memory of the colonial period and the deep wound which it left in the Indian mind, and regain a greater tranquillity and composure, so that it can attempt to sift through the various forces and impulses that are still clashing together in the world of Indian thought today in a more dispassionate and clear-sighted spirit, and find a new orientation” (1995: 308-309).

Hacker’s approach to, and appraisal of, modern Hinduism was subsequently summarised by the Indologist Wilhelm Halbfass (1940-2000) in the following succinct manner:

In what Paul Hacker has described and critically analysed as Neo-Hinduism, the Hindu tradition is reinterpreted and transformed by applying Western concepts and responding to Western expectations and presuppositions. Fundamental notions of traditional religious and philosophical self-understanding and self-articulation function as vehicles of translation or as receptacles for the adoption of Western ideas and perspectives, but also as devices of apologetics and self-affirmation. (Halbfass 1988: 380)

In his classic study *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (1988), Halbfass adopted many elements from Hacker’s outlook on Neo-Hinduism (Halbfass 1988: 217-262) and continued his task by reflecting further on some of the issues raised by Hacker. This reliance comes particularly to the fore in the second part of his *India and Europe*, entitled “The Indian Tradition and

the Presence of Europe,” where Halbfass addressed the issue of Neo-Hinduism, Modern Indian Traditionalism and the presence of Europe (Chapter 12-14), and the notion of *dharma* in Traditional and Modern Hinduism (Chapter 17-18). As is well known, Halbfass portrayed the encounter between India and Europe as an uneven and asymmetrical process in which Indian culture discovers the West while being “discovered, subdued and objectified” by it. As he put it:

Europe has been in search of India in a variety of ways for many centuries: It has looked for analogies, origins, alternatives or correctives; it has tried to define its own identity by demarcating it against, and reflecting it in, the otherness of India; it has confronted and tried to subordinate India to its claims and interests of political domination, religious conversion, philosophical and scientific superiority. Traditional Hinduism, on the other hand, has not tried to find European or other non-Indian origins or alternatives; it has not taken any initiatives in trying to teach, convert or understand Europeans on its own. India has discovered the West and started responding to it while being discovered, subdued and objectified by it. The encounter with the West was not the result of developments initiated and carried on in India itself, but of changes and breaks imposed from outside; and the response was often, and almost inevitably, a somewhat hasty accommodation or apologetics. (Halbfass 1988: 380)

Halbfass locates India in an *asymmetrical encounter* with the West and conceptualises Neo-Hinduism in terms of response to an impact; a response which he, reminiscent perhaps of Hacker, also assessed here in a rather pejorative manner as “a somewhat hasty accommodation or apologetics.”

In subsequent publications, however, Halbfass seemed to put some distance between his own scholarship and that of Hacker and provided a critical appraisal of Hacker’s pejorative and somewhat simplistic use of the term “Neo-Hinduism” and “Neo-Vedānta” (Halbfass 1995: 1-23; Franco & Preisendanz 1997: 307). With his habitual erudition, Halbfass also explained that Hacker actually borrowed the term “Neo-Hinduism” (and gave it a new meaning) from the Jesuit scholar Robert Antoine who probably adopted it from Brajendra Nath Seal (1864-1938), who was likely its inventor, and who used it (in Bengali: *abhinava vendānta*) to characterize the literary work of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. However, despite these important remarks and notwithstanding his emphasis on the fact that “the demarcation of these modernist trends against ‘surviving traditional Hinduism’ is more problematic than it appears in Hacker’s dichotomy” (1997: 307), Halbfass still believes that “Neo-Hinduism” and “Neo-Vedānta” are useful and convenient labels in that “they are simply abbreviations for important developments and changes which took place in Indian thought since the period of 1800, i.e., the relatively unprepared opening to foreign, Western influences, the adoption of Western concepts and standards and the readiness to reinterpret traditional ideas in light of these new, imported and imposed modes of thought” (1997: 307).

Yet, Halbfass's approach to this cultural opening to the Western influences and the substantial cultural transformations that it gave rise to was, on the whole, quite different from that of Hacker. In their introductory essay to the volume on the work of Wilhelm Halbfass and its impact on Indian and cross-cultural studies, Eli Franco and Karin Preisendanz contrasted Hacker's and Halbfass's mental disposition toward Neo-Hinduism in the following telling manner:

Neo-Hinduism is the specific object of responsive interest for Hacker as well as for Halbfass. Hacker asserts the superiority of his own Christian tradition against Neo-Hinduism, while Halbfass, in a less confrontational manner, recognizes the domination of the 'dialogue' between Indian and Europe by the West. Like Hacker, Halbfass is not a 'pure Indologist.' Both scholars are committed participants in the 'dialogue' between India and Europe in the sense that their reflections on the Indian tradition are accompanied by reflections on and critical examination of their own traditions. For Halbfass his own tradition is the European philosophical tradition, whereas for Hacker it is mainly the Roman Catholic theological tradition. However, the two differ strikingly in their attitudes: Halbfass writes in a reconciliatory and benevolent mood, while in Hacker's writing, especially those of the later stage of his life, one senses a strong undercurrent of mistrust and aversion in his reaction to Hinduism and Neo-Hinduism. One may even suspect that he saw a danger for Christianity in what he perceived as the cunning passive-aggressive pseudo-tolerance of Hinduism. The role that he allocated to himself was not that of a dialogue participant in the usual, non-Halbfassian sense, but that of a gatekeeper warning unsuspecting and possibly misled Christians of the danger they might fail to recognize, namely, the Neo-Hindu inclusivism, a wolf in the sheep's clothing of tolerance. These remarks, however, are not meant to imply a lack of appreciation for Hacker's towering achievements as an Indologist. On the contrary, mistrust and dislike may sharpen one's sensitivities no less than empathy does. Persons who disliked India and the Hindus played an important role in Indological research, and indeed the field is still indebted to their contributions. (Franco & Preisendanz 1997: XIV)

Their assessment of Halbfass' work on the issue of cross-cultural encounter between India and Europe and particularly of his reconciliatory approach to modern Indian philosophy seems to be especially meaningful in the face of Hacker's debunking agenda. In stark contrast to his dismissive assessment of Neo-Hinduism and Neo-Vedānta, which they find underpinned as much by his towering Indological scholarship as by his reactionary Roman Catholic agenda, Franco and Preisendanz celebrate Halbfass's appreciation for what under the strictly philological criteria appears as 'mistakes,' 'distortions' and 'misinterpretations.' Importantly for my own concerns in this study, as professional Indologists engaging with Indian philosophy, Franco and Preisendanz seem to be ready to think of modern Indian philosophers as "serious thinkers" whose commitment to Indian philosophy and culture at large was not about offering a philologically and historically sound representation of classical Indian philosophy and religion. Instead, as Indian philosophers in

their own right, they sought to find innovative ways of self-understanding in the face of Western modernity within the distinctive hermeneutic situation laid down by the colonial predicament. As they write:

[...] Halbfass has done more than any other Indological scholar to dispel contempt for Neo-Hindus by Western scholars, a contempt that often leads to general disregard. He has taught us to see how interesting and fascinating the Neo-Hindu writings can be and has impressed on us that the Neo-Hindu interpretation of the classical Sanskrit tradition and its texts should not be judged solely with a view to philological and historical accuracy; in this respect it obviously proves to be rather deficient. Halbfass possesses a strong philological background, and he is no less capable than other philologists to point out the Neo-Hindu distortions and misinterpretations of the Indian tradition in the self-representation *for* and at the same time *against* the West – this he has done, and masterfully, for the key concepts of *dharma* and *darśana*. But Halbfass goes beyond that: he instructs us in the appreciation of these ‘mistakes’ in the light of the hermeneutical situation of the Neo-Hindus and presents those who ‘commit’ them as serious thinkers who try courageously and innovatively to come to grips with the inescapable European modernity without thereby losing their cultural or religious identity. In doing so, Halbfass has profoundly changed our perception of Indian philosophy: Indian philosophy is no longer something that is immovably fixed in the past or, in its present-day ‘authentic’ appearance, a mere fossilized relic from the past. It is alive and ‘dialogically’ creative; it keeps on changing in dynamic encounters, just as the European tradition does. (Franco & Preisendanz 1997: XV)

Franco and Preisendanz are thankful to Halbfass for reminding Western scholars that modern Indian philosophy should not be appraised solely with a view to philological and historical accuracy (as Hacker did). They appreciate his scholarly urge to assess it from an entirely different perspective and with an entirely different criterion: as courageous and innovative attempts to “come to grips with the inescapable European modernity without thereby losing their cultural or religious identity.” Finally, they acknowledge that by doing so Indian philosophy is no longer “a mere fossilized relic from the past,” but a philosophical tradition that is alive and ‘dialogically’ creative.

1.2.2 Toward an alternative model of assessment: From the model of impact-response to the model of convergence

More recently, there have been several similar attempts to provide an engaging reading of modern Indian philosophy. Two examples must suffice here to illustrate my point: Brian Hatcher (2004) and Bhushan & Garfield (2011; 2017).

Towards the end of his comprehensive and insightful article entitled “Contemporary Hindu Thought” Brian Hatcher (2004) formulates the following question, which has been addressed by Hacker and Halbfass in their own terms: “All of this returns us to the inescapable question: Is Vedānta – or

should we speak of neo-Vedanta or neo-Hinduism – an indigenous philosophy?” (Hatcher 2004: 200). His own struggles with the issue of identity of modern Hindu thought takes him to interesting reflections on the theoretical models or frameworks for assessing modern Hindu thought and eventually to propose a *model of convergence* which, in his account, has the virtue of dispensing with problematic dichotomies.

Hatcher deals with three possible frameworks. First, there is the view of those who “assert that modern Hinduism owes no appreciable debt to the changes that were set in motion by the establishment of the British rule in India. To take such a view would be to argue for the strict continuity of modern Hinduism with what was thought and practiced in premodern India” (Hatcher 2004: 200). Hatcher associates this standpoint with the voice of those who “claim that Hinduism is a *sanatana dharma*” and dismisses it by remarking that “such assertions of historical continuity have to be reckoned as more ideological than empirical” (Hatcher 2004: 200). However, if defending thorough continuity of modern Hindu thought with the past necessarily entails the rhetoric of *philosophia perennis* (fostered perhaps by a certain epistemology of religious experience) which downplays in the eyes of its detractors the factor of historicity; and if, accordingly, acknowledgement of discontinuity is in some sense inevitable, then the obvious question that must be raised and addressed is “how to account for the changes we notice” (Hatcher 2004: 201).

The second view described by Hatcher belongs to “those observers of colonial India who have advocated what amounts to a billiard-ball theory of change: Modern Hindu thought is the direct result of the ‘impact’ of Western thought – where ‘Western’ may be taken to mean European Protestantism” (Hatcher 2004: 201). Without explicitly naming its militants (but later references in the same article to Hacker and particularly to his article “Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism” are difficult to be missed) Hatcher remarks that:

This model of change is not without its problems. The most basic of these is that though such ‘impact-response’ models attempt to account for religious change, they assume that both the efficient cause and the material form of that change may ultimately be attributed to what is sometimes only vaguely identified as ‘Western influence.’ (Hatcher 2004: 201)

The third perspective on cultural change, which is also his own, entails “the basic premise that any number of previously existing ideas, values, and practices from precolonial India converged in the modern period with those ideas, values, and practices that made their way into India as a result of colonial rule” (Hatcher 2004: 201). He explains the benefits of such a theoretic framework in the following terms:

To speak of convergence is to try to recognize the role that Indian intellectuals, Indian concepts and values, even Indian languages themselves played in shaping the discourse of modern Hinduism. To speak of convergence is to acknowledge that in the colonial arena, indigenous norms worked to inflect Western norms just as surely as Western norms transvalued South Asian norms; it is to acknowledge that under such circumstances preexisting concepts and values (indigenous and Western) were routinely thrown into entirely new relationships with one another. (Hatcher 1994: 201-202)

However, the immediate outcome of privileging the third among these frameworks concerning cultural change is best portrayed in Hatcher's metaphor of parrots and poets. Recalling perhaps Hacker's provocative understanding of how Radhakrishnan presents "Western or Christian ideas in a Hindu garb" (Hacker 1995: 248) and certainly the ill-starred dynamics of Neo-Hinduism presented in his "Aspects of Neo-Hinduism," Hatcher clearly moves away from such hermeneutics and takes a corrective action remarking that:

We will never understand the uniqueness or the originality of a Rammohan Roy or a Mahatma Gandhi if we view them as transplanted Enlightenment critics or Protestant reformers clad in *dhotis* and sandals. We must view them, instead, as skilful manipulators of indigenous fields of knowledge and shrewd creators within their native linguistic realms. That such thinkers also engaged in extensive dialogue with European philosophy and theology is but one (albeit highly significant) component of their message. (Hatcher 2004: 202)

Moreover, he stresses the fact that no model of cultural impact of Western culture upon the Indian and its consequent, automatic or mechanic, response can explain the distinctive, creative, and diverse ways in which modern Hindu actors attempted to define Hinduism during the colonial period. Toning down their putative automatism and mimicry, Hatcher goes on to emphasise the active and creative role that modern Hindu intellectuals played in negotiating their own self-understanding with the increasingly cosmopolitan world that was in many ways brought about by British colonialism. He writes that:

The spokespersons for modern Hindu thought have neither been parrots nor patsies. If anything, they have been poets. They have endeavoured to work with the bits and pieces of a rapidly expanding and increasingly cosmopolitan intellectual world to create what might be for them and others meaningful expressions of Hindu belief. (Hatcher 2004: 202)

To be sure, Hatcher proposes thereby to look at modern Hinduism and modern Hindu thought as a "product of a rich and extended conversation between India and the West" (2004: 202), an outlook which suggests that we "must pay close attention to the ways European colonialism, missionary rhetoric, Orientalist scholarship, and even the spiritual longings of the modern West converged with indigenous intellectual forces to support the emergence of distinctively modern modes of Hindu thought; it also suggests we need to view

this process as continuing into the present in the on-going transnational construction of Hinduism” (Hatcher 2004: 202-203).

Besides stressing and fostering such a framework of convergence to the detriment of the model of impact-response, Hatcher’s corrective measure entails also dispensing with certain dichotomies which he believes often (mis)inform our (mis)understanding of modern Hindu thought. They are the binary oppositions between (a) apology and polemic, as well as (b) conservative and progressive, together with their related forms, the dichotomies traditionalist/modernist, revivalist/reformer, and orthodox/liberal. The first dichotomy contributes to (mis)conceiving modern Hindu thought in terms of “the apologetic response to Christian polemic” (Hatcher 2004: 204). As Hatcher remarks, “To be sure, polemic and apologetic are at the heart of modern Hindu discourse. However, these represent nothing more than the oscillating modes of such discourse” (Hatcher 2004: 205). The second dichotomy and its related forms are challenged by non-essentialist reading of their terms. Thus, for example, Hatcher reminds us that the dichotomy between tradition and modernity was called into question as soon as “scholars recognized that tradition itself is often something invented to suit new circumstances” (Hatcher 2004: 206). The immediate consequence of this non-essentialist understanding of tradition is to “realize that being Hindu in modern South Asia (or elsewhere in the world) is not as simple as making a choice between following one’s tradition or abandoning those ways for the new ways of the so-called modern world” (Hatcher 2004: 206).

1.2.3 Whose voice? Whose tongue? The appraisal of Anglophone Indian philosophy

Furthermore, in a recent project that involved a massive recompilation of modern Indian philosophy written in English during the British Raj (1858-1947), Bhushan & Garfield (2011) also made their case for acknowledging the creative role that colonial Indian intellectuals played in shaping modern Indian philosophy. As they write: “The intellectual agency and creativity in the domain of Indian philosophy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries belong to Indian thinkers” (2011: xiv). As they appraise them, these essays “demonstrate the fecundity [of Anglophone Indian philosophy produced under the British colonial rule] to which we alluded above, the continuity with classical Indian tradition that renders the philosophy of this place and time distinctively *Indian*, and the cosmopolitan engagement that brings Indian philosophy into modernity” (2011: xv). They open their anthology of Indian philosophy in English during the British Raj questioning its disputed identity, and capture the whole issue in two highly pertinent questions: Whose voice? Whose tongue?

Their own standpoint on this vexed issue is avowed in contrast with a series of statements made by the Indian philosopher Daya Krishna, whom the authors interviewed in 2006, and whose views the authors do not hesitate to dismiss as “deeply mistaken” (Bhushan & Garfield 2011: xiv). In this interview Krishna professed that:

Anybody who is writing in English is not an Indian philosopher...What the British produced was a strange species – a stranger in his own country. The Indian mind and sensibility and thinking [during the colonial period] was shaped by an alien civilization. [The British] created a new kind of Indian who was not merely cut off from his civilization, but was educated in a different way. The strangeness of this species is that their terms of reference are the West...They put [philosophical problems] in a Western way. (Bhushan & Garfield 2011: xiii)

He continues:

This picture of Indian philosophy that has been presented by Radhakrishnan, Hirianna and others... [each of whom is an *Indian*, writing philosophy in *English* during the colonial period] is not the story of Indian philosophy. We have been fed on the Western presentation of Indian philosophy, which hardly captures the spirit and history of Indian philosophy...If I were not to know Indian philosophy myself, I would say that [their presentation] is wonderful, that it presents it clearly, with great insight and understanding. Now that I know a little Indian philosophy, I say that they did not...They are not concerned with the problems that Indian philosophers were concerned with. (2011: xiii-xiv)

And finally, turning to the issue of language, he drives his point home:

I will say that philosophy written in English is not Indian philosophy. Indian philosophy is not written in English, but in Sanskrit. (2011: 455)

Moving away from such a viewpoint, Bhushan & Garfield vindicate the need for acknowledging the indigenous and distinctive character of Anglophone Indian philosophy during the colonial predicament, arguing that Indian philosophers writing under the British Raj were committed to Indian civilization and that their engagement with Western philosophy entailed an appropriation that was motivated by, and oriented toward, realizing the project of a modern, cosmopolitan India. As they explicitly avowed: “We disagree with the depreciation of the Indian philosophy of this period, and we trust that this volume documents the probity of that disagreement” (2011: 456). From their conciliatory standpoint, they oppose the thesis according to which colonial and anglophone Indian philosophers are intellectuals who are cut off from the Indian civilisation and are, therefore, not authentically Indian. In stark contrast with this claim, they contend that:

From the late 19th century through the middle of the 20th century, important and original philosophy was written *in* English, *in* India, *by* Indians. These philosophers were not cut off from Indian civilization; they were deeply committed to it. Their engagement with Western philosophy was an act of appropriation in the service of a *modern*, indeed cosmopolitan, *Indian* project. The problems they addressed were their own, raised by and for philosophers working in a tradition with roots in India, but who were cognizant of the Western tradition as well. (Bhushan & Garfield 2011: xiv)

Furthermore, Bhushan & Garfield lament the negligence in acknowledging their commitment to write philosophy in a context of cultural fusion. They describe the predicament of modern Indian philosophy in English in these rather dramatic terms:

This failure of recognition is tragic. These philosophers wrote in a context of cultural fusion generated by the British colonial rule of India. They were self-consciously writing both as Indian intellectuals for an Indian audience and as participating in a developing global community constructed in part by the British Empire. They pursued Indian philosophy in a language and format that could render it both accessible and acceptable to the Anglophone world abroad. In their attempt to write and to think for *both* audiences they were taken seriously by *neither*. (Bhushan & Garfield 2011: xiv)

Thus, stressing the importance of three historical factors – (1) Thomas Macaulay’s “Minute on Education” (1835), (2) the religious and social reform movements embodied by Brahmo and Ārya Samāj, and (3) the British occupation as such – and the role they played in shaping the very character of Anglophone India philosophy (2011: xiv-xv), Bhushan & Garfield foster an outlook according to which colonial Indian philosophers found themselves at the crossroad of two civilizations and aimed to address, engage, and negotiate with both.⁶ As they write: “Colonial India was the site of a vibrant, innovative philosophical community, engaging simultaneously with its Vedic roots and with then-current trends in European philosophy” (2011: xxv).

In this vibrant context, Indian intellectuals were more than passive subjects; they were active agents genuinely engaged in their intellectual projects, even if dealing with Western ideas and values which had been facilitated to them by British colonialism. These were the ideas and values that they creatively appropriated as valid categories for their own self-understanding and self-affirmation within the emerging cosmopolitan context. Ultimately, Bhushan & Garfield wish to portray colonial Indian philosophers as intellectuals who were to a certain extent autonomous, self-conscious, and innovative; and who

⁶ In contrast to the thesis that Indian philosophers writing in English aimed to write and to think for (a) an Indian audience and (b) a developing global community, but were taken seriously by *neither*, Coquereau-Saouma (2018) has recently argued that Anglophone Indian philosophy “may have addressed *neither* of these audiences” (Coquereau-Saouma 2018: 497).

aimed to bring Indian philosophy onto the global stage in an effort to enter in dialogue with Europe. As they depict them:

Indian philosophers under the Raj worked quite self-consciously in this environment and produced innovative and valuable philosophical literature. They strove to usher Indian philosophy onto a global stage; they used English language in order to call attention to Indian philosophy and in an effort to bring India into dialogue with Europe. In prosecuting this project, they did not abandon Indian philosophy but advanced it, bringing Western voices and techniques into its tradition, in the process constructing its modern avatar. (Bhushan & Garfield 2011: xxvi)

Returning now to their initial set of questions – Whose voice? Whose tongue? – Bhushan & Garfield seem to claim that Indian philosophers writing in English during the British colonial rule have their own distinctive, genuinely Indian, and cosmopolitan voice. This is also, very much so, what dwelt at the core of the metamorphosis from parrots to poets which we encountered in Brian Hatcher’s shift from the framework of impact-response to the framework of convergence.

1.3 The central argument of this study

In this dissertation, I shall distance myself from Paul Hacker’s approach to modern Hinduism and modern Vedānta. In doing so, I will dispense with the manner in which he deployed the historical and philological criteria in order to question and challenge the authenticity of the cultural phenomena he called ‘Neo-Hinduism’ and ‘Neo-Vedānta.’ In order to signal my reticence to what I take to be a radically conservative outlook, I will depart in this study from using the terms ‘Neo-Hinduism’ and ‘Neo-Vedānta’ as convenient labels for designating the undeniable innovations in the understanding of key classical Sanskrit terms which took place during the colonial period in response to the encounter with the West. I do not agree with Halbfass that these are “simply abbreviations for important developments and changes which took place in Indian thought since the period of 1800, i.e., the relatively unprepared opening to foreign, Western influences, the adoption of Western concepts and standards and the readiness to reinterpret traditional ideas in light of these new, imported and imposed modes of thought” (Franco & Preisendanz 1997: 307). On the contrary, I suspect that these labels often – though admittedly not necessarily – carry a pejorative assessment of these developments and changes suggesting that those involved in bringing them about are inauthentic Indians in that they draw heavily from Western sources and are cut off from the Sanskrit tradition.

My reticence to employ these terms as well as my resistance to follow Hacker's outlook does not signal, however, that I wish to deny these innovations altogether or to downplay their magnitude. To be sure, in this study I am thoroughly committed to the idea that these are profound and significant transformations, and that only sound philological scholarship on classical Indian thought can make us aware of them. I am not, therefore, concerned with dismissing or diminishing these far-reaching modern developments. What I propose in the following pages is, instead, a change of perspective from which to appraise them. That is, distancing myself from the scholarship of Hacker on modern Hinduism and modern Vedānta (Hacker 1995) and dispensing with the conceptual scheme that builds upon the dichotomies traditional/modernist and authentic/inauthentic, I shall follow in the footsteps of Halbfass (1988), Hatcher (1999; 2004), Bhushan & Garfield (2011; 2017) and others (Kopf 1979; Ram-Prasad 1992; Ganeri 2016) and read the engagement with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge professed by Badrīnāth Śukla (1898-1988), Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya (1875-1949), and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) through a different conceptual tool. As outlined above, I will read their engagements as enacting (i) the non-dialogical and the dialogical attitudes towards the Western Other as well as (ii) the exegetic and the hermeneutic attitudes towards the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia.

Within this scheme of things, I will not be concerned in this study with the claim that any one among these two sets of attitudes entails a more authentic or genuine way of engaging with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge or a more successful modality of articulating modern Indian philosophy. Avoiding carefully any such appraisal, the focal point of this dissertation will concern the interplay between (1) the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia, (2) the presence of the Western Other, and (3) the twentieth century Indian academic discourse on the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge and I shall go on to claim that the aforementioned doxastic attitudes that I will impute to the three modern Indian philosophers examined in this study have direct bearing upon their conceptualisations of liberating knowledge. More to the point, I will suggest that the engagements with this central Advaitic notion which reflect the dialogical cum hermeneutic concerns feature a sort of epistemic discontinuity with the precolonial Sanskrit past that the non-dialogical cum exegetic does not. Moreover, I will argue that this discontinuity is neither fortuitous nor vouches for a lack of acquaintance with the Sanskrit intellectual past of Advaita Vedānta. I will contend, instead, that it reflects a deliberate choice of those professing the dialogical cum hermeneutic attitude to conceptualise the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge in relation to the Western Other, within its parameters of intelligibility, and in order to contest what they considered a troublesome predicament of Western modernity. In this way, the central argument that will occupy me here entails the following set of contentions.

First, I will argue in chapter 2 that the precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna* was deeply shaped by the *pramāṇa* framework as well as the episodic paradigm of knowing. I will suggest that, within these specific parameters of intelligibility, *brahmajñāna* was conceptualised as (a) a mental event of its own kind and as an instance of (b) immediate cognition, (c) intentional awareness, and (d) veridical cognition. Second, I will contend in chapter 3 that Badrīnāth Śūkla's elucidation of the process of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) reflects a non-dialogical cum exegetic attitude and it largely partakes in the conceptual scheme as well as the specific parameters of intelligibility that underpinned the precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna*. Third, I will argue in chapter 4 and 5 that Bhattacharyya's and Radhakrishnan's engagement with this key Advaitic notion reflects their dialogical cum hermeneutic concerns and that it dispenses with this same conceptual scheme and these same parameters of intelligibility while it adopts – but surely also reworks – significant parameters of intelligibility provided by the Western Other.

Furthermore, in these two chapters I will also suggest that the change of the epistemological paradigm that characterised their engagement was a mindful one in that it was motivated by their urge to interpret the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge in reference to the Western Other and in order to contest its troublesome modernity. Hence, I will argue that while Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya sought to conceptualise liberating knowledge in confrontation with (a) Kantian transcendentalism and its scepticism toward the possibility of self-knowledge, (b) the objective attitude that metaphysics, empirical psychology, and Kantian transcendental philosophy display towards the Self, and (c) the scientific paradigm of knowledge, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience sought to combat (d) the dogmatic affirmation of any given religion as well as the dogmatic denial of religion by science, (e) the putative commitment of science to the hypothesis of the immanent frame, and (f) the loss of a unitary meaning of human life.

Finally, in chapter 6, I will summarise my entire argument and float the idea that while Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya aimed at providing an outline of an alternative and distinctively Indian modernity for the modern Indian subjects which, in contrast to the Western, safeguards an intelligible place for the Advaitic cult of self-knowledge, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience envisaged only one common paradigm of modernity that is Advaitic in that it engulfs and displaces the Other of his putatively all-accommodating Advaita. After a brief reflection on creativity in modern Indian philosophy, I will conclude this study by formulating a number of intriguing questions concerning the future of the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia.

2. On *brahmajñāna*, *pramāṇavāda*, and the episodic theory of knowledge: Outlining the conceptual scheme underpinning the precolonial Advaitic discourse on liberating knowledge in Sanskrit

2.1 Introduction

As the title announces, the immediate purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of the conceptual scheme that underpinned the Advaitic discourse on liberating knowledge (*brahmajñāna*) in Sanskrit immediately prior to the colonial period, particularly its second phase, defined by the imperial rule of the British Crown (1858-1947).⁷ My approach in providing this retrieval is primarily conceptual and philosophical, rather than historical, in that in the following I shall highlight and pay particular attention to the distinctive Sanskrit terminology as well as the epistemological framework that shaped and enabled that discourse on *brahmajñāna*, setting its conditions of intelligibility and parameters of defensibility.⁸

My motivation for doing so is to gain insight into the normative space that defined the theoretic scenery where the discourse on liberating knowledge could be safely conducted within the Sanskrit circles of Brahmanical learning on the eve of British colonisation. Such insight will provide me with a solid

⁷ More to the point, I mean to retrieve here a number of significant items of the conceptual scheme that shaped and underpinned the Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna* in Sanskrit prior to 1815, within the final decades of the effective rule of the East India Company (1757-1858), where I roughly situate the origins of modern Indian philosophy (see footnote 1). In this study, I will use the term ‘precolonial’ to denote the timeframe between approximately 1450 and 1700, which roughly corresponds to the idea of the Early Modern period. For a useful survey of the Sanskrit sources of Advaita Vedānta in early modern history, see Minkowski (2011). All the sources examined in this chapter are listed in this survey.

⁸ To the extent that what I am pursuing here is not a historically refined presentation but a philosophical reconstruction of the conceptual scheme and the epistemological framework underpinning the precolonial Advaitic discourse on liberating knowledge for the reasons to be explained herein below, I will ask the reader to keep in mind that this chapter does not aim to shed light on the historical process through which this conceptual scheme and this epistemological framework emerged. However, although the following retrieval is not, admittedly, historically nuanced, I contend that it is useful within the framework and the distinctive concerns of the present project.

perspective that will enable me to assess, in the course of the following chapters, the conceptualisations of liberating knowledge offered by Badrīnāth Śūkla, Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in the strict terms of their relation, or the lack of it, to this precolonial Sanskrit discourse and its underpinning conceptual scheme. Notably, it will allow me (i) to bring to the fore the profound sense in which Śūkla's non-dialogical and exegetic engagement with the notion of liberating knowledge is conceptually attuned to that precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna* and (ii) to endorse the idea that the two dialogical engagements examined in this study – the hermeneutical voice of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and of Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya – depart from that normative conceptual scheme in their pursuit of contesting Western alterity and its troublesome modernity with their new and distinctive ways of rethinking liberating knowledge. Hence, I intend the following retrieval to allow me to assess, in the course of this study, the performances by Śūkla, Radhakrishnan, and Bhattacharyya in terms of their conceptual attunement to the normative conceptual scheme that defined the discourse on liberating knowledge within their immediate Sanskrit intellectual past.

Furthermore, stressing the lack of conceptual affinity between this precolonial conceptual scheme and the conceptualisations of liberating knowledge provided by Radhakrishnan and Bhattacharyya will enable me to assess their performances in terms of negotiation and legitimisation of the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge in relation to an entirely new and different set of concerns as well as parameters of intelligibility and defensibility: those provided by the Western alterity and its troublesome modernity. Consequently, I will argue in this study that instead of defending the notion of liberating knowledge in the technical precolonial framework retrieved in this chapter, they embarked on defending its viability in the face of the proclamation of empirical sciences as the only legitimate paradigm of knowledge, Kantian scepticism towards self-knowledge, the approach to self-knowledge displayed in metaphysical thinking and empirical psychology, the emergent religious pluralism within the globalising world, the dogmatic and conflictive affirmation of creeds by members of diverse religious communities, and the denial of religion by science together with the implied hypothesis of total immanence – to name just a few.

With these purposes in mind, I shall argue in the present chapter that the precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna* articulated in Sanskrit is deeply embedded in the *pramāṇa* epistemology and the episodic paradigm of knowledge. In order to bring this reliance to the fore, and drawing mainly on Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra's *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, Appayya Dīkṣita's *Siddhāntaleśasamgraha*, Sadānanda Sarasvatī's *Vedāntasāra*, Nṛsiṃhāśrama's *Subodhinī* and Rāmātīrtha Yati's *Vidvanmanoraṇjanī*, I will retrieve some key items of the conceptual scheme that shaped, and set the pa-

rameters for debating the notion of *brahmajñāna* among its precolonial proponents. Arranged thematically, my exposition will address, in this order, the following four assertions: (1) *brahmajñāna* is a mental event, (2) *brahmajñāna* is an instance of intentional awareness, (3) *brahmajñāna* is an instance of immediate cognition, and (4) *brahmajñāna* is an instance of veridical cognition.

2.2 *Brahmajñāna* is a mental event

I will start my retrieval by addressing the episodic nature of liberating knowledge, a feature that is quite plainly denoted by the Sanskrit locution *ṛt-tirūpaṁ brahmajñānam* (SLS.3.7.4). In order to bring to notice what this precolonial Advaitic paradigm of *brahmajñāna* entails and bring to the fore some of its key features, I shall focus on (a) the distinction between bare and cognitive awareness, (b) the notion of cognitive awareness and the dynamism of shaping the mind, (c) the nature of relation between bare and cognitive awareness, and (d) the horizon of intelligibility that the episodic paradigm of knowledge opens for conceptualising liberating knowledge.

2.2.1 Bare and cognitive awareness

Classical Indian philosophy approaches the problem of consciousness or awareness⁹ through the analogy of light.¹⁰ Comparing awareness to the lamp-light (*dīpaprabhā*), the solar light (*ādityaprabhā*), or the image of the solar disc reflecting in water (*bimba-pratibimba*), awareness – which in Sanskrit is designated by various terms such as *cit*, *caitanya*, or *saṁvid* – is, accordingly, characterized as being luminous, shining, manifesting or revealing just as the light of the sun is. Within the logic of this analogy, the distinctive luminous feature of awareness is mostly captured by terms derived from the verbal roots having to do with shining, such as *prāṅkās* ‘to shine forth,’ *√bhā* ‘to shine,’ *ā√bhās* ‘to shine, appear, manifest’ and *prati√bhās* ‘to reflect.’ Hence, some of the most common terms referring to awareness, or some of its putative features, are *prakāśa* ‘shining forth, revealing, illuminating, light,’ *prabhā* ‘shining forth, light,’ *pratibhā* ‘shining against, reflecting light,’ *ābhāsa* ‘light, appearance, manifestation, reflection,’ *cidābhāsa* ‘reflecting light of awareness, reflection of awareness,’ *caitanyaābhāsa* ‘shining or manifesting light of

⁹ Throughout this study, I will use these two terms ‘consciousness’ and ‘awareness’ interchangeably.

¹⁰ For a treatment of this analogy and its consequences in Indian philosophy, see “Consciousness and Luminosity: On How Knowledge is Possible,” Ram-Prasad (2007: 51-99). For a treatment as an analogy for cognition in the context of Buddhist idealism, see “Light as an Analogy for Cognition in Buddhist Idealism (*Vijñānavāda*),” Watson (2013).

awareness, reflection of consciousness,’ *svayaṃ prakāśa* ‘self-revealing, intrinsically luminous,’ *pratibimbītacaitanya* ‘reflected image of awareness’ and so forth. These terms, together with many others akin to them, aim to describe consciousness and the act of becoming aware by comparing them with light and the way it shines forth, falls upon the objects, and renders them visible.

Beyond the merely metaphoric, scholastic debates concerning the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) of awareness (*caitanya*, *cit*, *saṃvid*) and its luminosity (*prakāśa*) within precolonial Indian philosophy in general¹¹ involved inquiring whether the intrinsic nature of awareness is self-luminous and self-validating or else that its luminosity and veridicality is a feature derived from something other than itself. This controversy was articulated in terms of consciousness being either *svayaṃ prakāśa* ‘self-revealing, self-luminous, intrinsically luminous’ or *parataḥ prakāśa* ‘luminosity derived from another,’ either *svataḥ prāmāṇya* ‘self-derived or intrinsic veridicality’ – the feature of being self-validating or self-certifying – or *parataḥ prāmāṇya* ‘veridicality or certification derived from another.’¹² Moreover, the debate on the nature of awareness implied asking whether its intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) is or is not endowed with object (*viśaya*); that is, whether *caitanya* is *saviśayaka* ‘endowed with the object of cognition’ or rather *nirviśayaka* ‘devoid of the object of cognition’. A related issue was determining whether awareness is articulated in some way or another or devoid of all sort of shape or form (*ākāra*).¹³ In technical terms, it implied inquiring whether *caitanya* is *sākāra* ‘endowed or having form, shape, aspect’ or rather *nirākāra* ‘devoid of form, shape, aspect.’ On top of that, Advaitins and proponents of other *darśanas* alike were concerned with determining whether awareness has or not a ‘locus, bearer,’ that is, whether it has *āśraya* or is devoid of it (*nirāśraya*). Finally, there was a concern as to whether awareness has or does not have an origin; that is, whether awareness is *anādi* ‘without beginning’ or *ādimant*, *sādi* ‘endowed with, or having, a beginning.’

The Advaitic stance on these critical issues, which holds true for its precolonial proponents, is straightforward.¹⁴ They took the words *caitanya* and *jñāna* to denote both (a) pure awareness and (b) cognitive awareness, or consciousness qualified by mental events (*vr̥ttiviśiṣṭaṃ caitanyam*). Within the logic of this distinction, when precolonial Advaitins used the terms *caitanya* and *jñāna* to denote bare awareness – a feature that sometimes (but not always)

¹¹ See for example “Consciousness and Knowledge in Indian Philosophy,” Mohanty (1979: 3-10).

¹² For this debate and the diversity of philosophical stances adopted in Indian philosophy see Matilal (1986: 141-179) and Ram-Prasad (2007: 49-99).

¹³ On the technical term *ākāra* ‘form, shape’ and its role in Indian philosophy with particular attention to the intellectual history of Buddhism, see *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 42, issue 2-3, June 2014.

¹⁴ For a valid summary of Advaitic conception of awareness, see for instance “Consciousness in Vedānta” (Mohanty 1993: 56-67). See also Timalisina (2009).

was brought to the fore by the adjective *śuddha*, as in the compound *śuddhacaitanya* ‘bare, pure awareness’ – they aimed to denote its intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*), awareness per se, which they conceived as self-luminous or self-revealing, deprived of content, formless, without a locus, and without a beginning. In the Sanskrit philosophical jargon introduced above, they endorsed the idea that the intrinsic nature of awareness (*caitanya*) is *svayaṃ prakāśa*, *nirviṣayaka*, *nirākāra*, *nirāśraya*, and *anādi*. Besides these features, they also described it as *asaṅga*, *niṣkala*, *akhaṇḍa* and so forth; that is, as being ‘unassociated,’ ‘undivided,’ and ‘unfragmented’ (VSS.28). Its luminosity was then said to be *nirupādhiprakāśa* ‘devoid of qualifying adjuncts’ and *aparicchinnaprakāśa* ‘unlimited’. This is because Advaitins are committed to thinking that as bare (*śuddha*), spotless (*nirañjana*), and unfragmented (*akhaṇḍa*), awareness is Brahman itself.

When, on the contrary, precolonial Advaitins used the terms *caitanya* and *jñāna* to denote cognitive awareness or knowledge – which they regarded as their auxiliary or secondary meaning (*upacāra*) – they were committed to thinking that this is not the intrinsic feature of awareness, but the feature of awareness as qualified by mental events (*vyrttiviśiṣṭa caitanya*). In this sense only, precolonial advocates of Advaita agreed that awareness can be regarded as having an object, having a shape or aspect, having a bearer, and having a beginning. That is, they contended that, in stark contrast to bare awareness (*śuddhacaitanya*) per se, consciousness as qualified by mental events is *saviṣayaka*, *sākāra*, counts with *āśraya*, and is *ādimant*. Its luminosity was then said to be delimited or confined (*paricchinnaprakāśa*).¹⁵

2.2.2 Liberating knowledge, cognition, and the dynamism of shaping the mind

Within this framework, regarding *brahmajñāna* to be episodic (*vyrttirūpa*) entailed committing oneself to the idea – as precolonial proponents of Advaita did – that liberating knowledge falls within the domain of awareness that is qualified by mental events (*vyrttiviśiṣṭa caitanya*), rather than its bare and stainless intrinsic nature. Due to this commitment, Advaitins conceived that liberating knowledge must be some sort of modality of consciousness having a content/object (*saviṣayaka*), shape (*sākāra*), bearer (*āśraya*), and origin (*ādimant*). In order to appreciate the full import of their commitment, we need to pay close attention to how precolonial Advaitins explained cognition and its relation to bare awareness; for insofar as *brahmajñāna* was conceived to be a cognitive event – although of its own kind – its account featured all the major traits of cognitive events at large.

¹⁵ For some of these descriptions, see VMR.28 and VSS.28 in Appendix 2.

As I have already stressed, precolonial Advaitins took cognition to be a modality of awareness that is qualified by mental events (*ṛttiviśiṣṭa caitanya*). They described the episode or the event of internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*, *cittavṛtti*, *manovṛtti*) as the *vyañjaka* or ‘what shows, displays, instantiates but also taints’ bare awareness as well as the *avacchedaka* or ‘what delimits’ knowledge or cognition (*jñāna*). Moreover, as Dharmarāja argues in the following passage defining the perceptual means of knowing (*pratyakṣapramāṇa*), Advaitins endorsed the idea that in contrast to bare awareness – which is without beginning (*anādi*) – cognition conceived as an instance of awareness qualified by a mental event has a beginning (*ādimad*) insofar as mental events do:

Among these six means of knowing, perceptual means of knowing is the instrument of veridical percept. And here, [within Vedānta framework], veridical percept is nothing but [bare] awareness, since it is heard ‘[That Brahman] which is direct and immediate.’ [In this Vedāntic utterance] *aparokṣāt* means its immediacy. [Objection] However, since [bare] awareness is without beginning, how can [the sense organs] starting with the eyes be a means of knowing, being the instrument of that [veridical percept]? [Reply] It is said: Although [bare] awareness is without beginning, since the episode of internal organ – its displayer – is produced by the contact of the sense organs [with their respective objects] and so forth, [bare] awareness qualified by the episode [of internal organ] is said to have a beginning. Furthermore, since it delimits knowledge, the episode [of internal organ] is metaphorically called knowledge. It has been said in the *Vivaraṇa*: ‘The episode of internal organ is metaphorically called knowledge.’¹⁶

This is also true for *brahmajñāna* which, to the extent it is episodic or consisting of mental event (*ṛttirūpa*), is said to arise (*udeti*). The conception of the process through which mental events originate is complex. Its account presupposes the notion that the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) or mind (*manas*, *citta*) is intrinsically insentient (*jaḍa*),¹⁷ made out of light or radiance (*aiśvarya*) derived from the fire element (*tejas*), and that – in the case of perception – it factually goes out through the sense organs in order to reach the locus of the entities. Upon meeting, the internal organ is said to render them into its objects of cognition (*viśayīkṛtya*)¹⁸ and undergoes a transformation (*pariṇāma*) in that

¹⁶ *tatra pratyakṣapramāṇaṁ pratyakṣapramāṇam / pratyakṣapramāṇam tv atra caitanyam eva ‘yat sāksādaparokṣāt’ iti śruteḥ / ‘aparokṣāt’ ity asya aparokṣam ity arthaḥ / nanu caitanyam anādi tat katham caṣur ādeḥ tat karaṇatvena pramāṇatvam iti / ucyate caitanyasyanāditve ‘pi tadabhivyañjakāntaḥkaraṇavṛttir indriyasamnikarṣādīnā jāyate iti ṛttiviśiṣṭam caitanyam ādimad ity ucyate; jñānāvacchedakatvāc ca ṛttau jñānatvopacārāḥ / taduktam vivaraṇe ‘antaḥkaraṇavṛttau jñānatvopacārāt’ iti; VP.1.1-4. The first quotation is from BrhUp.3.4.1.*

¹⁷ For passages where mental events (*cittavṛtti*, *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*) are explicitly treated as ‘insentient’ or ‘inert’ (*jaḍa*), see below.

¹⁸ *ayam ghaṭa iti ghaṭākārākāritacittavṛttir ajñātam ghaṭam viśayīkṛtya / ‘Having made the unknown pot its object of cognition, the mental event shaped after the form of a pot – ‘This is a pot’ – [...]’ VS.29.*

it assumes the shape, aspect, or form (*ākāra*) of the object it has reached (*ghaṭādiviṣayākāreṇa*). Here is a representative excerpt from *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* where Dharmarāja provides us with an evocative description of the cognitive modality of awareness as threefold – split into the triplet of knower, known and means of knowing (*pramātr, prameya, pramāṇa*) – and the alluded dynamic process of shaping the mind:

Awareness is threefold: awareness in the form of the object, awareness in the form of the means of knowing, and awareness in the form of the knower. Among them, awareness in the form of the object is awareness delimited by the pot and so on. Awareness in the form of the means of knowing is awareness delimited by the episode of internal organ. And awareness in the form of the knower is awareness delimited by the internal organ. There, just as the water of a pond goes out through a hole, enters the fields through the channels, and becomes similar to that, with the shape of four corners and so on; similarly, the internal organ consisting of light goes out through the doors of [the sense organs] starting with the eyes, reaches the locus of such objects as pot and so on, and is transformed according to the shape of such object as pot and so forth. This same transformation is called episode [or event of internal organ].¹⁹

The crucial features in this account – namely: the insentient nature of the internal organ, the making of the object of cognition, and the notion of mental transformation as the process the internal organ undergoes in assuming the shape of the object – are again true for *brahmajñāna*. Hence, not unlike the common act of cognition, which is denoted by such compounds as *jaḍapadārthākārākāritacittavṛtti*, *jaḍapadārthaviṣayakacittavṛtti*, *jaḍapadārthaviṣayiṇī cittavṛtti* or *ghaṭākārākāritacittavṛtti* and conceived as a ‘mental event shaped after the form of the insentient entities such as pot,’ liberating knowledge is denoted by such locutions as *akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti* (VS.28), *akhaṇḍākāravṛtti* (VSS.28), *akhaṇḍākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛtti* and *akhaṇḍākārā cittavṛtti* (VMR.28). That is, it is described as a ‘mental event shaped after the form of the unfragmented’ where *akhaṇḍa* stands for Brahman, the ‘unfragmented’ or ‘undivided’ reality or awareness purported by the Vedāntic sentence *tat tvam asi* (ChUp.6.8-16). Stressing explicitly Brahman to be the entity after which it is shaped, liberating knowledge is also denoted by such locutions as *brahmātmākārā cittavṛtti* ‘mental event with the shape of the identity between the Self and Brahman’ and *brahmākārā vṛtti* ‘episode with the shape of Brahman’ (VMR.29). Furthermore, not unlike any and all mental events, which are regarded to be a *vyañjaka* or ‘what shows or displays’ bare awareness, the mental event shaped after Brahman is sometimes

¹⁹ *trividhaṃ caitanyaṃ viṣayacaitanyaṃ pramāṇacaitanyaṃ pramātr̥caitanyaṃ ca iti / tatra ghaṭādyavacchinna-caitanyaṃ viṣayacaitanyaṃ / antaḥkaraṇavṛttyavacchinnaṃ caitanyaṃ pramāṇacaitanyaṃ / antaḥkaraṇāvachinnaṃ caitanyaṃ pramātr̥caitanyaṃ / tatra yathā taṭākodakaṃ chidrān nirgatya kulyātmanā kedārān praviśya tadvad eva catuṣkoṇādyākāraṃ bhavati tathā taijasam antaḥkaraṇam api cakṣurādīdvārā nirgatya ghaṭādiviṣayadeśaṃ gatvā ghaṭādiviṣayākāreṇa pariṇamate / sa eva pariṇāmo vṛttir ity ucyate*, VP.1.17-18.

conceived to be its *abhivyakti* ‘display or instantiation’ and what makes the unfragmented awareness become *abhivyakta* ‘displayed’ or ‘instantiated’ (VSS.28). Finally, at least some precolonial Advaitins link the notion of liberating knowledge as *akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti* to the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* ‘I am Brahman’ (BṛhUp.1.4.10), which they treat then as the specific *upādhi* or ‘qualifying adjunct’ of bare awareness per se.²⁰

These conceptualisations are telling in that they juxtapose liberating knowledge with conventional cognitions. They highlight the fact that, except for the entity involved in each, these two types of cognitions are conceived in exactly the same terms. And hence, just as conventional cognitions entail assuming the shape of the insentient entities (*jaḍapadārtha*), which requires turning them into objects of cognition, *brahmajñāna* entails a mental event assuming the shape of Brahman, which requires rendering it into its object of cognition (*paraṃ brahma viṣayīkṛtya*).²¹ In sum, since precolonial understanding of *brahmajñāna* is informed by the episodic paradigm of knowing (*vṛttirūpa*), in the same way as any episode of cognitive awareness qualified by a mental event (*vṛttiviśiṣṭa caitanya*) is endowed with an object (*saviṣaya*), has a shape (*sākāra*), and has a beginning (*ādimant*), liberating knowledge is conceptualised as a mental event that arises (*udeti*), has supreme Brahman for object (*paraṃ brahma viṣayīkṛtya*), and is shaped after it (*akhaṇḍākārākāritā, brahmākārā vṛtti*). What sets it apart from the instances of conventional cognition making it an event (*vṛtti*) of its own kind is the unique object (*viṣaya*) after which is it said to be shaped: the self-revealing Brahman.

2.2.3 Relating bare awareness to mental events, liberating knowledge, and the two functions of conventional cognitions

The abovementioned process of transformation (*pariṇāma*) in which the internal organ was conceived to assume the shape (*ākārita*) or feature of its object was not, however, sufficient for explaining cognition satisfactorily. This is because precolonial Advaitins regarded the ‘mind’ or ‘internal organ’ (*manas, citta, antaḥkaraṇa*) to be insentient (*jaḍa*) and, therefore, unsuitable to give rise, on its own, to conscious cognitive episodes. Thus, in order to present a plausible theory of cognition, Advaitins were compelled to postulate a sort of relation between the light of bare awareness on the one hand and the insentient episodic mental event on the other. This relation – in many ways troublesome – was conveyed by means of several terms. In *Vedāntasāra*, for instance,

²⁰ See VS.28, VMR.28, and VSS.28 in Appendix 2.

²¹ *sā tu citpratibimbasaḥitā satī pratyagabhinnaṃ ajñātaṃ paraṃ brahma viṣayīkṛtya tadgatājñānam eva bādhati* / ‘Furthermore, this [mental episode] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness. Having made the supreme, unknown, and nondifferent from the inner [Self] Brahman into the object of cognition, it only removes the ignorance that is concerned with it,’ VS.28. This is, however, a highly problematic claim that, as I will discuss in next chapter, Advaitins cannot accept literally.

Sadānanda addressed the issue by stating that the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ (BrhUp.1.4.10) which is shaped after the form of the unfragmented is *citpratibimbasaḥitā* ‘accompanied by, or associated with, the reflecting image of awareness’ (VS.28). His commentators Rāmatīrtha and Nṛsiṃhāśrama glossed the idea with *pratyakcitvyāptā* ‘pervaded by the awareness in the form of the inner [Self]’ (VMR.28) and *caitanyapratibimbasaṃvalitā* ‘mixed together with the reflecting image of awareness’ (VSS.28). Another idea that was not uncommon in this context was to conceive that the reflecting light of awareness is *ārūḍha* or ‘mounted’ upon the insentient mental event. Yet another, that the act of liberating knowledge – also a mental event – implies that bare awareness is somehow put close together or associated (*upahita*) with its qualifying adjunct (*upādhi*), in which it reflects like a face in the mirror. As these ideas suggest, precolonial Advaitins believed that cognition at large is a complex involving necessarily a relation or association between these two factors: (a) the unlimited and reflecting luminosity of bare awareness and (b) the insentient mental organ which undergoes transformation in assuming the features of the entities.

Furthermore, with regard to liberating knowledge, precolonial Advaitins maintained that to the extent that the first among these components – the reflecting light of awareness – was mounted upon (*ārūḍha*) the insentient mental event having Brahman for object, which was therefore mixed with (*saṃvalitā*) or pervaded (*vyaptā*) by it, the light of awareness (*caitanyaprakāśa*) mounted upon the insentient mental event shaped after Brahman was chiefly responsible for dispelling or removing (*nivartana*, *nivṛtti*, *nirasana*) the ignorance concerning Brahman. In *Siddhāntaleśasaṃgraha*, for instance, Appayya Dīkṣita recalls the following argument:

Furthermore, some [argue that] the knowledge of Brahman consisting in a mental event does not remove the entire world and the ignorance [concerning Brahman] that is its root; for, according to the restriction that ignorance is to be removed by the light [of awareness], the insentient [mental] event that turns up is unsuitable [for that]. Rather, the light of awareness mounted upon that [mental event] removes it.²²

The same idea was endorsed by Sadānanda and his commentators Rāmatīrtha Yati and Nṛsiṃhāśrama:

[Then] in the mind of the entitled [student] arises that mental episode which is shaped after the form of the unfragmented: ‘I am Brahman, eternal, pure, awakened, released, one whose intrinsic form is truth, supreme bliss, infinite, and nondual. Furthermore, this [mental episode] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness. Having made the supreme, unknown, and nondifferent

²² *kecit tu vṛttirūpaṃ brahmajñānaṃ nājñānatanmūlaprapaṇcānīvartakam / ajñānasya prakāśanīvartyatvanīyamena jaḍarūpavṛttivartyatvāyogāt / kiṃ tu tadārūḍhacaitanyaprakāśaḥ tannīvartakaḥ*; SLS.3.7.4.

from the inner [Self] Brahman into the object of cognition, it only removes the ignorance that is concerned with it.²³

This, again, was not unlike what occurs in any conventional cognition involving a mental event shaped after any one among the insentient entities. In other words, precolonial Advaitins claimed that dispelling the ignorance concerning that entity which becomes the object of knowing is an epistemic feature defining instances of conventional cognition and liberating knowledge alike. Despite this commonality, however, they were not ready to conflate these two processes altogether. Instead, they postulated a second epistemic feature of cognitive awareness (*vr̥ttiviśiṣṭa caitanya*) which, defining only the instances of conventional cognition, set the instance of liberating knowledge apart from it. Thus, precolonial Advaitins claimed that, in contrast to the conventional act of cognition which entails both (a) removing the ignorance (*ajñānanirāsana*) that veils the object (*āvaraṇa*) as well as (b) manifesting it (*bhāsana*, *avabhāsana*, *sphuraṇa*), the case of liberating knowledge is different in that it does not entail manifesting its object, Brahman. This distinctive feature of *brahmajñāna* seems to have been carefully addressed by stressing the need of the ‘pervasion by the mental event’ (*vr̥ttivyāpti*) but denying the ‘pervasion by the fruit’ (*phalavyāpti*). In a nutshell, the idea was that knowing Brahman requires the mind to take Brahman as its object (*viśaya*) and assume its features (*ākāra*) – a process that was called ‘pervading’ it with the mind – but it does not require the light of awareness (*ābhāsa*, *cidābhāsa*) reflecting in the insentient mental event ‘I am Brahman’ to manifest or reveal the self-revealing Brahman. Drawing on Vidyāraṇya’s *Pañcadaśī*, in the following passage Sadānanda aims to address this very issue at the same time that he intends to resolve two apparently contradictory Vedāntic utterances proclaiming that Brahman is and is not to be known with the mind:

This [cognition ‘I am Brahman’] being so, these two *śruti* passages “It [viz. Brahman] is to be seen with the mind” (Br̥hUp.4.4.19) and “What is not thought with the mind” (KUp.1.6) are not contradictory; for, agreeing on the pervasion by the mental event, pervasion by the fruit is denied. It has been said: “Only its pervasion by the fruit has been forbidden by the authors of scholastic

²³ *adhiḥkāriṇo ’haṃ nityaśuddhabuddhamuktasatyasvabhāvaparamānandānantādvayaṃ brahmāsmīty akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛttir udeti / sā tu citpratibimbasaḥitā satī pratyagabhinnam ajñātaṃ paraṃ brahma viśayīkr̥tya tadgatājñānam eva bādhati*; VS.28. VMR.28: *vr̥tter jaḍatvād ajñānabādhanāśambhavam āśaṅkya tām viśinaṣṭi – citpratibimbasaḥitā satīti / pratyakcitivyāpteti yāvat* / ‘Having suspected the impossibility for removing the ignorance due to the insentient character of [this mental] episode, he describes it [saying:] ‘[this mental event] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness.’ To be precise: [this mental episode] is pervaded by the consciousness in the form of the inner [Self].’ And VSS.28: *sā ca caitanyapratibimbasaṃvalitā satī caitanyagatam ajñānam nivartayati / tasyāś caitanyāvarakājñānanivṛttir eva prayojanam* / ‘Furthermore, that [mental episode] is mixed with the reflecting image of consciousness and causes the ignorance concerning [unfragmented] consciousness to cease. Its use is to bring the ignorance that conceals the [unfragmented] consciousness to an end.’

treatises. For dispelling the ignorance concerning Brahman, pervasion by the mental event is required.” (PD.7.90b-92a). And: “Since [Brahman is] self-revealing, the reflecting light [of awareness] is not employed [for revealing it]” (PD.7.92b). The mental event shaped after the form of insentient entities is different. It is like this: The mental event shaped after the form of a pot – ‘This is a pot’ – makes the unknown pot its object of cognition and, by the light of awareness it contains, it removes – first – the ignorance concerning that [pot] and – then – manifests the pot. It has been said: ‘These two, the intellect and the reflecting light of awareness, pervade the pot. Among them, the ignorance is destroyed by the intellect and the pot is displayed by the reflecting light of awareness’ (PD.7.91a). Just like the halo of a lamplight makes the pot and the cloth contained in darkness its objects and, by its own light, removes – first – the darkness in which they are contained and – then – manifests them.²⁴

2.2.4 Liberating knowledge in the precolonial horizon of the episodic theory of knowledge

These examples suggest that conceptualising *brahmajñāna* in terms of awareness qualified by mental events (*vṛttiviśiṣṭa caitanya*) was a crucial hallmark of the precolonial Sanskrit discourses on liberating knowledge. The episodic paradigm of knowing, with all its distinctive features outlined above, provided a doxastic framework where certain foundational questions concerning *brahmajñāna* became possible and even necessary. To a large extent, formulating, negotiating, and providing tentative answers to these questions defined the deep logic of the precolonial discourse on *brahmajñāna*. These foundational questions can be organised under three different but related categories. They address, broadly, issues related to the arising, performance, and extinction of the mental event shaped after Brahman. Thus, the first category concerns the conditions of its arising (*ud√i*). It involves such questions as: How does this mental event arise? How is it related to the Vedāntic utterances, particularly to the sentence ‘I am Brahman’ (BṛhUp.1.4.10) and ‘You are that’ (ChUp.6.8-16)? What instrument (*karaṇa*) causes it? The second category focusses on the *sui generis* character of this mental episode. Under this category we find such questions as: what exactly makes this mental event of its particular kind? What is its specific use or application (*prayojana*)? What purpose does it serve? What is it capable of (*samartha*)? Does *akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti*

²⁴ *evaṃ ca sati ‘manasaivānudraṣṭavyam’ ‘yan manasā na manuta’ ity anyayoḥ śrutyor avirodho vṛttivyāpyatvāṅgikāreṇa phalavyāpyatvapratīṣedhapratipādanāt / tad uktam - phalavyāpyatvam evāsya śāstrakṛtbhir nivāritam / brahmaṇy ajñānanāśāya vṛttivyāptir apekṣitā iti // svayaṃ prakāśamānatvān nābhāsa upayujyate iti ca // jadapadārthākārākāritacittavṛtter viśeṣo ‘sti / tahtā hi / ayaṃ ghaṭa iti ghaṭākārākāritacittavṛttir ajñātaṃ ghaṭam viśayikṛtya tadgatājñāna-nirasanapurāḥsaram svagatacidābhāśena jaḍam ghaṭam api bhāśayati / tad uktam – buddhitatsthaacidābhāśau dvāv etau vyāpnuto ghaṭam / tatrājñānam dhiyā naśyed ābhāśena ghataḥ sphureti iti // yathā dīpaprabhāmaṇḍalam andhakāragataṃ ghaṭapaṭādikam viśayikṛtya tadgatāndhakāranirasanapurāḥsaram svaprabhayā tad api bhāśayati, VS.29. See Chapter 3.*

work in the same way as all other *jaḍapadārthaviṣayakacittavṛtti*? Is it an instance of indirect (*parokṣa*) or immediate (*aparokṣa*) cognition? What are the determining factors of indirectness and immediacy? Finally, the third category contains questions concerning the status of this mental event once its function has been fulfilled. Included in this category are such questions as: Once the mental event having Brahman for object has been produced and its purpose has been accomplished, does it remain or does it cease (*nivṛtti*)? If the latter, then how is it extinguished? Is there something responsible for removing it (*bādhaka*)? Does it perish by itself? All these foundational questions concerning *brahmajñāna*²⁵ are meaningful and intelligible within the distinctive features of the episodic paradigm of knowing outlined above.

2.3 *Brahmajñāna* is an instance of intentional awareness

I have argued so far that Advaita's precolonial understanding of liberating knowledge was largely informed by the episodic paradigm of knowing. Accordingly, precolonial Advaitins were not arguing that *brahmajñāna* is bare or unfragmented awareness *per se*, Brahman. Instead, they were committed to the idea that, not unlike any instance of conventional cognition, liberating knowledge is a modality of awareness qualified by mental events and, therefore, a modality of awareness having an object, having a shape, having a beginning and so forth. What made it different from the instances of conventional cognition at large was the claim that liberating knowledge was a mental event having Brahman for object²⁶ after which it was shaped (*brahmākārākāritā*). Notwithstanding this important difference, conventional cognitions and *brahmajñāna* alike were said to render their own respective entities into their objects of cognition. As Sadānanda put it, they entail *ghaṭākārākāritacittavṛttir ajñātaṃ ghaṭaṃ viṣayīkṛtya* (VS.29) and [*akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛttir*] *paraṃ brahma viṣayīkṛtya* (VS.28).

Putting these features together, I wish to stress now that the precolonial proponents of Advaita held *brahmajñāna* to be an instance of intentional awareness. By 'intentional' I mean to denote the content-aspect of awareness or its 'aboutness,' the idea that there is something consciousness is conscious of or something it is directed to.²⁷ As my discussion above highlighted, precolonial Advaitins were committed to the idea that the essential nature of

²⁵ I have done this survey on the basis of VMR.28 and VSS.28. See Appendix 2.

²⁶ Already in his *Bhāmāṭī* on BSBh.1.1.1, Vācaspati Miśra (940) argued that: *na cāyam anubhavo brahmasvabhāvo yena na janyeta, api tu antahkaraṇasyaiva vṛttibhedo brahma-viṣayaḥ* / 'And this cognition is not the essential nature of Brahman, by which it could not be yielded. Rather, it is nothing else but a different kind of event of the internal organ, one having Brahman for object;' (Sastri 1933: 79).

²⁷ I am using the term 'intentional' here in the same sense Brentano used it for defining mental phenomena at large: "Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call,

awareness is contentless (*nirviṣayaka*) and formless (*nirākāra*) – and therefore not ‘intentional’ – and that these and other similar features were the properties of the awareness that was qualified by mental events (*vr̥ttiviśiṣṭa caitanta*). However, to the extent that they believed liberating knowledge to entail a mental event, they were committed to the idea that *brahmajñāna* is about something; that it has an intentional object, Brahman, toward which the mind is directed and after which it is shaped. That is, they were committed to the idea that *brahmajñāna* is an instance of intentional awareness.

This idea seemed to have been explicitly brought to the fore in, for instance, a brief but important clarificatory remark by Rāmātīrtha on Sadānanda’s *param brahma viṣayīkṛtya* (VS.28), or the idea that the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ makes of supreme Brahman its object of cognition. To be sure, in VMR.28, Rāmātīrtha argued that this entire idea should be understood in strictly ‘intentional’ terms, as denoting a process or event in which the insentient internal organ faces or turns toward Brahman. As he commented: *brahmaṇo viṣayīkaraṇaṁ nāma vr̥ttes tadābhimukhyam* / ‘Directing the mental event toward that [Brahman] is called making of Brahman the object [of cognition]’ (VMR.28). In other words, Rāmātīrtha seemed to suggest that liberating knowledge ‘makes Brahman into the object of cognition’ only insofar as it entails a mind turning toward Brahman. It entails an intentional mental event, one that is directed toward Brahman. This ‘intentional’ interpretation of Sadānanda’s phrase was probably meant to dismiss the idea that liberating knowledge entails a positive apprehension of Brahman. For this, as I have already mentioned, was explicitly rejected in denying that Brahman should be pervaded by/with the fruit (*phalavyāpti*).

Accordingly, precolonial proponents of Advaita seemed to conceive liberating knowledge or *brahmajñāna* to be a special instance of intentional awareness: a mental event directed toward Brahman which, having Brahman for object, is shaped after its features. For Sadānanda, it is the cognition ‘I am Brahman, eternal, pure, awakened, released, one whose intrinsic form is truth, supreme bliss, infinite, and nondual.’²⁸ However, as VMR.28 and VSS.28 seem to illustrate, precolonial Advaitins were not unanimous in pointing out the intentional object of this mental event. Commenting on Sadānanda’s *param brahma viṣayīkṛtya*, they disagreed on whether the liberating mental event in-

though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We can, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves;” as quoted in Chalmers (2002: 481).

²⁸ *ahaṁ nityasuddhabuddhamuktasatyasvabhāvaparamānandānantādvayaṁ brahmāsmīty akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛttir udeti*; VS.28.

stantiated in the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* (BṛhUp.1.4.10) is *śud-dhabrahmaviṣayiṇī* or *ajñānaviśiṣṭapratyagabhinnaparabrahmaviṣayiṇī* (VSS.29); that is, whether its intentional object is the supreme and ‘pure Brahman’ or the ‘supreme Brahman that is nondifferent from the inner [Self] and qualified by ignorance.’²⁹

2.4 *Brahmajñāna* is an instance of immediate cognition

The third crucial feature I wish to highlight from the precolonial discourse on *brahmajñāna* is its firm commitment to the idea that the knowledge of Brahman consists of immediacy. To be sure, precolonial proponents of Advaita seemed to agree unanimously that liberating knowledge is an instance of immediate cognition. As Dharmarāja plainly and simply asserts: *tac ca jñānam aparokṣarūpam* / ‘And this [liberating] knowledge consists of immediacy’ (VP.9.13).

In their quest to conceptualise this particular feature of cognitions at large and *brahmajñāna* in particular, precolonial Advaitins resorted to a jargon involving a number of technical terms among which the following are worth emphasising: *pratyakṣatva*, *pratyakṣatā*, *parokṣajñāna* and *aparokṣajñāna*, *sākṣātkāra*, *sākṣātkāratva*, *sākṣāttva*, *anubhava*, *brahmasākṣātkāra*, and *brahmānubhava*. As the etymology of most of these terms suggests, precolonial proponents of Advaita reflected on the issue of immediacy by analogy with sensory awareness. Hence, the abstract nouns *pratyakṣatva* and *pratyakṣatā* denotes the ‘perceptibility’ or the ‘perceptual feature’ of cognitions. The triplet *sākṣātkāra*, *sākṣātkāratva*, and *sākṣāttva* remit to the feature of ‘direct presentation’ the act of ‘witnessing’ or being in sensorial contact with something. When analysed as *karmadhāraya*, the compounds *parokṣajñāna* and *aparokṣajñāna* allude to the stark contrast between the instances of ‘indirect cognition’ and ‘immediate cognition.’ As *tatpuruṣa* compounds, they refer to the contrast between the ‘cognition of what is away from sight’ and the ‘cognition of what is not away from sight;’ that is, the cognition of remote and immediate entities. Finally, the term *anubhava* seems to stress the experiential feature of cognition, its first-person perspective, in that it denotes the subjective ‘undergoing’ of something.

Beyond the strictly terminological, two core questions seemed to have almost monopolised the precolonial debate on the feature of immediacy. The first of these involved enquiring about the conditions of immediacy. The arguments here revolved around spelling out the determinant of immediate cognitions. In this respect, there was a disagreement as to whether the distinctive feature of immediacy was dependent on the object or the instrument involved in the process of cognition. The second question was related to the first one

²⁹ I will discuss this topic in Chapter 3.

and revolved around determining what instrument (*karaṇa*) brings about immediate cognitions. Within the *pramāṇa* discourse where each and every means of knowing is defined in terms of the instrument that brings about veridical cognition,³⁰ this question translated to the one asking whether immediacy as a feature borne by certain cognitions is exclusively delivered by perception (*pratyakṣa*) or whether verbal means of knowing (*śabdapramāṇa*) could also be efficient in this respect. This was a major point of contention, as it bears upon the relation between *brahmajñāna* and the Vedāntas, particularly the great sayings (*mahāvākyas*).

The discussion on the conditions of immediacy seemed to hinge significantly upon the term *nibandhana* or the fact of being ‘bound to’ or ‘dependent on’ something. Accordingly, the different outlooks on the issue were formulated and presented in term of the opposition between *karaṇaviśeṣotpattinibandhana* and *prameyaviśeṣanibandhana* (VP.9.14), *karaṇaviśeṣanibandhana* and *viśayaviśeṣanibandhana* (VP.9.16) as well as *karaṇanibandhana* and *arthanibandhana* (VMR.28). That is, the precolonial discussion on immediacy seemed to have focused on whether immediacy is dependent (*nibandhana*) on the quality or peculiarity (*viśeṣa*) belonging to the object of knowledge (*prameya*, *viśaya*, *artha*), or on the quality or peculiarity belonging to the instrument (*karaṇa*); or just on whether it is dependent on the instrument or the entity. As already mentioned, there was a disagreement on this issue. While some argued that immediacy depends on the instrument, others maintained that it depends on the entity. Here is an excerpt from *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* in which Dharmarāja endorses the idea that liberating knowledge must necessarily be an instance of immediate cognition and presents two different Advaitic outlooks on immediacy in the aforementioned terms:

And this [liberating] knowledge consists of immediacy; for if it were indirect, it would fail to remove the delusion, which is immediate. Furthermore, some say that this immediate cognition [arises] from such sayings as “You are that” etc. In [the opinion of] others, [it arises] from the internal organ purified by exegetic reflection and intense meditation. Among them, this is the intention of the early teachers: immediacy of cognition is not bound to arising from the quality of the instrument but bound to the quality of the knowable. This has been [already] explained [in Chapter One: On Perception]. Accordingly, as the living being in the form of the knower is non-different from Brahman, the cognition that apprehends it, which is to be produced from words, is also immediate. [...] However, the intention of others is in this way: perceptual feature of cognitions is bound to the quality of the instrument only; [it] is not bound to the quality of the object of cognition; for it is seen that the conventional experience of those endowed with sharp and blunt sense organs in respect of one and the same subtle entity is of perceptibility and of imperceptibility. And thus, since production by the sense organs is alone what is effective in respect of the directness of cognition, the cognition that is to be produced from words is not

³⁰ *pramākaraṇam pramāṇam*; VP.Upd.3.

immediate. Even with regard to the direct presentation of Brahman, the instrument is the mind alone purified by exegetic reflection and intense meditation; for it is heard: “With the mind alone it is to be seen” (BṛhUp.4.4.19).³¹

In this passage, Dharmarāja is alluding to the views on immediacy professed by the followers of the *Vivaraṇa* of Prakāśātman (975) and the *Bhāmātī* of Vācaspati Miśra (960) respectively. In his account of their stances, he stresses that the former endorse the idea that liberating knowledge is an instance of immediate cognition that is delivered by the Vedāntic sentence *tat tvam asi* insofar as immediacy depends on the quality or peculiarity of the object of cognition. The determining quality of the object was, again, explained in terms of its proximity (*naikatya*) to the knower or, as Dharmarāja himself argued in the first chapter of VP, in terms of its nondifference (*abheda*, *abhinnatva*) from the awareness in the form of the knower.³² Thus, according to this first view, the condition of immediacy is met in all those instances of cognition in which its object is either non-different from or near to the knower. Accordingly, the proponents of this theory of immediacy believed that the liberating and immediate knowledge of Brahman can be delivered by the verbal means of knowing because its referent or target (*artha*), Brahman, is one such entity that is always close at hand. Here is a passage from VMR.28 by Rāmatīrtha endorsing this view:

The meaning is that [this mental event ‘I am Brahman’] consists of direct presentation, it is not shaped after [the form of] a remote entity. And it should not be argued that since the intrinsic nature of words is to yield indirect cognitions, words do not produce immediate mental events. Since the *śruti* “That Brahman which is direct and immediate, which is the Self inside of all” [proclaims that] the intrinsic nature - the Self in the form of Brahman - is always immediate, there is no evidence that, with regard to that, words [only] yield indirect cognition. Furthermore, since it is seen that one [and the same] mind

³¹ *tac ca jñānam aparokṣarūpam, parokṣatve aparokṣabhramanivartakatvānupapatteḥ / tac cāparokṣajñānam tat tvam asy ādivākyaḥ iti kecī; manānānididhyāsanasaṃskṛtāntahkaraṇād evety apare / tatra pūrvācāryāṇāṃ ayam āśayaḥ - saṃvidāparokṣyaṃ na karaṇaviśeṣotpattinibandhanam; kiṃ tu prameyaviśeṣanibandhanam; ity upapāditaṃ / tathā ca brahmaṇaḥ pramātrjīvābhinnatayā tadgocaraṃ śabdajanyaṃ jñānam apy aparokṣam [...] anyeṣān tv evam āśayaḥ - karaṇaviśeṣanibandhanam eva jñānānāṃ pratyakṣatvam; na viśayaviśeṣanibandhanam; ekasminneva sūkṣmavastuni paṭukaraṇāpaṭukaraṇayorḥ pratyakṣatvāpratyakṣatvavyavahāradarśanāt / tathā ca saṃvitsākṣāttve indriyajanyatvasyaiva prayojakatayā na śabdajanyajñānasyāparokṣatvam / brahmasākṣātkāre ‘pi manānānididhyāsanasaṃskṛtaṃ mana eva karaṇam; ‘manasaivānudraṣṭavyam’ ityādiśruteḥ; VP.9.13-17.*

³² *siddhānte pratyakṣatvaprayojakaṃ kiṃ iti cet, kiṃ jñānagatasya pratyakṣatvasya prayojakaṃ prechasi, kiṃ vā viśayagatasya? / ādye pramāṇacaitanyasya viśayāvacchinnacaitanyābheda iti brūmah [...] / dvitīye ghaṭāder viśayasya pratyakṣatvan tu pramātrabhinnatvam / [Objection] But, in your final view, what is occasioning perceptuality? [Reply] Do you ask about what is occasioning the perceptual feature contained in the cognition or the one contained in the object? In the first case, we say that it is the non-difference of awareness in the form of means of knowing from awareness delimited by the object [...] In the second case, however, the perceptual feature of such objects as pot and so on is [its] non-difference from the knower; VP.1.15-16; 41.*

is the cause of remembrance of past entities and the cause of immediate cognitions the content of which is pleasure and so on, the character of indirectness and immediacy of cognition is not bound to the instrument but bound to the entity [being cognised]. But if in that case the nature [of cognition] is due to the difference in the cooperating factor [i.e. the entity being cognised], then in this case also [i.e., in the case of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’] the difference is in the cooperating factor. The proximity of the referent of word defines the attainment from words [i.e. verbal cognition]. Brahman, the intrinsic nature, is extremely near to the Self; [it] is not what is not the intrinsic nature, having assumed the qualifying adjuncts consisting of such [deities] as Indra and Varuṇa. Therefore, it is appropriate [to think that] such sentences as “You are that” yield immediate cognitions, just as such other sentences as “You are the tenth” and so on do.³³

The second view outlined by Dharmarāja conceives that immediacy is contingent upon the quality (*viśeṣa*) of the instrument (*karaṇa*). Taking *karaṇa* to mean the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) or the sense organs at large, it goes on to argue that the quality of the sense organs is the main determinant for bringing about immediate cognitions, just as having sharp sight is for perceiving a subtle entity. The proponents of this view argued, accordingly, that the verbal means of knowing cannot bring about the immediate instance of liberating knowledge. It can only grant its indirect apprehension during the stage of hearing the Vedāntas (*śravaṇa*). Following Vācaspati Miśra, the upholders of this view subscribed, therefore, to the idea that it is during the subsequent stages of exegetic reflection (*manana*) and intense meditation (*nididhyāsana*) that this first but indirect knowledge of Brahman is turned into its direct apprehension.³⁴ Hence, as Dharmarāja highlights, they believe that the mind or the internal organ that has been purified (*saṃskṛta*) by exegetic reflection and intense meditation is the instrument for bringing about the direct presentation of Brahman (*brahmasākṣātkāra*).

Furthermore, it seems that besides these two competing accounts advocated by the followers of the *Vivaraṇa* and the *Bhāmātī*, there was yet another view

³³ *sākṣātkārarūpā na punaḥ parokṣārthākāritety arthaḥ / na ca śabdasya parokṣajñānajanakatvasvābhāvīyān na tenāparokṣā cittavṛttir udeṭīti vācyam / ‘yat sākṣād aparokṣād brahma ya ātmā sarvāntara’ iti śruter nityāparokṣaṃ brahmātmāsvarūpaṃ tasmin parokṣajñānaṃ janayataḥ śabdasyāprāmāṇyāpatteḥ / kiñca jñānasya parokṣatvāparokṣatve na karaṇanibandhane kintv arthanibandhane ekasyaiva manasaḥ sukhādiviśayaśāparokṣajñānahetutvasyātītarthasṃrīhetutvasya ca darśanāt / tatra sahakāribhedāt tathābhāva iti cet tarhīhāpy asti sahakāribhedaḥ śabdapratiṭṭiṣṭiḥ śabdārthanaiḥkalakṣaṇaḥ / nikaṭaṃ hy atyantam ātmanāḥ svarūpaṃ brahma na tv asvarūpaṃ upādhyantarāviṣṭam indravaruṇādirūpaṃ / tasmād daśamas tvam asītyādivākyavat tat tvam asy ādivākyānām aparokṣajñānajanakatvaṃ yuktam; VMR.28.*

³⁴ According to Seshagiri Rao, “Vācaspati’s view is that *śabda*... gives only indirect and mediate knowledge. It is to be made direct and immediate through constant practice of rational contemplation (*manana*) and meditation (*nididhyāsana*) which is the direct cause of realization. This view is technically termed ‘*prasaṃkhyāna*’ which is fully upheld by Maṇḍana and Vācaspati;” Potter (2006: 9).

according to which *prasamkhyāna* is the instrument for bringing about the direct presentation of Brahman.³⁵

These debates illustrate the deep commitment of precolonial Advaitic thinkers to the idea that liberating knowledge is an instance of immediate cognition. They suggest that, despite their agreement about the necessity to highlight this feature of *brahmajñāna*, their opinion was divided as to whether immediacy was contingent upon the quality of the object or the quality of the instrument involved. In addition to this, they held different views as to whether immediacy was restricted to the perceptual means of knowing or could also be provided by some instances of verbal means of knowing. This, again, seemed to have been a point of contention between the followers of the *Vivaraṇa* and the followers of the *Bhāmātī*.³⁶

2.5 *Brahmajñāna* is an instance of veridical cognition

The fourth and last far-reaching issue I shall stress from the precolonial Advaitic discourse on liberating knowledge is the fact that *brahmajñāna* was not conceived by its proponents to be just any sort of immediate episodic cognition (*vṛttiviśiṣṭa caitanya*), which may be either true or false. It was, rather, meant to be an instance of veridical cognition, a knowledge-episode. The immediate repercussion of this formal requirement was that the notion of *brahmajñāna* had to be conceived, embedded, and defended against its potential opponents within the normative framework of the *pramāṇa* epistemology, its technical terminology, and its specific features. In other words, defending the

³⁵ In SLS.3.4, Appayya presents three views on the instrument for witnessing Brahman: (a) *prasamkhyāna*, (b) purified *manas*, and (c) *mahāvākyas*. He introduces the first among these in the following terms: *nanv asmin pakṣadvaye 'pi brahmasākṣātkāre kiṃ karaṇam? kecid āhuḥ - pratyayābhyāsarūpaṃ prasamkhyānam eva / yogamārga ādita ārambha upāsanarūpasya sāmukhyamārga mananāntaranididhyāsanarūpasya ca tasya sattvāt* / 'However, even in these two points of view [*yoga* and *sāmukhya*], what is the instrument for witnessing Brahman? Some say [that it is] repetitive thinking (*prasamkhyāna*) alone, which consists of repeating a [certain] thought; for in the path of *yoga* it starts from the beginning in the form of devotional concentration, and in the path of study (*sāmukhya*) it is present in the form of intense meditation [on the meaning of the Vedāntas] which follows exegetic reflection;' SLS.3.4, p. 269. I am uncertain, however, whether this view corresponds to the one upheld by Maṇḍana Miśra.

³⁶ Thus, in VP.6.12, Dharmarāja seems to endorse clearly that cognitions bearing the feature of the perceptual (*pratyakṣatva*) are not necessarily restricted to the perceptual means of knowing: *na hi phalībhūtajñānasya pratyakṣatve tatkarāṇasya pratyakṣapramāṇātānīyatatvam asti* / 'For, where the resulting cognition is perceptual, its instrument is not restricted to the perceptual means of knowing.' This is in stark contrast to Vācaspati's view: *na caiṣa sākṣātkāro mīmāṃsasahitasyāpi śabdapramāṇasya phalam, api tu pratyakṣasya, tasyaiva tatphalatvaniyamāt; anyathā kuṭajabījād api vaṭānkurotpattiprasaṅgāt* / 'Furthermore, this direct presentation [of Brahman] is not the result of the verbal means of knowing, even if accompanied by examination. Rather, [it is the result] of perception; for there is a restriction that it is a result of that alone [i.e. perception], since otherwise there is the conjuncture in which a sprout of a Vaṭa-tree is produced even from the seed of a Kuṭaja-tree;' Bh.1.1.1 (Sastri 1933: 78). For the divide between the *Vivaraṇa* and the *Bhāmātī*, see McCrea (2015) and Roodurmum (2002).

epistemic viability of *brahmajñāna* within the context of the Sanskrit scholastic culture meant resorting, willingly or unwillingly, to the intricacies of *pramāṇavāda*.³⁷

The specific terminology of *pramāṇavāda* is complex and demanding. Its most foundational terms include such words as *pramātr*, *pramāṇa*, *prameya*, *pramā*, *apramā*, *pramātvā*, *prāmāṇya*, *svataḥ prāmāṇya*, *parataḥ prāmāṇya*, *kāraṇa*, *kāraṇa* and so forth. The triplet *pramātr*, *pramāṇa*, and *prameya* denotes, respectively, the ‘knower,’ the ‘means of knowing,’ and the ‘knowable.’ The word *pramā* denotes an instance of ‘veridical cognition,’ a ‘piece of knowledge,’ while its antonym *apramā* means ‘false cognition.’ The term *pramātvā* ‘veridicality’ or ‘veracity’ refers to the specific feature that turns cognitions – upon bearing it – into veridical ones. The term *prāmāṇya*, which I shall also render as ‘veridicality,’ refers to the epistemological authoritative-ness or validity, particularly with regard to the means of knowing. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the locutions *svataḥ prāmāṇya* and *parataḥ prāmāṇya* allude to the stark contrast between the ‘self-certifying’ feature of cognitions and their being ‘certified or warranted by another.’ They refer to the conundrum as to whether veridical cognitions attain their justification intrinsically or extrinsically. Finally, within the causal approach to epistemic events that underpins the *pramāṇa* theory of knowledge, the terms *kāraṇa* and *kāraṇa* indicate, respectively, the ‘generic cause’ and the ‘instrument’ giving rise to knowledge-episodes.

To be sure, insofar as the word *pramā* is the chief technical term within the *pramāṇa* framework for denoting a knowledge-episode, to defend the idea that *brahmajñāna* is an instance of veridical cognition one had to turn to the concept of *pramā* itself. This is because, as with any other cognitive episode amounting to knowledge, liberating knowledge had to fulfil the specific epistemic criteria that defined *pramā* and marked it off from *apramā*.³⁸ Within the *pramāṇa* theory of knowledge there were two ways of approaching the definition of *pramā*. One was to define it by resorting to the notion of *pramātvā* and arguing that any instance of veridical cognition is such by virtue of bearing the feature of ‘veridicality.’ The other was to call upon the causal and evidential aspects of the *pramāṇa* theory and arguing that a cognition is true by virtue of its affiliation to any one of the acknowledged means of knowing. Both strategies were deployed by the precolonial proponent of Advaita in order to underpin the epistemic soundness of liberating knowledge.

³⁷ Śrī Harṣa may have been an exception in this respect. See Ram-Prasad (1993).

³⁸ As Matilal put it, “All *pramāṇa* theorists agree about the episodic character of knowledge. Knowledge or a knowing episode is brought about much like a sensation of pain by a set of causal factors. It is a happening, an event that takes place, a cognitive episode; but not all cognitive episodes amount to knowledge or knowing episodes. Only such cognitive or mental episodes would amount to knowledge as would yield a truth. Knowledge is but a true cognition revealing the nature or reality as it is” (Matilal 1986: 35).

2.5.1 *Pramāṭva, prāmāṇya, and brahmajñāna*

In *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* for instance, Dharmarāja offered a definition of veridicality (*pramāṭva*) in terms of *anadhigata* and *abādhita*.³⁹ By the former – which literally means ‘unreached, unattained’ – he meant to stress that the act of knowing must bear epistemic significance and novelty in that its object must be previously ‘unknown.’ By the latter – which literally means ‘unoppressed, unremoved, unrefuted’ – he meant to emphasize that any cognition remains true until it is proved false. Within the logic of these terms, Dharmarāja argued that both criteria together define the sort of veridicality that is available in all instances of veridical cognition except those of remembrance (*smṛti*), which are defined exclusively by the fact that they are about entities that are as yet unremoved. As he contended:

There, the veridicality that excludes remembrance is the property of a cognition having for object an entity that is [previously] unknown and is [yet] unremoved. However, [the veridicality] that is in common with remembrance is the property of a cognition having for object an entity that is [yet] unremoved.⁴⁰

He proceeded then by refining his definition of what it means to remain unremoved (*abādhita*) by introducing the factor of temporariness. That is, Dharmarāja claimed that for conventional entities to remain unremoved is for them to remain so during the transmigratory condition (*saṃsāradaśā*). Because of this provisional feature of *abādhita*, he argued that there was no contradiction in defending the idea that cognising conventional entities could amount to knowing them and staying committed to the quintessential Advaitic belief that they will be proved false and annulled at the dawn of direct knowledge of Brahman. In other words, Dharmarāja was offering a definition of veridicality that was necessarily time bound. Here is the argument:

[Objection:] However, since according to [your] final view [the entities] beginning with pot are false and are, therefore, removed, how can cognising them be a means of knowing? [Reply:] It is said: for [the entities] beginning with pot are removed immediately after the direct presentation of Brahman, since it is heard “Where, however, everything has become one’s very Self, there who is there for one to see and by what means?” However, [the entities beginning with pot] are not removed during the transmigratory condition, for it is heard “For where there is a duality of some kind, there the one can see the other.” And

³⁹ The term *anadhigata* is a past participle derived from *an-adhi√gam* meaning not ‘to go up to, to approach, to find, to attain.’ The term *abādhita* is also a past participle derived from *a√bādh* meaning not ‘to press, to drive away, to remove, to repel, to annul.’ I will render *anadhigata* as ‘unknown’ and *abādhita* as ‘unremoved.’

⁴⁰ *tatra smṛtivyāvṛttaṃ pramāṭvam anadhigatābādhitārthaviṣayakajñānatvam; smṛtisādhāraṇaṃ tu abādhitārthaviṣayakajñānatvam; VP. Upd.4.*

thus, since the word ‘unremoved’ means [in this context] the property of remaining unremoved during the transmigratory condition, [applying the notion of] veridical cognition to [the entities] beginning with pot is not too extensive.⁴¹

However, this definition of veridicality (*pramātvā*) in terms of *anadhigata* and provisional *abādhita* applied to conventional cognitions only, those having for object conventional entities. Implicit here was the idea that veridicality, particularly as denoting the feature by which certain cognitions remain unrefuted insofar as their objects remain unremoved, could be equally applied to the instance of *brahmajñāna* by extending the time frame of *abādhita ad infinitum*. In this way, the epistemic validity of liberating knowledge could be safeguarded by appealing to the same conditions of veridicality in which conventional cognitions were. This implicit move came to the fore in VP when, after treating all the six means of knowing acknowledged in Vedānta, Dharmarāja came to define their veridicality (*prāmāṇya*) in the following terms:

The veridicality of the means of knowing which have been in this way explained is twofold: making known conventional reality and making known supreme reality. Among them, the first [type of] veridicality belongs to all the means of knowing excluding the means of knowing that apprehends the intrinsic nature of Brahman; for their objects are not removed during the conventional condition. However, the second [type of] veridicality belongs to [the Vedāntic sentences] beginning with “Existence alone, oh dear one, was in the beginning” and concluding with “You are that” which are concerned with the oneness of the living being with Brahman; for their object – the oneness of the living being with the highest – is not to be removed during the three times [i.e., past, present, and future].⁴²

In this passage, Dharmarāja was unmistakably claiming that the veridicality of the six means of knowing that he has carefully treated in VP – perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāṇa*), analogy (*upamāṇa*), words (*śabda*), postulation (*arthāpatti*), and inapprehension (*anupalabdhi*)⁴³ – is of two kinds, inasmuch as they make known either conventional reality (*vyāvahārikatattvāve-*

⁴¹ *nanu siddhānte ghaṭāder mithyātvāna bādhitatvāt tajjñānaṃ katham pramāṇam / ucyate - brahmasākṣātkārānantaram hi ghaṭādīnāṃ bādhaḥ; 'yatra tv asya sarvam ātmaivābhūt tat kena kaṃ paśyet' iti śruteḥ / na tu saṃsāradaśāyāṃ bādhaḥ, 'yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati taditara itaraṃ paśyati' iti śruteḥ / tathā ca abādhitapadena saṃsāradaśāyāṃ abādhitatvaṃ vivakṣitam iti na ghaṭādipramāṇāṃ avyāptiḥ; VP.Upd.7-8. The two passages that Dharmarāja quotes here in order to support his claims are from BrhUp.4.5.15.*

⁴² *evaṃ nirūpitānāṃ pramāṇāṃ prāmāṇyaṃ dvividhaṃ, vyāvahārikatattvāvedakatvaṃ pāramārthikatattvāvedakatvaṃ ceti / tatra brahmasvarūpāvagāhipramāṇavyatiriktānāṃ sarvapramāṇāṃ ādyaṃ prāmāṇyam, tadviśayañāṃ vyavahāradaśāyāṃ bādhabhāvāt / dvitīyaṃ tu jīvaibrahmaikyaparāñāṃ 'sad eva somyedam agra āsīt' ityādīnāṃ 'tat tvam asi' ityantānāṃ; tadviśayasya jīvaparaikyasya kālatrayābādhyatvāt; VP.8.1-2.*

⁴³ *tāni pramāṇāni ṣaṭ pratyakṣānumāṇopamāṇaśabdārthāpattyanupalabdhibhedāt / 'The means of knowing are six, for they are divided into perception, inference, analogy, words, postulation, and inapprehension; VP.Upd.10.*

daka) or supreme reality (*pāramārthikatattvāvedaka*). The criterion for distinguishing between these two referred to the notion of removal or refutation (*bādhā*) in either absolute or relative terms. Thus, Dharmarāja went on to claim that while conventional entities are not removed during the span of the conventional condition (*vyavahāradāśā*, *saṃsāradāśā*), supreme reality is not removed during the three times (*kālatraya*) – i.e., it is not removed at all. Therefore, while the validity (*prāmāṇya*) of the means of knowing concerned with conventional entities is relative, the validity of those which make supreme reality known is never handicapped.⁴⁴ Finally, he endorsed the idea that conventional reality is made known by all means of knowing except the verbal one (*śabda*) apprehending Brahman; that is, perception, inference, analogy, postulation, and inapprehension. Conversely, he was committed to the idea that those Vedāntic sentences having for purport the oneness of the living being with Brahman (*jīvabrahmaikya*) were alone responsible for making known the supreme reality, the intrinsic nature of Brahman (*brahmasvarūpa*).

In this way, Dharmarāja's classification of *prāmāṇya* entailed extending the notion of *pramātva* to all instances of veridical cognitions, liberating and otherwise. In his outlook, the instance of *brahmajñāna* was true or veridical (*pramā*) to the extent it featured the character of veridicality (*pramātva*); that is, inasmuch as its object was an entity that was not to be removed (*abādhita*) either at all or during the transmigratory condition.

2.5.2 Liberating knowledge and the causal and evidential aspects of *pramāṇavāda*

Yet another strategy that the precolonial proponent of Advaita deployed for defending the veridical feature of liberating knowledge was to resort to the causal and evidential aspects of the *pramāṇa* theory. Within the *pramāṇa* discourse itself, the term *pramāṇa* may denote (a) a particular way or means for attaining knowledge, (b) an authoritative source for attaining a piece of knowledge, and (c) a way of proving or justifying a certain knowledge-claim.⁴⁵ Hence, it refers to both issues of epistemic justification as well as causal origination. Indeed, the generic way of defining *pramāṇa* is in terms of the instrument of veridical cognition: *pramākaraṇam pramāṇam* / 'Means of knowing is the instrument of veridical cognition' (VP.Upd.3). This causal definition provided a basis for another way of approaching the notion of veridical cognition (*pramā*); namely, by tracing it back to any one of the acknowledged

⁴⁴ And hence, although Dharmarāja does not say it explicitly here, the *prātibhāsikatattva* or the 'apparent reality' could never inform any instance of veridical cognition, conventional or liberating one, inasmuch as appearances (*pratibhāsa*) are removed even during the transmigratory or conventional condition.

⁴⁵ As Matilal stressed, "It means both a means for (or a way of) knowledge and an authoritative source for making a knowledge-claim. It also means a 'proof', a way of proving that something exists or something is the case" (Matilal 1986: 36).

means of knowing. From this perspective, the epistemological process of warranting a certain knowledge-claim entailed affiliating it to the means of knowing. That is, a cognition was proved to be true because it was shown to be delivered by a means of knowing.

These features of the *pramāṇa* discourse allowed the opportunity to defend the idea that *brahmajñāna* is an instance of veridical cognition by tracing it back to any one of the acknowledged means of knowing. Besides, it also entailed, although indirectly, the need to defend the actual status of that means of knowing as a means of knowing. In this respect, precolonial proponents of Advaita seemed to endorse, unanimously, the idea that liberating knowledge was yielded by the verbal means of knowing (*śabda*).⁴⁶ Such view was, for instance, plainly endorsed in the abovementioned classification of veridicality (*prāmāṇya*) by Dharmarāja where he contended that the kind of veridicality that makes known supreme reality (*pāramārthikatattvāvedaka*) belongs to the Vedāntic sentences proclaiming the oneness of the living being with Brahman (*jīvaibrahmaikya*). Accordingly, Dharmarāja believed that liberating knowledge was affiliated to the Vedāntic sentences of ChUp.6.2-16. The same idea was avowed by Sarvajñātman (PP.4), Sadānanda Sarasvatī (VS.23, 28) and his Sanskrit commentators, and indeed by many other upholders of Advaita Vedānta.⁴⁷

Tracing *brahmajñāna* back to the verbal means of knowing in general and the Vedāntic sentences in particular seemed to have raised within precolonial Advaita two far-reaching questions, namely: which Vedāntic sentences were relevant in this respect and what exegetic method should be applied in order to ensure that their purport was appropriately apprehended? To be sure, the first issue implied establishing some sort of hierarchy among the Vedāntic sentences themselves and highlighting, in consequence, the relevance of the so-called ‘great utterances’ or ‘great sayings’ (*mahāvākyas*).⁴⁸ However, both the taxonomy as well as the exact list and identification of these great sentences seemed to have been open to debate, for several such lists of

⁴⁶ And hence, they did not seem to entertain the idea that liberating knowledge is delivered, and thereby justified, by some special and *sui generis* means of knowing.

⁴⁷ To be sure, the core Advaitic idea that the knowledge of Brahman is grounded in the Vedas, which are the authoritative source of its knowledge, goes back to Śaṅkara and his second interpretation of BS.1.1.3: *śāstrayonitvāt*.

⁴⁸ For instance, already in his *Pañcaprakriyā* Sarvajñātman (1027) distinguished between *mahāvākyas* and *avāntaravākyas*. As Kocmarek writes in the introduction to his translation of *Pañcaprakriyā*, “These [Upaniṣadic statements] he [Sarvajñātman] divides into two categories: a) the great Upaniṣadic statements (*mahāvākyas*) such as ‘I am Brahman’ [...] and ‘That thou art’ [...], the correct understanding of which is the ultimate means of bringing about final release (*mokṣa*); b) statements which are subsidiary (*avāntaravākyas*) to the great Upaniṣadic statements, but which contribute to the understanding of the meaning of the components of the great statements – these subsidiary statements are of two kinds, positive or affirmative one (*vidhimukha*) such as ‘Brahman is truth, knowledge, the infinite’ (*satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma*) [...] and negative ones (*niṣedhamukha*) such as ‘not this, not this’ (*neti neti*) [...],” Kocmarek (1985: 19).

mahāvākyas are available in precolonial Advaitic literature.⁴⁹ The second issue was by no means less vexed, for at least two different methods have been deployed by Advaitic thinkers for analysing the meaning of the Vedāntic sentences. These were known, respectively, as *anvayavyatirekanyāya* (or *anvayavyatirekayukti*) and *adhyāropāpavādanyāya*. The *anvayavyatirekanyāya* was deployed with this specific purpose in mind by Śaṅkara himself. However, it seems that soon after his lifetime it was neglected and eventually substituted by the ‘method of adscription and retraction’ (*adhyāropāpavādanyāya*),⁵⁰ which became thereafter the standard method among the proponents of Advaita for getting at the purport of the Vedāntic sayings. The method itself was said to purify, refine, or clarify (*śodhana*) the meaning of the words contained in Vedāntic utterances, particularly the words contained in the sentence

⁴⁹ The number of *mahāvākyas* was, certainly, not rigidly fixed. As Jacob surveyed (Jacob 1934: 155-156), the *Mahāvākyavivaraṇa* lists eleven (or twelve) of these great sayings. They are: (1) *tat tvam asi* (ChUp.6.8-16), (2) *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* (BṛhUp.1.4.10), (3) *ayaṃ ātmā brahma* (MānUp.2), (4) *eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmyamṛtaḥ*, (5) *sa yaś cāyaṃ puruṣe yaś cāsāv āditye sa ekaḥ* (TaiUp.2.8.1), (6) *prajñā pratiṣṭhā prajñānaṃ brahma* (AiUp.3.4.3), (7) *vijñānam ānandaṃ brahma* (BṛhUp.3.9.28), (8) *satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma* (TaiUp.2.1.1), (9) *sa evaṃ eva puruṣo brahma*, (10) *sarvaṃ khalv idaṃ brahma* (ChUp.3.14.1), (11) *ekaṃ evādviṭṭyaṃ* (ChUp.6.2.1). *Mahāvākyārthadarpaṇa* gives the same list but by trisecting No. 5 and uniting Nos. 6 and 7 features a list with a total of twelve great sayings. *Mahāvākyavivaraṇa* lists only four. In addition to these lists, in the fifth chapter of *Pañcadaśī* entitled *Mahāvākyaviveka*, a total of four *mahāvākyas* are explained. They are: (1) *prajñānaṃ brahma*, (2) *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*, (3) *tat tvam asi*, and (4) *ayaṃ ātmā brahma*. Furthermore, some precolonial sources such as VS.23 and VS.28 stress the importance of two Vedāntic sayings: *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* and *tat tvam asi*. And this is not uncommon in early Advaita literature. Already in US.1.18, Śaṅkara attempted to explain the meaning of the word *ahaṃ* occurring in the sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* (US.1.18.96; 18.101) along with his interpretation of the sentence *tat tvam asi*. Even if in this early source these two Vedāntic sayings are not technically designated as *mahāvākyas*, it is likely that Śaṅkara’s US is the original source of this particular list.

⁵⁰ On *anvayavyatireka* method, its discontinuance, and the exegetic method of later Advaitins see Mayeda (1979: 49-58). According to him, “Śaṅkara’s *anvayavyatireka* method was inherited by his disciple Sureśvara. Though Sureśvara has tried to theoretically strengthen it, his use of the method does not seem to be very different from that of his *guru*. Śaṅkara compares ‘*tat tvam asi*’ with ‘*nīlāśva-*’ (The horse is black) [...] while Sureśvara employs the sentence ‘*nīlot-pala-*’ (The lotus is blue) [...] Padmapāda, another of Śaṅkara’s disciples, compares the same sentence with ‘*so ’yam*’ (This is that) which becomes the stock-instance of *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*. Sarvajñātman (1027) who is traditionally regarded as a disciple of Sureśvara, refers in his *Śaṃkṣepaśārīraka* (I, 154-157) to the threefold transfer (*lākṣaṇīkavṛtti*) and compares the sentence with ‘*so ’yam pumān*’ (This is a person) [...] These facts may allow us to suppose that Śaṅkara’s method was already neglected at the time of his pupils, or at any rate of Sureśvara’s,” Mayeda (1979: 54-55). As for the reasons for abandoning Śaṅkara’s *anvayavyatireka* method, Mayeda writes: “Why was Śaṅkara’s method dropped by the later Advaitins? One reason is that the method contains a defect in logical exactitude, and the other is that his technical terms are loanwords from Grammarians or Naiyāyikas,” Mayeda (1979: 55). For *anvayavyatirekanyāya* in Nyāya context, see Cardona (1967-68). For its use in Advaita, see also Halbfass (1991: 162-182).

tat tvam asi (ChUp.6.8-16).⁵¹ Here is how Sadānanda explained its application to this same Vedāntic utterance:

From this [method of] adscription and retraction the refinement of the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* is also accomplished. In this way: the totality beginning with ignorance, consciousness qualified by omniscience and so on that is attached to this, and consciousness unattached to this; these three appearing as one, like a lump of heated iron, is the expressed meaning of the word *tat*. Unattached consciousness that is the substratum of [consciousness] attached to this qualifying adjunct is the implied meaning of the word *tat*. The individuality beginning with ignorance, consciousness qualified by little-knowing-ness and so on that is attached to this, and consciousness that is unattached to this; these three appearing as one, like a lump of heated iron, is the expressed meaning of the word *tvam*. Unattached consciousness, the fourth [quarter], the inner bliss, the substratum of [consciousness] attached to this qualifying adjunct is the implied meaning of the word *tvam*.⁵²

As stressed in this passage, refining the meaning of this Vedāntic sentence by the method of adscription and retraction is deeply semantic in that it entails determining the expressed or primary meaning (*vācyārtha*) and the implied or secondary meaning (*lakṣyārtha*) of the words *tat* and *tvam* contained therein. This analysis was, again, informed and underpinned by a full-fledged theory concerning the different powers of word and connotation (*lakṣaṇā*).⁵³ Altogether, these intricacies led eventually to a widely accepted view among pre-colonial proponents of Advaita according to which the purport of the Vedāntic

⁵¹ The purifying or refining function of this method is well attested. In VS for instance, Sadānanda used the locutions *tattvampadārthaśodhana* (VS.22) and *tattvampadārthau śodhayitvā* (VS.28), which is also found in VSS.28. The idea is, however, much older. It was already present in Sarvajñātman's *Pañcaprakriyā*: *evam padārthadvayam śodhayitvā vyavas-thitam tad eva tat tvam asīty ācāryo bodhayati* / "Having purified in this way the meanings of the two words [*tat* and *tvam*], the preceptor makes [the student] understand what is declared in the sentence 'You are that'" (PP.4).

⁵² *ābhyām adhyāropāpavādābhyām tattvampadārthaśodhanam api siddham bhavati / tathā hi / ajñānādisamaṣṭir etadupahitaṁ sarvajñātvādiviśiṣṭaṁ caitanyam etadanupahitaṁ caitat-trayaṁ taptāyapīṇḍavad ekatvenāvabhāsamānaṁ tatpadavācyārtho bhavati / etad upādhyupahitādhārabhūtaṁ anupahitaṁ caitanyam tatpadalakṣyārtho bhavati / ajñānādivyaṣṭir etadupahitālpajñatvādiviśiṣṭacaitanyam etadanupahitaṁ caitatrayaṁ taptāyapīṇḍavad ekatvenāvabhāsamānaṁ tvampadavācyārtho bhavati / etadupādhyupahitādhārabhūtaṁ anupahitaṁ pratyagānandaṁ turīyaṁ caitanyam tvampadalakṣyārtho bhavati*; VS.22.

⁵³ In VS.24-27, Sadānanda explained three types of *lakṣaṇā* 'connotation' or 'indication'. They are *jahallakṣaṇā*, *ajahallakṣaṇā*, and *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*. For a good description of each, see Raja (1963: 249-254). This classification of *lakṣaṇā* appears as early as in PP.1, where after dealing with the three types of occurrences of words (*śabdavṛtti*): *prasiddhi* (or *mukhyāvṛtti*), *lakṣaṇā*, and *guṇa*, Sarvajñātman states: *lakṣaṇā punas trividhā - jahallakṣaṇā, ajahallakṣaṇā, jahadajahallakṣaṇā ceti* / 'Furthermore, connotation is threefold: connotation in which [the expressed meaning of word] is abandoned, connotation in which [the expressed meaning of word] is not abandoned, and connotation in which [the expressed meaning] is abandoned and not abandoned [i.e., is partially abandoned].'

sentence *tat tvam asi* should be understood by a connotation called *bhāgalakṣaṇā*, *bhāgatyaḡgalakṣaṇā*, or *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*⁵⁴ which entailed a partial abandonment and a partial retention of the primary meaning of both words. In this way, the process of refinement involved leaving aside the mutually opposed or exclusive aspect (*viruddhāṁśa*) in the expressed meaning of these two words – the totality and the individuality beginning with ignorance as well as consciousness qualified by omniscience and little-knowing-ness attached to these two – and retaining that part or aspect of it that is common to both: unattached consciousness. Here is a passage from VSS.28 in which Nṛsiṃhāśrama explains this process of refinement culminating eventually in the apprehension of the unfragmented meaning (*akhaṇḍārtha*):

[To the question:] ‘When is it expected?’ He [Sādānanda] says ‘[when the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* has been refined] by the preceptor.’ When the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* has been refined by the preceptor by the adscription of false entities beginning with the sense of agency and ending with the [gross] body – appearing, by means of nescience, like the horn of a rabbit in the undivided, unassociated, and contentless awareness – and by their [subsequent] retraction; when the awareness of the unfragmented meaning is known through the sentence *tat tvam asi* by abandoning the mutually exclusive portion by means of the indication in which the primary meaning is [partially] abandoned and [partially] retained. This is the meaning.⁵⁵

2.5.3 Liberating knowledge and the practice of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*

Another relevant discussion surrounding the claim that *brahmajñāna* is an instance of veridical cognition concerned its means of attainment (*sādhana*). The highlights of this complex discussion concerned the cognitive process of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*, which goes back to the Vedāntic passage (BrhUp.2.4.5) in which Yājñavalkya tells his wife, Maitryī, that the Self (*ātman*) is to be seen, heard, reflected, and meditated upon.⁵⁶ As a sort of mental action or operation (*mānasī kriyā*, *mānasavyāpāra*), these three – to which some Advaitins also added *samādhi* – were conceptualised as means (*sādhana*) leading to the immediate instance of *brahmajñāna*, which itself was but a means to liberation (*mokṣa*). Although opinion was divided as to whether

⁵⁴ The term *jahadajahallakṣaṇā* appeared already in Sarvajñātman’s PP.1. The term *bhāgalakṣaṇā* appeared in VS.23 and VS.26. It also appeared in VV.48. Finally, *bhāgatyaḡgalakṣaṇā* appeared in Appayya’s SLS (Raja 1963: 252).

⁵⁵ *kadeṭy apekṣāyām āha ācāryeṇeti / ācāryeṇāviṣaye ’saṅge niṣkalacaitanye śaśaśṛṅgāyamānāvidyayāhankārādi śarīrāntamithyāpadārtham adhyāropatadapavādapuraḥsaram tattvampadārthau śodhayitvā tat tvam asīti vākyena jahadajahallakṣaṇayā viruddhāṁśaparitāgenākhaṇḍārthacaitanye jñāte satīty arthah*; VSS.28

⁵⁶ *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi / ātmano va are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānena idaṃ sarvaṃ viditam* / ‘You see, Maitreyī, one should see and hear, think and meditate on the Self; for by seeing and hearing, thinking and meditating on the Self this entire [world] is known’ (BrhUp.2.4.5).

the instrument for witnessing Brahman was the mind that has been purified during the process of *manana* and *nididhyāsana* or the Vedāntic utterances themselves, there is no question that these three mental operations were understood to be conducive to liberating knowledge inasmuch as they were grounded in the Vedāntas, the sole instrument and, therefore, source of authority of *brahmajñāna*. To this extent, hearing the Vedāntas occupied a somehow advantageous position in that it circumscribed the frame for the subsequent activity of reflection and intense meditation upon, and eventually even mental absorption in, what has been previously heard from the authoritative source of *brahmajñāna*. Here are two definitions of this cognitive process. The first is by Dharmarāja who acknowledged only the triplet of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*:

In this way, hearing, reflection, and intense meditation are also means of knowing [Brahman]; since in the *Brāhmaṇa* of Maitreyī, after mentioning seeing: “The Self, indeed, is to be seen” there is an injunction to hearing, reflection, and intense meditation: “It is to be heard, reflected, and intensely meditated upon” (BrhUp.2.4.5) as a means to that. Among them, that mental act which is well-disposed to ascertaining the nondual Brahman as the purport of the Vedāntas is called hearing. That mental operation which yields cognitions consisting of *tarka*, which is well-disposed to remove doubts related to other means of knowing that hinder the meaning ascertained by [the Vedāntic] words is called reflection. That mental occupation which is well-disposed to mental steadfastness having the Self for its target, which removes the mind from [other] objects to which it is drawn by ill impressions without beginning is called intense meditation.⁵⁷

Sadānanda, however, in what was probably intended to accommodate *yoga* within the Advaita scheme of things, complements these three with mental absorption (*śamādhi*):

Hence, since the practice of hearing, reflection, intense meditation, and absorption is required up to the point of direct presence of [pure] awareness which is one’s own very nature, they are also indicated here. Ascertaining through the sixfold distinctive mark that the purport of the Vedāntas is the nondual entity is called hearing. Commencement, conclusion, repetition, novelty, result, eulogy, and attainment are, certainly, the distinctive marks [...] Thinking along incessantly on the nondual entity pertaining to what has been heard [from the Vedāntas] by arguments akin to the Vedāntas is, to be sure, reflection. Intense meditation is a flow of cognition of the kind of nondual entity that is devoid of cognitions starting with the body, which are of different kind. Absorption is

⁵⁷ *evam śravaṇamanananididhyāsanāny api jñānasādhanaṇi; maitreyībrāhmaṇe ‘ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ’ iti darśanam anūdya tatsādhanatvena ‘śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ’ iti śravaṇamanananididhyāsanānām vidhānāt / tatra śravaṇam nāma vedāntānām advitiye brahmaṇi tātparyāvadhāraṇānukūlamānasī kriyā / mananam nāma śabdāvadhārite ‘rthe mānātaravirodhaśaṅkāyām tannirākaraṇānukūlatarkātmakajñānajanako mānasavyāpāraḥ / nididhyāsanam nāma anādidurvāsanayā viśayeśvākṛṣyamāṇasya cittasya viśayebhyo ‘pakṛṣyātmaviśayakasthairyānukūlo mānasavyāpāraḥ; VP.9.21-24.*

twofold, with conceptual elaboration and without conceptual elaboration. Among them, when a mental event abides on the nondual entity assuming its shape without the requirement for dissolving conceptual elaborations such as knower and knowing, it is called [absorption] with conceptual elaboration [...] When, however, a mental event abides with extreme equanimity on the nondual entity assuming its shape with the requirement for dissolving conceptual elaborations such as knower and knowing, it is [absorption] without conceptual elaboration.⁵⁸

Despite their differences, both these definitions seem to stress invariably that *śraṇaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*, and even eventually *samādhi* are structured around the Vedāntic sentences and their nondual purport. Since they orbit around the Vedāntas, performing them was believed to aid the dawn of *brahmajñāna*. This was in agreement with the quintessential Advaitic claim that Vedāntic utterances were the means of knowing (*pramāṇa*) Brahman in that they were both its source and its epistemological justification.

2.6 Conclusion: Toward a normative framework in the precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna* in Sanskrit

I have argued in this chapter that the precolonial exponents of Advaita Vedānta were committed to thinking about *brahmajñāna* as (a) a mental event, (b) an instance of intentional awareness, (c) an instance of immediate cognition, and (d) an instance of veridical cognition. As I have illustrated, these commitments were deeply rooted, shaped, and underpinned by the many intricacies and the technicalities of the *pramāṇavāda* as well as the episodic paradigm of knowledge. My main contention here is that these two acted as a sort of normative framework in which the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge was to be conceptualised and defended against its potential detractors within the precolonial centres of Brahmanical learning.

Thus, conceived as a mental event, liberating knowledge was held to be episodic and, therefore, susceptible of arising, performing a certain function,

⁵⁸ *evam bhūtasvasvarūpacaitanyasākṣātkāraparyantaṃ śravaṇa-*
nananididhyāsanamādhy-anuṣṭhānasyāpekṣitātvāt te 'pi pradarśyate / śravaṇaṃ nāma
śaḍvidhalingair aśeṣavedāntānām advitīye vastuni tātparyāvadhāraṇaṃ / liṅgāni tūpakramo-
pasaṃhārābhyāsāpūrvatāphalārthāvadopapattyākhyāni [...] mananaṃ tu śrutasyādvitīya-
vastuno vedāntānugūṇayuktibhir anavaratam anucintanam / vijāṭiyadehādi-
pratyayarahitādvitīyavastusajātīyapratyayapravāho nodidhyāsanam / samādhir dvividhaḥ sa-
vikalpako nirvikalpakaś ca / tatra savikalpako nāma jñātrjñānādivikalpalayānapekṣayādvitīya-
vastuni tadākārākāritāyāś cittavṛtter avasthānam [...] nirvikalpakas tu
jñātrjñānādivikalpalayāpekṣayādvitīyavastuni tadākārākāritāyāś cittavṛtter atitarām
ekībhāvenāvasthānam [...], VS.30. For a similar definition including samādhi in the list, see
PD.1.53-55.

and ceasing. As I have suggested, theorising *brahmajñāna* was in consequence confined, to a large extent, to addressing questions concerning these very issues. Moreover, as a modality of awareness that is qualified by mental events, liberating knowledge was conceived to have a shape, to have an object, to have a bearer, and to arise as well as to cease. That is, it was vindicated as having Brahman for object, having its shape or features, having a mental event as its bearer, and arising in connection to the Vedāntic great sayings. This entire outlook presupposed a particular “philosophy of mind” in which the cognitive modality of awareness was conceived to entail a reflection of bare awareness in an insentient mental event assuming the shape of the object of cognition. However, in contrast to conventional instances of cognition, which were said to entail both pervading the object with a mental event and pervading it with the light of awareness contained therein, the instance of *brahmajñāna* was meant to require only that Brahman be pervaded with a mental event, so that its ignorance could be dispelled, but did not require pervading it with the light of awareness reflecting therein, which would amount to revealing or manifesting it.

Furthermore, I have argued that the precolonial proponents of Advaita were committed to the idea that liberating knowledge is intentional in that it entails a mental disposition or orientation toward Brahman. They were also committed to thinking that liberating knowledge is an instance of immediate cognition, although opinion was divided on whether its immediacy was granted by the Vedāntic sentences themselves or rather by the mind that has been purified by exegetic reflection and intense meditation on their meaning. As I have addressed, this point of contention was closely related to that concerning the conditions of immediacy. Whereas some proponents of Advaita held immediacy to be contingent upon the quality of the object of cognition, others endorsed the idea that it was contingent upon the quality of the instrument.

Finally, I have asserted in this chapter that liberating knowledge was regarded to be an instance of veridical cognition. My key contention was to stress that this claim required turning to the concept of *pramā* and *pramātva*, as well as to the causal and evidential aspects of the *pramāṇa* theory. In the course of my exposition, I have stressed that liberating knowledge was affiliated to the verbal means of knowing, particularly the great Vedāntic sayings, which were believed to proclaim the oneness of the living being with Brahman and to which a qualified student could gain access through a specific exegetic method. I have argued that the affiliation of liberating knowledge to one of the acknowledged means of knowing safeguarded its epistemological tenability and that the so-called means to/of liberating knowledge such as *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana* and eventually *samādhi* orbited around the Vedāntas, deriving therefrom their epistemic significance.

As laid out in my introduction to this chapter, my contention is that the logical or philosophical retrieval provided here will allow me to analyse in the following the engagements with the Advaitic notion of *brahmajñāna* offered

by Badrīnāth Śukla, Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in terms of their attunement, or the lack of it, to the conceptual scheme and the four major commitments retrieved here. Thus, I will move on now to my next chapter where I will examine Badrīnāth Śukla's non-dialogical and exegetic voice engaging with the process of knowing Brahman. In doing so I will stress, on the one hand, his lack of engagement with the Western Other and, on the other, his deep reliance on both the conceptual scheme retrieved here as well as the Sanskrit culture of commentary writing.

3. Beyond synthesis and negotiation: Badrīnāth Śukla (1898-1988) on the process of knowing Brahman

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to examine Badrīnāth Śukla's engagement with the notion of *brahmajñāna* as illustrated in his Hindi *Vyākhyā* (1979) on *Vedāntasāra* written by Sadānanda Sarasvatī (1500). In doing so, my main contention will be to portray Śukla's rigorous and insightful commentary as that of a Sanskrit-learned exegete whose discourse on Advaita's ideal of liberating knowledge (i) is by no means intended by him to mediate the encounter between India and the West – nor is it a product of that same encounter, (ii) exemplifies in a masterful manner the continuation of the classical Sanskrit exegetic tradition within a vernacular medium and a post-colonial sociocultural context, and (iii) carries in some instances the reflection on *brahmajñāna* beyond that of his Sanskrit predecessors, albeit always within the rules and terms of discourse belonging to that Sanskrit exegetic culture.

In order to make my case, I will begin this chapter by defining Śukla's voice as a commentator of *Vedāntasāra* 28 dealing with the issue of the Vedāntic sentence *aham brahmāsmi* 'I am Brahman' (BṛhUp.1.4.10). In the course of my discussion, I will argue that in order to appreciate the distinctive features constituting Śukla's exegetic voice engaging the notion of *brahmajñāna*, it is necessary to put his own Hindi commentary into the perspective of two other precolonial Sanskrit commentaries on *Vedāntasāra* – the *Subodhinī* by Nṛsiṃhāśrama (1555) and *Vidvanmanorañjanī* by Rāmatīrtha Yati (1610). I will claim that his own exegetic voice is undeniably articulated in relation to them, be it in terms of assent or in terms of dissent. In other words, I will argue that Śukla's pronouncements on Advaita's conceptualisation of liberating knowledge does not reflect in any significant manner the encounter between India and the West but is intelligible and meaningful within the textual context of the Sanskrit commentarial tradition. In addition to inscribing Śukla's voice within its own particular context of reference, I will define his voice further by reflecting on the typology of his exegetic interventions. Finally, I will pay attention to the distinctive manners in which Śukla's *Vyākhyā* on VS.28 displays and exercises exegetical creativity and authority.

After defining the peculiarities of his exegetic voice, I will proceed by addressing the turning points in Śukla's exposition of the process of knowing Brahman, or as he has it in Hindi *brahmajñān kī prakriyā*. I will start by reflecting on the deep relation between the process of knowing Brahman, Vedānta texts, and the culture of exegesis surrounding them by examining the way Śukla – following the footsteps of VS, VSS and VMR – stressed the continuity between the great Vedāntic sayings consisting in the instruction *tat tvam asi* and the sentence consisting in the cognition *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*. Next, drawing on an insightful and programmatic statement by Śukla, I will move on to examining Badrīnāth's elucidation of the five distinctive but successive stages constituting the process of knowing Brahman. This will lead me, in the first place, to explore several substantial discussions related to the process of making Brahman into the object of cognition – issues such as (a) the episodic nature and the immediate feature of this *sui generis* cognition, (b) the analogical character in which *brahmajñāna* is regarded to be a process of knowing, and (c) the ultimate referent of this process. Second, it will lead me to address the question concerning the efficiency or capability (*samarth*) of the mental event having Brahman for content. Third, I will examine Śukla's account of the attainment of nonduality and the extinction of the world as well as the cognition having Brahman for content. Fourth, I shall consider the limits of capability of the cognition *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* and the argument put forward to safeguard the putative self-revealing feature of Brahman. Finally, I will explore Śukla's exegesis on the threshold of nonduality.

I will conclude this chapter by summarising the main features of Badrīnāth Śukla's engagement with the notion of *brahmajñāna* and claim that those same peculiarities define the voice of a Sanskrit-learned and creative Hindi commentator that is beyond any attempt at synthesis and negotiation with the Western Other. This, in turn, will grant me a certain vantage point from which to examine – in the proceeding chapters – not the exegetic but the hermeneutic voice of two prominent Anglophone Indian philosophers whose engagement with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge was explicitly meant by them to mediate the encounter between India and the West during the terminal phase of the colonial period.

3.2 Defining Badrīnāth Śukla's voice as a commentator of *Vedāntasāra*

3.2.1 Śukla's context of reference in his *Vyākhyā* on VS.28: The *Subodhinī* by Nṛsiṃhāśrama (1555) and *Vidvanmanorañjanī* by Rāmatīrtha Yati (1610)

Badrīnāth Śukla is, to be sure, a fascinating and complex figure in contemporary Indian philosophy. His life, work, and thought remain to this day hardly known even among scholars specialized in Indian philosophy. This may be in part due to the fact that Śukla philosophized in Sanskrit and in Hindi – but not in English – leaving behind him a substantial body of work that, due to its richness, complexity, and language, requires for its appreciation a considerable level of both philosophic as well as philological expertise that is not easily available. Beyond and notwithstanding this cloak of anonymity, Badrīnāth Śukla is the author of several Hindi commentaries (*vyākhyā*) dealing with Vedānta and Nyāyavaiśeṣika topics. Among them, we have his *Vyākhyā* (1979) on *Vedāntasāra* by Sadānanda (1500), his *Vyākhyā* (1968) on *Tarkabhāṣā* by Keśava Miśra (1275), and his *Vyākhyā* (1966) on *Jainanyāyakhāṇḍakhadya* by Yaśovijaya Sūri (1624–1688). In addition to these Hindi commentaries, Śukla also seems to have written at least two short independent treatises in Sanskrit, the *Ārambhavāda* and the *Śataślokī* (1987), the latter providing us with a new interpretation of emancipation according to the *nyāya* philosophy of Gotama Akṣapāda. While both these short treatises and the bulk of his yet untranslated Hindi commentaries on Vedānta and Nyāya have received, to my knowledge, hardly any scholarly attention – indeed, if any at all – Badrīnāth Śukla's name is associated in scholarly circles with (a) an original and somewhat provocative talk he delivered in Sanskrit in Sarnath (1985) on the dispensability of the notion of *ātman* within the Nyāyavaiśeṣika scheme of things and (b) a paper he wrote in Sanskrit summarising the counterarguments put forward from the Nyāya point of view against the theory of proposition held by Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and G. E. Moore (1875-1958) that were discussed during the *saṃvāda* seminar held in Pune (1983). These were later translated into English and published, respectively, as *Dehātmavāda or the Body as Soul: Exploration of a Possibility Within Nyāya Thought* (Śukla 2001) and *On Propositions: A Naiyāyika Response to Russellian Theory* (Śukla 1994).⁵⁹

⁵⁹ *Dehātmavāda or the Body as Soul: Exploration of a Possibility Within Nyāya Thought* was translated from Sanskrit by Makund Lath and published for the first time in the *Journal of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, 1988, 5. 3, pp. 1-17. *On propositions: A Naiyāyika Response to Russellian Theory* was translated from Sanskrit by Arindam Chakrabarti and published for the first time in *Samvāda: A Dialogue between Two Philosophical Traditions* (Krishna et al, 1991: 203-2013).

The technical explorations undertaken in both *Dehātmavāda* and *On Propositions* reveal that Badrīnāth Śūkla felt philosophically at home while engaging critically with the Nyāyavaiśeṣika notion of *ātman* and the notion of proposition professed by two among the most eminent analytic Western philosophers of the twentieth century. This may, at first sight, be at odds with my very intentions in this chapter. First, because if Badrīnāth Śūkla endorsed such a theory of Self as the one argued for in *Dehātmavāda* – the body is the Self – then it seems rather implausible that he could have anything of value to say about the Advaitic notion of *brahmajñāna*. Second, because if he wrote a scholarly piece in Sanskrit presenting arguments against Russell’s view on proposition, then it seems rather obvious that he did actually engage with the Western Other (however indirectly). Indeed, as an active member of the *saṃvāda* project organized by M. P. Rege with the intention of bridging the gap and restoring the communication breakdown between Indian philosophers academically trained (in English) in Western philosophy and the community of paṇḍitas trained (in Sanskrit) in classical Indian philosophy,⁶⁰ Badrīnāth Śūkla was actually highly appreciated and admired for his independent thinking, his creativity, and his somewhat intermediate location between the modern and the traditional. He was, for Daya Krishna – one of the promoters of the *saṃvāda* project – “the modern amongst the traditional, and the traditional amongst the moderns – and hence the bridge-builder *par excellence* revered by everybody, acceptable to everybody” (Krishna 1991: xvi).⁶¹

While I do not wish to dismiss or underplay in any manner the importance of these facts, I will assume a certain degree of complexity of voices within the author himself and argue in the following that his engagement with VS – particularly as to his exposition of *brahmajñāna* – tells us that as a commentator and an exegete he had something substantial to say on the topic *within*

⁶⁰ Due to the success of the Pune *saṃvāda* project organised by M. P. Rege, several similar encounters were organised afterwords in Sarnath, Tirupati, and Srinagar.

⁶¹ Actually, Daya Krishna dedicated the entire volume containing the proceedings of the first *saṃvāda* event that took place in Pune in 1983 to Śūkla in these solemn words: “To the late Pt. Badarinath Shukla, the towering pandit of the older generation, this volume is dedicated. Without his inspiration, enthusiasm, affection and guidance little would have been achieved as he was the bridge between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern. He was, so to say, the modern amongst the traditional, and the traditional amongst the moderns – and hence the bridge-builder *par excellence* revered by everybody, acceptable to everybody” (Krishna 1991: xvi). Arindam Chakrabarti described Krishna’s admiration for Śūkla in these terms: “Daya Krishna admired Pandit Badrinath Shukla because of his deep rootedness in tradition which made him such an independent thinker. When once, in 1985, Badrinath Shukla simply stunned the Nyāya community of Varanasi by arguing that we can do without the entity called a self or soul even within the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika framework, Daya Krishna was simply bowled over by the ‘creativity’ of the argument and analysis that went to support such a radical idea. But he would always trace that creative moment back to the interactions with Western styles of irreverent reasonings and with training in genuine open dialogues with teachers and students and debating partners that Badrinath-ji enjoyed all his life. No single individual can realize his or her creative potentials without engaging in real ‘saṃvāda’ with unlike minds.” (Chakrabarti 2011: 24)

the framework of classical Advaita and *without* pretending to mediate or confront the Western Other. It is this voice in Badrīnāth Śukla that concerns me here.⁶²

There are three defining features of his exegetic voice that I wish to highlight from the outset. In first place, its context of reference. As close comparative analysis reveals,⁶³ Badrīnāth Śukla's exegesis on VS.28 dealing with the account of the Vedāntic sentence *aham brahmāsmi* (BrhUp.1.4.10) is closely informed by two previous Early Modern Sanskrit commentaries on VS, the *Subodhinī* by Nṛsiṃhāśrama (1555) and *Vidvanmanorañjanī* by Rāmatīrtha Yati (1610). Śukla carefully articulates his own text and exegesis with close attention to these two commentaries.⁶⁴ He either quotes them directly – as for instance in VSV.28.8 where he quotes verbatim, in Sanskrit, the words of Nṛsiṃhāśrama, or in VSV.28.9 where he quotes Rāmatīrtha Yati – or he follows them (to some extent and without saying it) on numerous turning points in his own exposition – as for example in VSV.28.1 where he quotes BS.4.1.3 to be found in *Vidvanmanorañjanī*, or when he attempts to respond to the possible objections against Advaita that were already registered and refuted either in VMR or in VSS. Indeed, his exegesis on VS.28 is heavily indebted to these two commentaries which constitute for him – so to say – the indispensable horizon of intelligibility of the root-text (*Vedāntasāra*) he has disposed himself to comment on. In other words, as it emerges from comparing his *Vyākhyā* on VS.28 with VSS.28 and VMR.28, Śukla's elucidation of the process of knowing Brahman is inscribed in a larger network of relations and concerns constituted by a root-text and its commentaries in which his exegetic voice partakes.

In second place, it is worth noticing that in his lucid and exhaustive *Vyākhyā* Badrīnāth Śukla never attempts to challenge the elucidation of the process of knowing Brahman offered by Sadānanda. Hence, he does not engage, for instance, in discussing whether *ajñāna* is or isn't the stuff out of which the world is made or whether the cognition *aham brahmāsmi* can arise otherwise than after hearing the exegesis of the Vedāntic sentence containing the instruction *tat tvam asi* – although such questions would be perfectly intelligible and legitimate within the Advaitic framework. Instead, he seems to commit himself in VSV.28 to a further elucidation of the process or procedure

⁶² I will not assume here any tacit hierarchy among these voices and will leave the question concerning Śukla's philosophic identity open. That is, in this chapter I will not aim to provide a comprehensive view of Śukla's philosophical inclinations and affiliations. On the contrary, I will focus exclusively on his exegetic engagement with VS and make no attempt to answer how the views articulated in his VSV are related to the views articulated in his other commentaries, scholarly articles, as well as independent treatises.

⁶³ For the Sanskrit texts with my translations of VS.28, VMR.28, VSS.28 and the Hindi *Vyākhyā* by Śukla on the same, see Appendix 2. My analysis is based on the comparison of these sources.

⁶⁴ Although Śukla is aware of the existence of another Sanskrit commentary on VS, the *Bālābodhinī* of Āpadeva, he does not seem to pay any attention to it while articulating his own thoughts on VS.28. I will, therefore, not include it in my discussions below.

of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) accepting and remaining within the discursive framework – involving certain concerns, terminology, and even analogies – opened by Sadānanda’s text. In the last analysis, Badrīnāth Śukla seems concerned with *vyākhyāna*, that is, glossing, commenting, and elucidating the root-text without exceeding its doxastic confines or challenging its authority.

Finally, in third place, comparing Śukla’s VSV.28 with VMR.28 and VSS.28 leads me to surmise that it is precisely in the course of such elucidation (*vyākhyāna*) of the root-text that Badrīnāth Śukla saw the need to critically examine, and challenge if necessary, the interpretations of VS.28 offered by Nṛsiṃhāśrama and Rāmatīrtha Yati. In this regard, it is noteworthy that he strongly disagrees on one capital point with the exegesis offered by Nṛsiṃhāśrama in his *Subodhinī* (as I will shortly address) and, while providing fresh arguments to prove that Nṛsiṃhāśrama’s reading is unsound, he shows his own preference for (and agreement with) the interpretation endorsed by Rāmatīrtha Yati.⁶⁵ In this and on other less dramatic occasions, Śukla was undeniably exerting exegetic authority: he was choosing readings, refining interpretations of the root-text, as well as challenging and rejecting others. In this sense, his voice seems to subordinate itself to Sadānanda’s authority and horizon of intelligibility but perceives itself to be on a par with other previous commentators – Nṛsiṃhāśrama and Rāmatīrtha – who took upon themselves the task of elucidating *Vedāntasāra*.

To the extent Śukla’s account of the process of knowing Brahman is in these ways mindful of and constitutively intertwined with Sadānanda’s, Nṛsiṃhāśrama’s, and Rāmatīrtha’s texts and is not in any significant way concerned with either meeting or contesting the Western Other, I suggest that his exposition of *brahmajñāna* must be taken as an integral part of that scholastic world of Sanskrit discourse, striving to carry it forward in the vernacular medium of Hindi language.

3.2.2 Towards a typology of Śukla’s exegetic interventions in VSV.28

I shall attempt to refine a little further now the profile of Śukla’s exegetic voice by outlining a rudimentary typology of his commentarial interventions on VS.28.⁶⁶ In this respect, I contend that a comparative analysis of his Hindi

⁶⁵ Śukla’s preference for Rāmatīrtha’s points of view is perhaps also declared by the fact that Śukla’s Hindi commentary was published along Sadānanda’s *Vedāntasāra* and Rāmatīrtha’s *Vidvanmanorajñanī*.

⁶⁶ In the analysis to follow, I do not claim to be exhaustive in any way. I will argue, rather, that Śukla’s exegesis of the process of knowing Brahman in his VSV.28 entails a certain typology of interventions which gives us an idea – however fragmentarily that may be – concerning the argumentative strategies involved in the articulation of his exegetic voice. It will also help me

commentary with VMR.28 and VSS.28⁶⁷ makes it possible to classify his exegetic interventions within the following categories, (a) involving major and minor elucidations, (b) choosing antagonistic exegetic itineraries, (c) selecting what is substantial in previous commentaries, and (d) summarising discussions. I will define them in the following adducing several examples from VSV.28 to underpin my point and exemplifying to what extent Śukla's voice and exegesis on the process of knowing Brahman is embedded in, and indebted to, the Sanskrit commentarial tradition.

(a) Major and minor elucidations. This category involves all those exegetic interventions in which Badrīnāth Śukla attempts to explain the root-text – *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda – with insights to be found either in VSS.28 or VMR.28 providing, in addition, further clarifications which, although not to be found in either, shed greater understanding upon certain technical points raised therein. These may, in turn, comprise (i) increasing intertextuality by bringing in new and previously unnoticed discussions into the loci of the discussion at hand, (ii) adducing fresh arguments to endorse and reinforce some turning point made by Nṛsiṃhāśrama or Rāmatīrtha in their respective commentaries, (iii) glossing a certain key term or locution with a close synonym, or (iv) rearticulating and translating the issue at stake with the help of a fresh terminology.

There are several examples for each of those.⁶⁸ Thus, for instance, the first type of intervention is well represented in VSV.28.6 where with surprising perspicacity Śukla questions whether it makes any sense at all within the Advaita scheme of things to say that Brahman becomes the object of some action or means of knowing – something Sadānanda himself endorsed when in VS.28 he explained that, given certain conditions, there arises a mental episode that is shaped after the form of the unfragmented (*akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛttir udeti*) which turns supreme Brahman into the object of cognition (*param brahma viṣayīkrtya*). Then, in order to make his point and illustrate in what ways such a stance is deeply conflictive, Śukla puts it into a new textual perspective and adduces two fresh passages from the *Upaniṣads* (BrhUp.2.4.14 and KUp.1.6) and one from Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahmasūtra* (BSBh.1.1.4). Only then, having put the issue into the perspective of these authoritative passages suggesting the impossibility of knowing Brahman, does he ask whether it makes any sense to think and say – as Sadānanda, Nṛsiṃhāśrama, and Rāmatīrtha do – that Brahman becomes the object of any

to stress further the extent to which the articulation of Śukla's voice is embedded within the horizon of intelligibility opened by a root-text and its commentaries.

⁶⁷ For the texts with translations, see Appendix 2.

⁶⁸ I will content myself with highlighting here only those examples which I take to be most representative of each category of intervention under discussion. While illustrating these exegetic interventions, I will describe briefly here – without pretending to be exhaustive – the topic under discussion only with the purpose of making intelligible Śukla's intervention. For a more robust discussion of most of these topics, I refer the reader to the second part of this chapter.

means of knowing. Isn't that contradictory?, he seems to be asking. This allows him then to provide an explanation (already hinted at in part in VMR.28) and specify in what sense that assertion is sound. But before turning to do so, he is able to shed new light upon the entire issue by framing it with relevant passages that neither Nṛsiṃhāśrama nor Rāmatīrtha took into consideration in their respective commentaries.

The type of interventions that gloss important terms or locutions is well represented in VSV.28.3 and 28.4. In the first instance, Śukla – following in this entirely Rāmatīrtha's VMR – engages in discussing whether verbal means of knowing (such as is required for understanding the sentence *tat tvam asi*) can yield immediate cognitions. To settle the issue seems to require taking a stance on whether it is a certain feature of the instrument yielding that cognition or its object that determine the feature of immediacy (*aparokṣatva*) displayed by certain cognitions. Rāmatīrtha formulates these doxastic options in terms of *karaṇanibandhana* and *arthanibandhana* which Badrīnāth Śukla glosses, in turn, as *karaṇ-pramāṇ ke adhīn* 'depending on the instrument or the means of knowing' and *arth ke adhīn* 'depending on the object of cognition,' glossing in this way the key term *nibandhana* with a close synonym. In the second instance, what is at stake is to explain how is it that the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented is capable of dispelling the ignorance concerning Brahman. In the context of this discussion, Śukla glosses Sadānanda's *sā tu citpratibimbasaḥitā satī* 'Furthermore, this [mental episode] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness,' which Nṛsiṃhāśrama as well as Rāmatīrtha glossed respectively as *saṃvalitā satī* and *pratyakcivitvyāptā*, with the locution *cidābhās yukt honā* 'to be yoked to the reflecting light of awareness.' As I will go on to address below, the point is here to assert that it is only because that mental event is 'yoked to the reflecting light of awareness' (not otherwise) that it can dispel the ignorance concerning Brahman (*brahmaviṣayak ajñān*).

The last kind of elucidatory intervention involving some sort of reconceptualization is best represented in VSV.28.6 where Śukla resolves the entire quandary entailed in saying that a certain mental episode (*cittavṛtti*) assumes, under certain conditions, the shape of the unfragmented. According to VMR.28, VSS.28 and VSV.28, this process amounts to making Brahman into the object of cognition. As I have already pointed out above in my first example, Śukla is able to shed understanding on this point of contention by framing it with relevant and authoritative passages indicating that Brahman cannot be known and hence become the object of any cognition whatsoever. In order to avoid what would otherwise be a glaring inconsistency, Śukla safeguards the coherence of Sadānanda's account of the process of knowing Brahman (and the commentators' coherence at this point) by reconceptualising the entire issue with the help of a fresh insight and terminology. That is, he approaches the point of contention with a brand new distinction between the *vāstavik* 'fac-

tual' and the *aupacārik* 'analogic' sense in which Brahman can be said to become the object of cognition. This allows him to resolve in a very elegant manner the controversy by holding that the entire discussion concerning Brahman becoming the object of cognition is in the analogic or metaphoric sense only and should not be understood as involving a *de facto* act of knowing. I will come back to this key issue in the second part of this chapter.

(b) By the second typology, 'choosing antagonistic exegetic itineraries', I mean those exegetic manoeuvres in the course of which Badrīnāth Śūkla is actually pondering over two diverging exegetic itineraries opened by Nṛsiṃhāśrama and Rāmatīrtha on a certain pivotal point to be found in VS.28 discussing the arising of the cognition *aham brahmāsmi*. In the course of such considerations, Śūkla culminates by choosing one among the exegetic options over another, providing fresh arguments to underpin that preference. These arguments may, again, involve (i) an independent argument of his own or (ii) an exegetic form of reasoning in which a certain point of contention is resolved by referring to a fresh excerpt from any given Vedāntic treatise in the light and authority of which the point of contention under examination is allegedly resolved.

This sort of intervention is best illustrated in VSV.28.7-8 where Śūkla engages in discussing whether the object of the cognition entailed in the sentence *aham brahmāsmi* is the supreme or inferior Brahman, the one that is or is not qualified/conditioned by the qualifying adjuncts (*upādhi*). For Śūkla, this is a major point of exegetic disagreement between Nṛsiṃhāśrama and Rāmatīrtha, a doxastic split he takes very seriously given the amount of space he devoted to addressing and healing it. While Nṛsiṃhāśrama argued in VSS.28 that the Brahman that Sadānada meant is the supreme Brahman that is qualified by ignorance (and non-different from the inner Self) which, according to Nṛsiṃhāśrama, is not the pure Brahman (*śuddhabrahman*)⁶⁹, Rāmatīrtha argued in VMR.28 that in VS.28 Sadānana meant to reject the idea that the object of the cognition *aham brahmāsmi* is the Brahman that is produced or effectuated (*kāryabrahman*).⁷⁰ In order to resolve this controversy – and reinforce the interpretation offered by Rāmatīrtha Yati – Śūkla provides two sort of reasoning that illustrate the typology I have in mind here. First, he is able to suggest that Nṛsiṃhāśrama's exegesis is unsound through intertextuality. That is, he adduces a passage by Śaṅkara (BSBh.4.3.14) in order to exemplify that the scholastic literature (*śāstroṃ meṃ*) regards the Brahman that is qualified by the qualifying adjuncts to be the inferior Brahman (*aparabrahman*). This, in his view, turns Nṛsiṃhāśrama's interpretation into an unlikely or unreasonable exegesis (*yuktiyukt nahīm*), for it deeply challenges his assumption that the Brahman conditioned by ignorance is the supreme Brahman

⁶⁹ *sā cittavṛttir na śuddhabrahmaviśayiṇī kintv ajñānaviśiṣṭapratyagabhinnaparabrahmaviśayiṇī*; VSS.28

⁷⁰ *brahmaśabdasya kāryabrahmaviśayatvaṃ vyāvartayati – param iti*; VMR.28

(*ajñānaviśiṣṭa...parabrahmaviśayiṇī*). In addition to this first argument, Śukla is able to provide in VSV.28.8 a second insight which entails an argument of his own as well as appealing to a yet another relevant passage by Śaṅkara (BSBh.1.1.11). The entire argument – more complex and creative than the first – boils down to asserting that Nṛsiṃhāśrama's interpretation is unsound for the following chain of arguments: since (a) Sadānanda's *Vedāntasāra* is a treatise concerned with the knowledge of Brahman (not its worship), and since (b) the Brahman that is to be known is the Brahman that is not conditioned by the qualifying adjuncts (while the Brahman that is to be worshiped is the Brahman qualified by the qualifying adjuncts) – as Śaṅkara endorsed in BSBh.1.1.11 with regard to *upāsya* and *jñeya* Brahman – it follows (c) that Sadānanda could not mean that the object of the cognition entailed in the Vedāntic sentence *aham brahmāsmi* is the Brahman conditioned by the qualifying adjuncts; and hence, (d) the Brahman that Sadānanda had in mind must be the supreme Brahman, the one that is not conditioned by the qualifying adjuncts.

After presenting these two arguments against Nṛsiṃhāśrama's exegesis on this crucial issue, Badrīnāth Śukla shows his agreement with the exegesis offered by Rāmānirṭha Yati who, to his mind, endorsed just the same reading of Sadānanda's words as his own – although Rāmānirṭha underpinned it in a far less sophisticated manner.

(c) Choosing what is substantial in previous discussions. Into this category fall all those silent choices through which Śukla turns his exegetic attention to specific issues raised either in VMR.28 or VSS.28 (while ignoring others) in order to articulate his own *Vyākhyā*. Just as one who extracts the nectar or essence (*sāra*) from the commentarial tradition, Badrīnāth Śukla behaves like a skilful *sāragrāhin* and is capable of selecting carefully the turning points that he regards as substantial and which, in his eyes, need to be taken into consideration.

While this practice of selective attention is well spread over the entire VSV.28, I believe that it is best represented in VSV.28.9, 28.10, and 28.12. In those paragraphs, Śukla articulates his exposition by presenting a choice of arguments for, and counterarguments against, the attainment or achievement of Advaita (*advaitasiddhi*). None among those choices is entirely new. What exemplifies the exegetic typology I am concerned with here is the fact that the arguments and counterarguments that Śukla took into consideration and re-worked in VSV.28 are pros and cons that are almost entirely indebted to VSS.28. This, I venture to surmise, is because Śukla considers here that, in certain instances⁷¹ (and he quietly selects examples to support his thesis),

⁷¹ Another example of such instances is VSV.28.2 where Śukla's exegesis of Sadānanda's *nityaśuddhabuddhamuktasatyasvabhāvaparamānandānantādvayam* describing *aham* identified with Brahman is entirely indebted to Nṛsiṃhāśrama's VSS.28. In fact, Rāmānirṭha had nothing to say about those descriptions in his VMR.28. Yet another example, this time showing a pref-

Nṛsiṃhāśrama's VSS – with which he disagreed on a major doxastic issue in favour of Rāmatīrtha's exegesis – is more relevant and illuminating than Rāmatīrtha's in accounting for the process of knowing Brahman. Needless to say, such a practice entails maintaining a certain distance from both commentaries which makes it possible to establish selective alliances with either of the two at any given turning point in the exegesis of *Vedāntasāra* without committing entirely to the exegetic horizon offered by either. In other words, it entails choosing and picking up what one believes is of worth in each commentary in order to elucidate the root-text.

(d) Finally, by 'summarising' I mean to say Badrīnāth Śukla's capability to drive the points home at the end of any given sequence of arguments or examination. In this respect, VSV.28 is of great help, because Śukla successfully manages to elucidate several technical points raised both in VMR.28 and VSS.28 by extracting their full consequences and summarizing their purport in order to illuminate the root-text of Sadānanda.

There are two great examples illustrating this sort of intervention. The first one occurs in VSV.28.12 when answering an objection against the attainment of nonduality. On that occasion Śukla is capable of elucidating and bringing home much of what has been implicit in his reflections up to this point: namely, that the process of knowing any given object and the process of knowing Brahman are two different processes altogether. Certainly, this has been hinted at already in VSV.28.9 where Śukla warned that knowing Brahman is analogic or metaphorical only (*aupacārik*) – since Brahman never becomes *de facto* (*vāstavic*) the object of any cognition. In VSV.28.12 this distinction is worked out to its ultimate consequences. The explanation boils down, in sum, to the idea that while knowing any common object of cognition requires as much the employment of the episode of internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*) as the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*), the process of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) does not entail (nor requires) employing the reflecting light of awareness. The reason behind this difference presupposes a certain notion of the cognitive act: while any given episode of the internal organ is responsible for removing the ignorance about the object that is cognised, the reflecting light of awareness is responsible for actually revealing (*prakāśa*) the object being cognised. Given this account, Śukla's intervention is at this point extremely clarifying and summarizing: while the ignorance concerning Brahman can be dispelled by the mental event shaped after the form of the unfragmented – the cognition *aham brahmāsmi* – the reflecting light of awareness accompanying this cognition cannot reveal Brahman, as is the case with the common objects, because unlike the common objects of cognition, Brahman is self-revealing (*svayaṃ prakāśa*).

erence for a discussion taking place in VMR.28, is VSV.28.3 where Śukla defends the consistency in thinking that verbal means of knowing can, on certain occasions, yield immediate cognitions. This discussion is entirely indebted to Rāmatīrtha Yati.

The second example is even more representative and occurs immediately after the one I have just discussed. Śukla sheds understanding now, in VSV.28.14, on the entire cognitive event involved in the cognition *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* as Sadānanda and his commentators approached it. He summarises the entire event by analysing it into five constitutive phases which, in his view, any account of the process of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) ought to address. This, I contend, proves to be an extremely lucid and comprehensive summary of the discussions found in VS.28 and its commentaries.

On the whole, the rich display of the exegetic resources deployed in VSV.28 – major and minor elucidations, pondering over and choosing among antagonistic interpretations, choosing the ‘right’ spot where to focus his exegetic attention, and summarizing doxastic outputs resulting from any given discussion – suggests that Badrīnāth Śukla was a skilled commentator. He was well capable of accessing the theoretic space defined by the web of relations between the root-text and its commentaries. In addition, he was proficient in practicing several exegetic strategies as means to articulating his own voice as a commentator *within* that theoretic framework. The typology of his interventions together with the concrete doxastic choices he performed along the way define his profile as a commentator of *Vedāntasāra*.

3.2.3 Articulation of exegetic creativity and authority in VSV.28

Before turning my attention to Śukla’s exegesis on the process of knowing Brahman, I will conclude my circumscription of his exegetic voice with a few remarks on the display of authority and creativity in VSV.28. As suggested above, in performing the duty of a commentator, Badrīnāth Śukla accepts working under the authority of Sadānanda’s *Vedāntasāra*. This means that in his exposition of the process of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) he will not challenge or dispute any doxastic issue professed by Sadānanda.⁷² Neither will he depart from any of the analogies – of knowing, of woven cloth, of self-extinguishing fire, of lamplight, and of the face in the mirror – through which Sadānanda attempted to explain the implications of the cognition involved in the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*. He will, on the contrary, engage in an exhaustive explanatory and elucidatory task involving examining, selecting, refining, and even refuting some of the views endorsed in the

⁷² I do not mean here in any way that Sanskrit commentary writing entails, always and necessarily, such submission. As is well known, the intellectual disposition with which any given commentator approaches the doxastic features of the immediate text he chose to comment on is reflected in the type of commentary he disposed himself to write. As a commentator Śukla was not, therefore, forced to work in the way he did on *Vedāntasāra*, but rather chose to do it in this way from among several other options. For reflections on the types of Sanskrit commentaries, see Preisendanz (2008) and Ganeri (2010).

two commentaries which he took to constitute the immediate horizon of intelligibility of *Vedāntasāra*. It is only in the course of those commentarial manoeuvres that Śukla wields control over the conceptualization of *brahmajñāna*. It is particularly noteworthy in this regard how he proceeds to discredit Nṛsiṃhāśrama's point of view on the exact content of the cognition *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*. This procedure entails exhorting against a certain exegetic stance⁷³ by evoking the authority of the scholastic tradition (*śāstr*) – exemplified several times in VSV.28 in the figure of Śaṅkara⁷⁴ – which would then, on the authority of this and that statement, render the interpretation at hand untenable. There are several skills at work here, namely, choosing an appropriate voice from within the scholastic literature that carries enough authority for a certain audience, finding relevant passages for the occasion, using them appropriately, and so on. My point is that while Śukla deploys all these strategies in order to challenge the doxastic stances formulated on the level of the commentaries, he never turns those same strategies against Sadānanda and his *Vedāntasāra*. Quite the contrary. When on one occasion he evokes two *upaniṣadic* passages and one by Śaṅkara that could, eventually, challenge the views of Sadānanda (VSV.28.6), he safeguards them by an additional exegetic manoeuvre that 'proves' them tenable *because consistent* with those two Vedāntic passages. In other words, Badrīnāth Śukla's *Vyākhyā* is embedded in certain codes of authority which he mindfully observes and deploys while articulating his own exegetic voice.

Those same codes of authority are heavily responsible for the sort of creativity displayed in VSV.28. Thus, submitting his thoughts on *brahmajñāna* to the authority of Sadānanda's account implies reducing significantly the range of what can *reasonably* be questioned, thought, and said about the entire process of knowing Brahman. Śukla does not seem to be bothered by such (self-imposed?) confinement. Rather than being creative in the sense of departing from the doxastic framework opened by Sadānanda, Śukla thinks creatively from within the theoretic space circumscribed by the root-text and its commentaries: VS, VSS, and VMR. Hence, he displays creativity not by attempting to think outside the box (conceptual, discursive etc.), but by staying precisely within the confines of that box and accepting its restrictions. Such sort of creativity requires, therefore, a thorough insight into the many technical nuances involved in the discussions at hand and lives chiefly on a fine appreciation of details as well as by negotiating and reworking the already existent

⁷³ It is worth stressing the fact that when Śukla confronts Nṛsiṃhāśrama's reading of VS.28 he carefully avoids disclosing his identity. Instead, he contents himself with quoting the relevant passage from VSS.28 and then proceeds to refute it (VSV.28.7). Śukla knew that Nṛsiṃhāśrama was the author of the *Subodhinī* (Śukla 2009: xlii) and was, therefore, deliberately choosing not to raise it here.

⁷⁴ Śaṅkara is not, however, the only source of authority to which Śukla resorts in his VSV. In other instances, Śukla appeals to the authority of Dharmarāja's *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* and Vidyāranya's *Pañcadaśī*.

material. Śukla's *Vyākhyā* exemplifies this sort of creativity in several ways. In fact, the examples I used above to illustrate the typology of his exegetic interventions, should be considered (among others) as illustrating also the sort of creativity and skill with which Badrīnāth Śukla penned his Hindi commentary on *Vedāntasāra*.

I will turn now to examining Śukla's exegesis of the process of knowing Brahman.

3.3 The process of knowing Brahman according to Śukla's *Vyākhyā* on VS.28

3.3.1 From *tat tvam asi* to *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*: Stressing the continuity between the Vedāntic culture of exegesis and the first-person cognition of Brahman

As already pointed out, Badrīnāth Śukla's account of the process of knowing Brahman is entirely confined within the doxastic framework outlined by Sadānanda Sarasvatī. It is no surprise, then, that Śukla begins his take on VS.28 containing Sadānanda's exegesis of the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* (BrhUp.1.4.10) with a thoroughly exegetic task consisting in explaining the meaning of the word *atha* which opens the *khaṇḍa* 28 of *Vedāntasāra*.⁷⁵ In seeking to interpret the term in the light of *Amarakośa* (AK.3.3.247[871]) in the sense of *ānantary*, 'absence of interval, without interruption, or immediately after,' Śukla is strictly concerned with stressing that which must necessarily precede the arising of the cognition 'I am Brahman.' This entails recalling and summarising a number of issues that have been discussed in previous sections of VS. I propose organizing them under two main concerns: (a) stressing the continuity between the Vedāntic exegetic culture of the saying *tat tvam asi* and the first-person cognition implied in the sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* and (b) stressing the required prerequisites on the part of the one who is qualified for such cognition (*adhikārin*). On the whole, Śukla intends to highlight that the first-person cognition 'I am Brahman,' far from being a decontextualized, spontaneous, or even unannounced occurrence is instead a culminating mental event that is safeguarded, propitiated, and sought within a well-defined sequence of (epistemic and non-epistemic) prerequisites and a well-defined culture and method of scriptural exegesis.

(a) In stressing the continuity with the Vedāntic exegetic culture, Śukla summarizes the intricacies of the technical exegetic method applied to *upadeśavākya* 'sentence consisting in an instruction' – the Vedāntic sentence

⁷⁵ *athādhunāhaṃ brahmāsmīty anubhavavākyaṛtho varṇyate* / "Hence, I will explain now the meaning of the sentence consisting in the cognition 'I am Brahman.'" This is also the procedure in VSS.28 and VMR.28.

tat tvam asi (ChUp.6.8-16) – that Sadānanda exposed in VS.23-27. In Śukla’s schematic presentation, the *adhyāropāpavād nyāy* or ‘method of adscription and retraction’ is a complex and multilayered exegetic procedure involving a well-defined cognitive process. As he recapitulates in VSV.28.1, it begins by removing the cognition of false entities (*mithyāpadārthajñān*) and continues with purifying, refining or clarifying (*saṁśodhan*) the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam*. It proceeds, then, by abandoning their mutually opposed aspect (*viruddhāś kā parityāg karnā*) by means of the connotation in which the primary meaning of each word is [partially] abandoned and [partially] retained (*jahadaajahallakṣaṇā ke dvārā*) and ends with the awakening to the awareness of the unfragmented meaning (*akhaṇḍārth caitany kā bodh honā*). The last stage of this exegetic method is then putatively followed, without interval or interruption (*ānantary*), by the arising of the cognition ‘I am Brahman.’

It is worth noticing that this approach to *brahmajñāna* relies heavily upon the idea that the Vedāntas are the ultimate source of knowledge and authority in knowing Brahman (BS.1.1.4). It is only because Vedāntic words (*pada*) and sayings (*vākya*) are believed to have the required efficiency to yield *brahmajñāna* that they receive an in-depth exegetic attention. This is particularly true – as Sadānanda’s and Śukla’s account implies – for the sentence *tat tvam asi*. Providing that it is correctly understood, this sentence is supposed to trigger the first-person cognition of Brahman. In order to highlight this essential role that Vedāntic sentences play in the itinerary culminating in *brahmajñāna*, Śukla pays attention to BS.4.1.3⁷⁶ *ātmeti tūpagacchanti grāhayanti ca* / “[The *Upaniṣads*], however, acknowledge and make apprehend [Brahman] as the Self” and glosses the Sanskrit verbs *upagacchanti* and *grāhayanti* with the Hindi *svīkar karnā* ‘to makes one’s own, to accept’ and *grahaṇ karānā* ‘to make apprehend or grasp.’ While the first pair of verbs highlights the specific content of *brahmajñāna* – the identity between Brahman and the Self – the causatives *grahāyanti* and *grahaṇ karānā* stress the alluded efficiency of the Vedāntas to impart that knowledge of identity.⁷⁷

Hence, the first sense of the word *atha* interpreted by Śukla as *ānantary* draws attention to (1) the idea of efficiency of the Vedāntas to making the knowledge concerning Brahman available at all and (2) to the required culture of Vedāntic exegesis which, through a technical and multilayered exegetic device called *adhyāropāpavād nyāy*, is supposed to lead gradually to the first-person cognition ‘I am Brahman.’ Both features underscore the deep relation between the Vedāntas, their exegetic culture, and the first-person cognition of Brahman.

⁷⁶ In doing so, he is indebted to VMR.28.

⁷⁷ The Sanskrit verb *grāhayanti* and the Hindi *grahaṇ karānā* are both build on the Sanskrit root √*grah* ‘to seize, to grasp, to apprehend.’ Here is how Sadānanda defined the purport of the Vedāntas: *viśayo jīvaibrahmaikyaṁ śuddhacaitanyaṁ prameyaṁ tatraiva vedāntānāṁ tāt-paryāt* [...] / ‘The subject-matter [of Vedānta] is what has to be known, pure consciousness, the oneness of living being with Brahman; for that alone is the purport of the Vedāntas;’ VS.4.

(b) This is not, however, the only sense carried by the term *atha*. In pointing it out, Śukla is most probably reminiscent of BSBh.1.1.1 where Śaṅkara interpreted the word *atha* occurring in the aphorism *athāto brahmajijñāsā* / ‘Hence, then, the desire to know Brahman’ precisely in the sense of *ānantarya*⁷⁸ that Bādṛīnāth Śukla vindicates in addition to the one discussed above. Just as for Śaṅkara it meant, in the context of BS.1.1.1, appealing to a certain set of requirements that precede and are conducive to the desire to know as well as knowledge of Brahman⁷⁹ – and which later Advaitins conceptualized as the ‘fourfold (preparatory) means’ (*sādhana-catustaya*) – Śukla suggests that in the context of VS.28 the term *atha* alludes to the absence of interruption (*ānantarya*) between the arising of cognition *aham brahmāsmi* and the entire culture of epistemic as well as non-epistemic requirements that renders an adept qualified for *brahmajijñāna*. Hence, in this second sense of the term *atha* interpreted as *ānantarya*, Śukla circumscribes the arising of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ within yet another context: this time a well-defined culture of preparatory means. Though he addresses them by the technical term *sādhana-catustaya*, he does not provide us in VSV.28 with the entire list thereof nor does he explain each of those requirements. The list is, however, well known. These preparatory means are: (1) *nityānityavastuviveka* ‘discernment between the permanent and the impermanent, (2) *ihāmutrārthabhogavirāga* ‘detachment from or dispassion for enjoying the goods here and hereafter, (3) the *ṣaṭkasam-patti* or ‘six attainments or perfections’ including *śama* ‘calmness,’ *dama* ‘self-control,’ *uparati* ‘cessation,’ *titikṣā* ‘endurance,’ *samādhāna* ‘concentration,’ and *śraddhā* ‘faith;’ and finally (4) *mumukṣutva* ‘seeking liberation.’⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *tatrāthaśabda ānantaryārthaḥ parigrhyate* / ‘There [i.e., in the aphorism ‘Hence, then, the desire to know Brahman’] the word *atha* is conceived in the sense of absence of interval.’ BSBh.1.1.1.

⁷⁹ *tasmāt kim api vaktavyam yad anantaram brahmajijñāsopadiśyate iti / ucyate nityānityavastuvivekaḥ, ihāmutrārthabhogavirāgaḥ, śamadamādisādhanaśampat, mumukṣutvam ca / teṣu hi satsu prāg api dharmajijñāsāyā ūrdhvam ca śakyate brahmajijñāsitum jñātum ca na viparyaye / tasmād athaśabdena yathoktasādhanaśampattyanantaryam upadiśyate* / ‘Therefore, what should be said about that without interruption to which the desire to know Brahman is indicated? [In reply] it is said: discernment between the permanent and the impermanent, detachment from the enjoyment of goods here and hereafter, attainment of such means as calmness and self-control, and the condition of seeking release. When these are present, after or even before the desire to know about *dharma*, then it is possible to desire to know and to know Brahman; not otherwise. Therefore, the word *atha* indicates the absence of interval with the completion of the means as mentioned;’ BSBh.1.1.1. In his *Bhāmātī* on BSBh.1.1.1, Vācaspati Miśra (940 CE) completes Śaṅkara’s list by adding to *śama* and *dama* the set of *titikṣā*, *uparāma*, and *śraddhā*. He states: *ādigrahaṇena ca viśayatitikṣādutparamatattvaśraddhāḥ saṃgrhyante* / ‘And the term *ādi* includes the desire to endure objects, abstinence from them, and faith in truth;’ Bh.1.1.1 (Sastri 1933: 97).

⁸⁰ In the *khaṇḍa* 4 of *Vedāntasāra*, Sadānanda explained them in the following manner: *sādhanaṇi nityānityavastuvivekehāmutrārthaphalabhogavirāgaśamādisaṭkasam-pattimumukṣutvāni / nityānityavastuvivekas tāvad brahmaiva nityam vastu tato ‘nyad akhilam anityam iti vivecanam / aihikānām śraccandanavanitādiviśayabhogānām karmajanyatayā ‘nityatvavad āmuṣmikāṇām apy amṛtādiviśayabhogānām anityatayā tebhyo nitarām viratir ih-*

These four preparatory means (*sādhana*catuṣṭaya) are responsible, in turn, for purifying the mind of the adept in whom, on the condition that all these requirements are available, arises the cognition ‘I am Brahman.’ Śukla underscores the importance of this culture of preparatory means by stressing that in case these were unavailable to the student (*śiṣya*), then the instruction concerning the sentence *tat tvam asi* imparted by the teacher (*guru*) would be worthless or useless (*nirarthak*). In other words, Śukla stresses that the efficacy of the exegetic method for producing the culminating cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is safeguarded by the culture of the fourfold preparatory means.

Taking into account all these nuances, it is reasonable to think that Śukla’s exegesis on VS.28 intends to inscribe the arising of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ into a well-defined and sophisticated culture of textual exegesis and of the fourfold preparatory means. It also presupposes a certain articulation of power and authority among the human agents involved in this programme – the interplay between *guru* and *śiṣya*. In the context of all these prerequisites, the arising of the first-person cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is not presented as a spontaneous and unrelated event, but rather as a long-sought, safeguarded, and culminating occurrence happening, allegedly, within a well-defined cultural milieu defined by several epistemic, purifying, and sociological parameters.

*āmutrārthaphalabhogavirāgaḥ / śamādayas tu śamadamoparati-
titikṣāsamādhānaśraddhākhyāḥ / śamas tāvac chravaṇādivyatiriktaviśayebhyo manaso nīgrahaḥ / damo bāhyendriyāṇāṃ tadvyatiriktaviśayebhyo nīvartanam / nīvartitānāṃ eteṣāṃ tadvyatiriktaviśayebhya uparamaṇam uparatir atha vā vihitānāṃ karmaṇāṃ vidhinā parityāgaḥ / titikṣā śītoṣṇādidvandvasaḥiṣṇutā / nīgrhītasya manasaḥ śravaṇāḍau tadānugūṇaviśaye ca samādhīḥ samādhānam / gurūpadiṣṭavedāntavākyaṣu viśvāsaḥ śraddhā / mumukṣutvaṃ mokṣecchā /* ‘The discernment between the permanent and the impermanent, the detachment from the enjoyment of fruits-goods here and hereafter, the six perfections such as calmness and so on, and the condition of seeking release are the [fourfold] means. The discernment ‘To the extent that Brahman is the only permanent entity, the entire world which is different [from that] is, therefore, impermanent’ is the discernment between the permanent and the impermanent. The detachment from the enjoyment of fruits-goods here and hereafter is a strong indifference towards those; for other-worldly enjoyments of such objects as immortality and so on are as impermanent as the impermanency of this-worldly enjoyments of such desired objects as sandal, garland of flowers and so on – since they are produced by action (*karma*). Calmness etc. is calmness, self-control, cessation, endurance, concentration, and faith. Calmness is the restraint of the mind from those objects which are different from those of hearing and so on [i.e., exegetic thinking and contemplation]. Self-control is the turning back of the external sense organs from those objects which are different from that. Cessation is the abstinence from those objects which are different from that, those which has been desisted; or rather, it is the abandonment of injunctions regarding enjoined actions. Endurance is the forbearance of such pairs as hot and cold. Concentration is the absorption of the restrained mind in the content of hearing and so on [i.e., exegetic thinking and contemplation] and those which are similar to them. Faith is the confidence in the sentences of the Vedānta which have been instructed by the teacher. The condition of seeking release is the desire of liberation;’ VS.4.

3.3.2 Five consecutive events in the process of knowing

Brahman: *brahmajñān kī prakriyā*

Now, what Sadānanda describes in VS.28 is actually a *sequence of events* which either constitutes or is closely related to the origination (*udaya*) of the cognition *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*. In order to capture its complexity and stressing its dynamism, Badrīnāth Śukla refers to the entire sequence of these events with the Hindi locution *brahmajñān kī prakriyā*⁸¹ which I will render as ‘process or procedure of knowing or cognizing Brahman.’ Strictly speaking, it is this entire sequence of events that the exegetic as well as the purifying processes discussed above are supposed to trigger. In addressing this sequence of events as one integral unit (*sārī kramik prakriyā*) designated by the locution *brahmajñān kī prakriyā*, in VSV.28.14 Śukla seems to assume a rather normative stance and, presumably under the authority of Sadānanda, remarks that this very sequence of consecutive events ought to be addressed in any discussion concerning *brahmajñāna*. He is, certainly, stressing what he takes to be the most relevant aspects involved in the process of knowing Brahman. Moreover, by enumerating this sequence of events Śukla is also providing us with a quite detailed thematic summary of his own commentary; for he himself covers in his *Vyākhyā* on VS.28 all the topics listed below. Towards the end of VSV.28, he writes:

In relation to this [process of knowing Brahman], it is appropriate to pay special attention to these following issues: [a] an episode of internal organ makes Brahman the object of cognition; [b] the destruction of ignorance concerning Brahman; [c] the destruction of the episode of internal organ together with the manifold world by the destruction of ignorance; [d] the reflecting light of awareness is incapable of revealing Brahman and is surpassed by Brahman; and [e] with the destruction of the episode of internal organ – a qualifying adjunct – only Brahman as such remains. This entire successive process is described in the scholastic literature only for the sake of understanding and explaining it. The fact is that all the mentioned effects are simultaneous. They unfold instantaneously.⁸²

⁸¹ In his commentary on VS.29, Śukla also refers to the same process with the locution *brahmānubhav kī ukt prakriyā*, that is, ‘the aforementioned process of cognizing Brahman’ and with the locution *brahmapratyakṣ kī ukt prakriyā* ‘the aforementioned process of perceiving Brahman’ Śukla (2009: 234). The only difference among these three locutions is the second term of the compound: whereas in VSV.28 the term is *jñān*, in VSV.29 it is *anubhav* and *pratyakṣ*. This terminological shift does not signal, however, any semantic difference; for Śukla seems to use the term *jñān* and *anubhav* as synonyms, and for him *brahmajñān* is an immediate cognition (*aparokṣ anubhav*) just as perception (*pratyakṣ*) is.

⁸² *is sandarbh meṃ yah bāt viśeṣarūp se dhyān dene yogy hai ki antaḥkaraṇavṛtti kā brahm ko viśay banānā, brahm ke ajñān kā nāś honā, ajñānanāś se viśvaprapaṇic ke sāth antaḥkaraṇavṛtti kā nāś honā, cidābhās kā brahm ko prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth hone se brahm se abhībhūṭ honā aur upādhibhūṭ antaḥkaraṇavṛtti kā nāś hone se brahmanātr kā śeṣ rah jānā yah sārī kramik prakriyā keval samajhne evaṃ samajhāne ke lie śāstroṃ meṃ varṇit hai. vastuṣṭhiti yah hai ki ukt sāre kāry yugapat hote haiṃ. unke hone meṃ ek kṣaṇ ke sahasrāṃś kā bhī vilamb nahīṃ hotā; VSV.28.14.*

According to this illuminating passage, Śukla asserts that there are five consecutive events or issues to be reflected upon in relation to the process of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) inaugurated by the cognition ‘I am Brahman’. It is worth noticing that the entire discussion presupposes an episodic theory of knowledge.⁸³ Hence, the first issue concerns the use of a *sui generis* episode or event of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*) which has to make or turn Brahman into the object of its cognition (*brahm ko viṣay banānā*). The second concerns the destruction of ignorance regarding Brahman (*brahm ke ajñān kā nāś honā*). The third involves arguing that the removal of ignorance concerning Brahman implies dispelling the special episode of internal organ as well as the entire world. The fourth issue addresses the incapability of the reflecting light of awareness to reveal Brahman (*cidābhās kā brahm ko prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth honā*). And finally, the fifth matter of contention involves a discussion on what happens when the episode of internal organ which converts Brahman into the object of its cognition vanishes (*upādhibhūt antaḥkaraṇavṛtti kā nāś honā*). The entire set of these five events circumscribing the process of knowing Brahman may be identified in Sadānanda’s treatment of the cognition (*anubhava*) ‘I am Brahman’ and is carefully discussed and elucidated by Badrīnāth Śukla in his commentary. Furthermore, as it stands in the passage quoted above, Śukla believes that knowing Brahman is a ‘successive or sequential process’ (*kramik prakriyā*) only in the theoretical and pedagogical sense. That is, he believes that the scholastic literature (*śāstr*) analysed it in this way for the sake of understanding and explaining it (*keval samajhne evaṃ samajhāne ke lie*). Beyond this pedagogical framework, however, the whole sequential process of knowing Brahman is simultaneous (*yugpad*) and its effects (*kāry*) instantaneous. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will follow Śukla’s heuristic approach to the process of knowing Brahman and examine, in order, how he exposes each of these five consecutive events.

3.3.3 Making Brahman into the object of cognition: *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* as *akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti* and the analogy of knowing

Defending *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* as *aparokṣ anubhav*

The episodic theory of knowledge frames Sadānanda’s entire discussion on *brahmajñāna*. Within this epistemological framework, to cognize entails the mind undergoing a certain transformation while assuming the shape or aspect (*ākāra*) of the object being cognized. Hence, in VS.28 Sadānanda conceived that the cognition denoted by the sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* (BṛhUp.1.4.10)

⁸³ On this capital topic, see my discussion in the previous chapter, section 2.2.

is a mental episode or event (*cittavṛtti*) that is ‘shaped or formed after the form of the unfragmented’ (*akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti*).⁸⁴ Śukla, likewise, addresses it in his commentary with the locution ‘manifestation or arising of the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented Brahman’ (*akhaṇḍabrahmākārā cittavṛtti kā āvirbhāv honā*) and his first preoccupation is twofold: (a) to defend the idea that this particular mental event is an instance of immediate cognition, and (b) to defend the notion that verbal means of knowing can, on certain occasions, yield immediate cognitions.⁸⁵ The rationale for (a) is straightforward: since the object of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is not a remote one (*parokṣ tattv*) but the immediate Brahman (*aparokṣ brahm*), the cognition having it for content is also immediate. As Śukla asserts:

Since that [episode of internal organ] makes the immediate Brahman into the object [of cognition], it is an immediate cognition consisting of direct presentation; that [episode of internal organ] is not shaped after the form of some remote entity.⁸⁶

This contention may, however, prove to be problematic; for it entails professing that verbal means of knowing (*śabdapramāṇ*) – such as is implied in the saying *tat tvam asi* – can yield immediate cognitions such as *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*. As Śukla recalls, “some say that the intrinsic nature of verbal means of knowing is to give rise to indirect cognition only.”⁸⁷ The core of his argument against this objection consists in reflecting on whether the arising of immediate cognitions depends on the instrument or means of knowing that yields them or the object apprehended – that is, on whether it is *karaṇ-pramāṇ ke adhīn* or *arth ke adhīn*.⁸⁸ Śukla argues that the character of immediacy featured by certain cognitions depends upon the object being cognised – not upon the instrument – and, therefore, that verbal means of knowing, on the condition of having an immediate entity for its content, can yield immediate cognitions (*aparokṣ anubhav*). In addition to endorsing this view, Śukla tries to show in VSV.28.3 that the contrary stance is unsound by pointing out instances suggesting that both the mind (*manas*) and the verbal means of knowing (*śabdapramāṇ*) can yield immediate as well as indirect cognitions (*apa-*

⁸⁴ *’dhikāriṇo ’haṃ nityasuddhabuddhamuktasatyasvabhāvaparamānandānantādvayaṃ brahmāsmīty akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛttir udeti* / ‘[then] in the mind of the entitled [student] arises that mental episode which is shaped after the form of the unfragmented: ‘I am Brahman, eternal, pure, awakened, released, one whose intrinsic form is truth, supreme bliss, infinite, and non-dual;’ VS.28.

⁸⁵ Śukla’s entire discussion on the topic of immediacy is indebted to VMR.28.

⁸⁶ *’yah aparokṣ brahm ko viṣay karne se aparokṣ anubhav - sāṅskātikārarūp hotī hai, yah kisī parokṣ tattv ke ākār se ākārit nahīn hotī*; VSV.28.2.

⁸⁷ *kisī kā yah kahnā ki parokṣajñān ko hī utpann karnā śabd pramāṇ kā svabhāv hai*; VSV.28.3.

⁸⁸ Śukla was just reworking here the distinction made by Rāmānirṭha in VMR.28 between *karaṇanibandhana* and *arthanibandhana*.

rokṣ and *parokṣ anubhav*). This seems to suggest, in turn, that whether a cognition is or isn't immediate has nothing to do with the instrument or means of knowing responsible for generating it. Hence, it must be the object.

Can Brahman become a *prameya* of a *pramāṇa*? On the *aupacārik* versus *vāstavik brahmaviśayatā* and the analogy of knowing

Now, both the episodic theory of knowledge as well as conceiving *brahmajñāna* in terms of 'manifestation or arising of the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented Brahman' (*akhaṇḍabrahmākārā cittavṛtti kā āvirbhāv honā*) seem to imply the position according to which Brahman can become or be made the object/content of cognition (*viśaya*). This view is explicitly endorsed in VS.28 – where Sadānanda had *paraṃ brahma viśayīkrtya* 'having made supreme Brahman into the object of cognition' – and Śukla himself uses the locutions *brahm ko viśay karnā* and *brahm ko viśay banānā* in order to convey the idea of 'making Brahman into the object of cognition.' This, however, seems to be at odds with the strong apophatic trend within Advaita tradition itself concerned with stressing the unknowability of Brahman. Śukla is extremely mindful when in VSV.28.6 he questions whether talking about Brahman becoming the object of cognition makes any sense within the Advaita scheme of things.⁸⁹ He is able to put the issue into the light of the tradition and, quoting from BrhUp.2.4.14, KUp.1.6, and Śaṃkara's BSBh.1.1.4, diagnoses a sheer contradiction here.⁹⁰

Resolving this point of contention takes him into new territories; for in order to safeguard the coherence of Sadānanda's conceptualisation of the first-person cognition 'I am Brahman', Śukla is going to make a significant exegetic move and point towards the limits of applicability of the episodic theory of knowledge to the instance of *brahmajñāna*. Conceptually speaking, this move is avowed through a careful distinction between *vāstavik* or '*de facto*, factual' and *aupacārik* or 'analogic, metaphoric, or figurative' objecthood (*viśayatā*) of Brahman. Within the logic of this distinction, Śukla is able to suggest that the entire approach to *brahmajñāna* through the episodic theory

⁸⁹ *yah praśn ho saktā hai ki kyā antaḥkaraṇ kī akhaṇḍākārā vṛtti parabrahm ko apnā viśay banāne meṃ samarth hai? kyā brahm antaḥkaraṇavṛtti rūp pramāṇ kā pramey banne yogy hai? brahm sabkā sāksī draṣṭā aur grahītā hai ataḥ vah viśayī bhale hī bane kintu vah kisī pramāṇ yā kriyā kā viśay kaise ban saktā hai /* 'The following question can be asked: is the mental episode that has assumed the shape of the unfragmented capable of making supreme Brahman its own object [of cognition]? Is Brahman suitable for becoming a knowable of the means of knowing consisting in an episode of internal organ? Brahman is the witness, the seer, and the apprehender of all. Hence, it may well become related to the objects of cognition; but how can it become the object of any action or means of knowing?' VSV.28.6.

⁹⁰ In his commentary on BS.1.1.4, Śaṃkara reflected on the objecthood of Brahman. In the course of that discussion he quoted, among other Vedāntic passages, BrhUp.2.4.14 and KUp.1.6 which are both reproduced here by Śukla together with Śaṃkara's own pronouncement on the issue. This fact suggests that Śukla's appeal to tradition in VSV.28.6 in order to stress how conflictive it is to profess that Brahman is made into the object of cognition is, probably, entirely inspired by Śaṃkara's BSBh.1.1.4.

of knowledge should not be taken too far at its face value. He suggests that *brahmajñāna* as instantiated in the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is far from signalling a factual cognitive apprehension of its object – Brahman – but is, rather, metaphorically said to do so. This, in other words, is to draw limits upon the adequacy of the analogy of knowing for conceptualizing *brahmajñāna*. Here is how Śukla makes this essential turn:

In this case, how can saying that an episode of internal organ makes Brahman into the object [of cognition] be consistent? In reply to this question it can be said that the purport of the aforementioned statement is not [to assert] that Brahman is the object of some performance or means of knowing. On the contrary, the intention of that statement is [to assert] that with regard to Brahman objecthood is analogic, not factual. Hence, the purport of the aforementioned sentence is only to indicate that the episode of internal organ faces towards Brahman. The intention is [to assert] that the mental episode which before the instruction of the teacher always used to face towards the external objects, that [mental] episode assumes the form of the unfragmented after the instruction of the teacher and faces towards Brahman – nondifferent from the inner Self. Only because the [mental] event faces towards Brahman, so it is said that by means of that Brahman is made into the object [of cognition].⁹¹

As the passage illustrates, Śukla provides a further explanation of what it means to say that Brahman’s objecthood is analogic only. In doing so he is surely drawing from VMR.28 where Rāmaṭīrtha interpreted the entire issue of making Brahman into the object of cognition in the following terms: *brahmaṇo viṣayīkaraṇaṁ nāma vṛttes tadābhimukyam* / ‘Directing the mental event toward that [Brahman] is called making of Brahman the object [of cognition].’ Śukla renders this same idea in his locution *antaḥkaraṇaṁ kī vṛtti kā brahm kī or abhimukh honā* ‘internal organ episode’s facing towards Brahman’ and inserting it within the previously made distinction between the factual versus the analogic objecthood of Brahman (*vāstavik* versus *aupacārik brahmaviṣayatā*), he goes on to interpret the latter in terms of this suggestive insight. Hence, he arrives at the conclusion that the first-person cognition of Brahman denoted by the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṁ brahmāsmi* (BṛhUp.1.4.10) does not signal factual knowing which entails making Brahman into the object of cognition, but an *attentional* or *intentional* mental event that is analogic to

⁹¹ *is sthiti meṁ yah kahnā ki antaḥkaraṇaṁ kī vṛtti brahm ko viṣay banātī hai, kaise saṁgat ho saktā hai? is praśn ke uttar meṁ yah kahā jā saktā hai ki ukt kathan kā tātpary yah nahīm hai ki brahm kiṁ pramāṇ yā vyāpār kā viṣay hai, kintu us kathan kā āśay yah hai ki brahm meṁ viṣayatā aupacārik hai, vāstavik nahīm hai, ataḥ antaḥkaraṇaṁ kī vṛtti kā brahm kī or abhimukh honā batāne meṁ hī ukt vaktavy kā tātpary hai. āśay yah hai ki guru ke upadeś ke pahle jo cittavṛtti bāhy viṣayoṁ kī or sadā abhimukh rahī thī vah vṛtti guru ke upadeś ke bād akhaṇḍākārākārit hokar pratyagātmābhinn brahm kī or abhimukh ho jātī hai. vṛtti ke is brahmābhimukhībhāva ko hī to uske dvārā brahm ko viṣay karnā kahā jātā hai; VSV.28.6.*

knowing in that it entails turning or focussing the mind upon a certain object/content and assuming its shape (*ākāra*).⁹²

‘I am Brahman’ – But is it *para* or *apara*?

Śukla notices, however, that at the level of the available commentaries on VS, it is uncertain whether the *intentional* object – Brahman – of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is the supreme or the inferior one; that is, it is open to question whether it is *parabrahman* or *aparabrahman* ‘supreme or inferior Brahman’ and whether it is the one qualified or not by ignorance (*ajñānaviśiṣṭa*). Hence, it is uncertain which is exactly the shape (*ākāra*) that the mind is supposedly assuming during the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman.

As I have already stressed, Nṛsiṃhāśrama unmistakably endorses in VSS.28 that it is not the pure Brahman (*na śuddhabrahmaviśayiṇī*) but the supreme Brahman that is qualified by ignorance (*ajñānaviśiṣṭa...parabrahmaviśayiṇī*). Rāmatīrtha, however, interprets Sadānanda’s use of the term *param* ‘supreme’ as indicating that the object of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is not the Brahman that is to be produced or effectuated (*kāryabrahmaviśayatvam*). It is beyond dispute that Śukla understands these as two mutually exclusive exegetic options and attempts to prove that Nṛsiṃhāśrama’s interpretation is untenable. His strategy for doing so is fundamentally conceptual in that he aims at showing (by adducing passages from Śaṅkara’s BSBh) that the author of VSS is inconsistent with the scholastic tradition in holding that supreme Brahman (*parabrahman*) is the one qualified by ignorance (*ajñānaviśiṣṭa*). Thus, immediately after quoting from BSBh.4.3.14,⁹³ Śukla remarks that: *is śāṅkar bhāṣy se suspaṣṭ hai ki parabrahm ajñānaviśiṣṭ nahīm ho saktā hai* / ‘From this critical commentary by Śaṅkara it is very clear that supreme Brahman cannot be qualified by ignorance’ (VSV.28.8).

On the whole, Śukla is therefore committed in VSV.28.7-8 to endorsing the idea that the object (*viśaya*) upon which the mind is intended during the arising of the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ – and whose shape it allegedly assumes – is the supreme Brahman that is not qualified by ignorance nor by the qualifying adjuncts. His discussion at this point is conceptually dense and rich, as in the course of his argumentation he introduces several technical terms such as: *śuddh brahm* ‘pure Brahman,’ *ajñānaviśiṣṭ pratyagātmarūp parabrahm* ‘su-

⁹² I will come back to this issue later on in this chapter and explain what, according to Śukla, distinguishes these two processes.

⁹³ *kiṃ punaḥ paraṃ brahma kim aparam iti / ucyate / yatrāvidyākṛtanāmarūpādiviśeṣapratīṣedhād asthūlādiśabdair brahmopadiśyate tat param / tad eva yatra nāmarūpādiviśeṣeṇa kena cid viśiṣṭam upāsanāyopadiśyate [...] tad aparam* / ‘What is supreme Brahman and what is inferior? It is said, where Brahman is indicated by such words as ‘not gross’ and so on, due to the denial of such distinctions as name and form, which are made by ignorance, it is supreme [Brahman]. Where, however, it is indicated as somehow qualified with such distinctions as name and form and so on for the sake of devotional meditation, [...] that is inferior.’

preme Brahman in the form of the inner Self that is not qualified by ignorance,’ *par* and *apar brahm* ‘supreme’ and ‘inferior Brahman,’ *upāsy brahm* and *jñey brahm* ‘Brahman to be worshiped’ and ‘Brahman to be known,’ *upādhiviśiṣṭ brahm* and *nirupādhik brahm* ‘Brahman qualified by the qualifying adjuncts’ and ‘Brahman not endowed with the qualifying adjuncts,’ *ajñānopādhik brahm* and *nirupādhik parabrahm* ‘Brahman qualified by the qualifying adjunct of ignorance’ and ‘supreme Brahman not endowed with the qualifying adjuncts,’ *kāryabrahm* ‘Brahman to be effectuated or produced’ and *sopādhik brahm* ‘Brahman endowed with the qualifying adjuncts.’

His conceptual analysis is heavily indebted to Śaṅkara and gravitates towards establishing the following set of associations: (a) while *apar brahm* ‘inferior Brahman’ is the one that is *upādhiviśiṣṭ* ‘qualified by the qualifying adjuncts,’ *ajñānopādhik* ‘qualified by the qualifying adjunct of ignorance,’ *sopādhik* ‘endowed with the qualifying adjuncts’ and the one that is to be produced (*kāryabrahm*)⁹⁴ and is, therefore, the Brahman that is suitable for *upāsy* ‘worship,’ (b) *par brahm* ‘supreme Brahman’ is the one that is *nirupādhik* ‘devoid of qualifying adjuncts’ and is, therefore, *jñey* ‘the one that ought to be known.’ Within this conceptual network, Śukla is able to assert that the Brahman Sadānanda meant in VS.28 to be the object of the cognition denoted by the Vedāntic sentence *aham brahmāsmi* (BṛhUp.1.4.10) is the supreme Brahman (*parabrahm*) devoid of qualifying adjuncts (*nirupādhik*) and this because his treatise – *Vedāntasāra* – is concerned with exposing the knowledge of Brahman, not with its worship. Thus, immediately after quoting Śaṅkara’s BSBh.1.1.11,⁹⁵ Śukla drives his point home, arguing that:

On the basis of this critical commentary [it becomes clear that] although Brahman is one only, in the [explanatory] treatises of Vedānta it is mentioned as what has to be worshiped when related to the qualifying adjuncts; just as it is mentioned as what is to be known when removed from the relation with the qualifying adjuncts. This explanatory [treatise] is concerning the knowledge of Brahman; it is not concerning the worship of Brahman. In such case, the author of this [explanatory] treatise [i.e., Sadānanda Sarasvatī] intends only the supreme Brahman that is not endowed with the qualifying adjunct to be the object [of cognition] of the mental episode [‘I am Brahman’]; not the Brahman that is endowed with the qualifying adjunct of ignorance.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *kāryabrahm sopādhik brahm kā apar nām hai* / ‘The name of the Brahman endowed with the qualifying adjuncts, the Brahman that is produced, is ‘inferior’;’ VSV.28.8.

⁹⁵ *evam ekam api brahmāpekṣītopādhisambandham nirastopādhisambandham copāsyatvena jñeyatvena ca vedānteṣūpadīśyate* / ‘Brahman, although one only, in the Vedāntas is referred in connection to the qualifying adjuncts as well as in connection to the removed qualifying adjuncts and indicated [respectively] as being what is to be worshiped and what is to be known;’ BSBh.1.1.11.

⁹⁶ *is bhāṣy ke ādhār par brahm ek hone par bhī upādhisambandh kī apekṣā hone par upāsy tathā upādhisambandh ke nirast hone par jñey rūp se vedānt granthom meṁ sūcit hai. yah prakaraṇ brahmajñānaparak hai na ki upāsanāparak, aiśī sthiti meṁ yahāṁ nirupādhik parabrahm hī cittavṛtti ke viṣayarūp meṁ granthakār ko abhīṣṭ hai, ajñānopādhik brahm nahīṁ;* VSV.28.8.

3.3.4 Removing the ignorance concerning supreme Brahman: Defining the *samarth* of *akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti*

In elucidating the first stage of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*), Śukla maintains, then, that the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is a particular mental event (*antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti*) that is turned, faced, or intended upon Brahman (*brahm kī or abhimukh honā*) and assumes its shape (*ākārākāritā*). Since the Brahman meant here is the one that is immediate (*aparokṣ*) and supreme (*par*) – and therefore not endowed with the qualifying adjuncts (*nirupādhik*) – the first-person cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is necessarily an instance of immediate cognition directed towards supreme Brahman. The analogy of knowing should not be, however, pushed too far; for making Brahman the object of cognition (*brahm ko viṣay karnā* and *brahm ko viṣay banānā*) is not to be conceived as a factual (*vāstavik*) event. The objecthood of Brahman is not factual but analogic (*aupacārik brahmaviṣayatā*) in that it entails an *intentional* mental event.

In elaborating on the second phase of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman, Śukla is concerned with addressing the following statement by Sadānanda:

Furthermore, this [mental episode] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness. Having made the supreme, unknown, and nondifferent from the inner [Self] Brahman into the object of cognition, it removes that ignorance alone which is concerned with it.⁹⁷

As the passage has it, Sadānanda endorsed the idea that besides making Brahman into the object of cognition the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is meant to remove or cancel (*bādhate*) the ignorance concerning Brahman (*tadgatājñāna*). In VSS.28, Nṛsiṃhāśrama conceptualized the latter in terms of *prayojana*; that is, he conceptualised it as its ‘purpose, application, function, or use.’⁹⁸ While in VSV.28.4-5 Śukla does not seem to pay due attention to this conceptual turn, he comes to realize that what is under discussion here is determining *sensu stricto* the efficiency or capability (*samarth*) of this mental event. Hence, while in VSV.28.6 Śukla asserts that the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is not factually capable of making Brahman into the object of cognition but is only facing towards it, he talks in VSV.28.4 about its capability of removing the ignorance concerning Brahman (*ajñān kī sarvanāś karne meṁ samarth honā*).⁹⁹ In his take on it, Śukla closely follows both VSS.28

⁹⁷ *sā tu citpratibimbasaḥitā satī pratyagabhinnaṁ ajñātaṁ paraṁ brahma viṣayīkṛtya tadgatājñānaṁ eva bādhate*; VS.28.

⁹⁸ *sā ca caitanyapratibimbasaṁvalitā satī caitanyagatam ajñānaṁ nivartayati / tasyāś caitanyāvarakājñānanivṛttir eva prayojanam ity arthaḥ* / ‘Furthermore, that [mental episode] is mixed with the reflecting image of consciousness and causes the ignorance concerning [unfragmented] consciousness to cease. Its use is to bring the ignorance that conceals the [unfragmented] consciousness to an end;’ VSS.28.

⁹⁹ Although the issue is not explicitly discussed at this stage, it is worth noticing here that while the analogy of knowledge is inadequate in respect to *brahmajñān kī prakriyā* in that in the

and VMR.28 in their treatment of this rather thorny issue and in doing so provides the only one positive definition of *samarth* of the mental event ‘I am Brahman.’¹⁰⁰

At face value, the problem here as Nṛsiṃhāśrama, Rāmatīrtha Yati, and Śukla address it is that to the extent the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is a mental event (*cittavṛtti*), it is necessarily insentient or deprived of consciousness (*jaḍa*); and as such, it is certainly unable to dispel any sort of ignorance, including the one concerning Brahman.¹⁰¹ In order to shed understanding upon this conundrum, all the commentators turn to the idea vaguely alluded to by Sadānanda that this mental event ‘comes together with’ or is ‘accompanied by’ the reflecting image of awareness (*citpratibimbasaṃvalitā satī*). Hence, Nṛsiṃhāśrama glosses the idea with *caitanyapratibimbasaṃvalitā satī* ‘being attached to, or mixed together with, the reflecting image of consciousness,’ Rāmatīrtha Yati with *pratyakcivitvyāptā* ‘being pervaded by the consciousness in the form of the inner [Self], and Śukla with *cidābhās yukt honā* ‘to be yoked to the reflecting light of awareness.’ Śukla is able to back up his terminological shift from *citpratibimba* to *cidābhās* with the following elucidating definition: *cittavṛtti meṃ cidātmā kā pratibimb ‘cidābhāsa’ yā ‘phala’ kahā jātā hai /*

process of ‘knowing’ Brahman its object (Brahman) does not de facto become the object of cognition – as is the case in any instance of knowing, the analogy is valid to the extent that both processes entail dispelling the ignorance concerning the object of cognition.

¹⁰⁰ On other occasions, Śukla’s discussions contribute to defining the specific efficiency (*samarth*) of this mental event by addressing what this mental event is not capable of (VSV.28.6; 12). As I have already pointed out, Śukla delimits its efficiency by endorsing the idea that this mental event is not capable of factually making Brahman into the object of cognition. He will develop this idea further in VSV.28.12 and profess that in *brahmajñān kī prakriyā* the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*) that is yoked to the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is not capable (*asamarth*) of revealing supreme Brahman. I will come back to this issue in section 4.3.6. It is worth noticing at this point that the entire issue of what this mental event is and isn’t capable of is not systematically addressed at once but is rather scattered in VSV.28.

¹⁰¹ VMR.28.2: *evam utpannākhaṇḍākārā cittavṛtti kiṃ karoti tadāha – sā tv iti / vṛtter jaḍatvād ajñānabādhānāsambhavam āśankya tāṃ viśiṇaṣṭi – citpratibimbasaṃvalitā satī / pratyakcivitvyāpteti yāvat /* ‘What does the mental episode in the form of the unfragmented which has been produced in this way do? He explains that [saying]: ‘Furthermore, this [mental event...].’ Having suspected the impossibility for removing the ignorance due to the insentient character of [this mental] episode, he describes it [saying:] ‘[this mental event] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness.’ To be precise: [this mental episode] is pervaded by the consciousness in the form of the inner [Self].’ And VSS.28: *nanu yathā dīpaprabhādītyamaṇḍalam na vyāpnoti na ca prayojanam asti tathā nityasuddhasvaparakāśam ātmānam jaḍā cittavṛttiḥ katham viśayikṛtyodeti kiṃ prayojanam [...]* *sā ca caitanyapratibimbasaṃvalitā satī caitanyaगतam ajñānam nivartayati / tasyās caitanyāvarakajñānanivṛttir eva prayojanam /* ‘Now, just as the light of a lamp does not pervade the disc of the sun and is not employed [in order to reveal it]; similarly, how can an insentient mental event arise making the Self that is eternal, pure, and self-revealing [its] object? What is the use? [...] Furthermore, that [mental episode] is mixed with the reflecting image of consciousness and causes the ignorance concerning [unfragmented] consciousness to cease. Its use is to bring the ignorance that conceals the [unfragmented] consciousness to an end.’

‘The reflecting image of the Self consisting of [pure] consciousness in a mental episode is called *cidābhāsa* or *phala*’ (VSV.28.4).¹⁰² He struggles in the following to convey the idea that the efficiency (*samarth*) of the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ to cancel the ignorance concerning supreme Brahman is granted because (and *only* because) this mental event – although in itself unconscious or insentient – is yoked to the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*) which reflects in it. Despite his failure to provide any account whatsoever of how these two antagonistic items – the insentient mental event and the reflecting light of awareness – come to be yoked (*yukt*) or associated with each other,¹⁰³ it is beyond dispute that this thorny idea is supposed to explain the alluded to efficiency. Here is how Śukla attempts to settle the issue:

The reflecting image of the Self consisting of [pure] consciousness in a mental episode is called *cidābhāsa* or *phala*. Since [this] mental episode is yoked to the reflecting light of awareness, it is capable of destroying the ignorance completely. Otherwise, since [on its own] it is insentient, none such action would be possible by its means. Consequently, this mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented is yoked to the reflecting light of awareness – a reflected image of the Self consisting of consciousness, – makes supreme Brahman – unknown and nondifferent from the inner Self – into the object [of cognition], and destroys the entire ignorance having that Brahman for content.¹⁰⁴

Strictly speaking, then, Śukla professes that being yoked to the reflecting light of awareness is what delivers the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ its specific efficiency: namely, to cancel or dispel the entire ignorance concerning Brahman (*brahmaviṣayak ajñānamātr ko naṣṭ karnā*). Śukla does not, however, provide any further insight into this vexed issue.

3.3.5 Extinction of the world and the *sui generis* mental event having supreme Brahman for object: The analogy of the woven cloth and the self-extinguishing fire

The next turning point in Śukla’s account of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman is signalled by the extinction of the world as well as the extinction of the

¹⁰² This definition refers probably to PD.7.89-92. In VS.29, Sadānanda quoted PD.7.90b; 7.91ab; 7.92a; and 7.92b.

¹⁰³ In fact, none of Sadānanda’s commentators is able to provide any substantial insight which could shed light upon this vexed issue. However, Śukla’s conceptualisation in terms of *yukt honā* may be, indeed, the most conflicting way to put it. It is also worth noticing that Sadānanda framed this entire issue in the analogy of reflection (*pratibimbavāda*) which all his commentators, including Śukla, closely assume.

¹⁰⁴ *cittavṛtti meṁ cidātmā kā pratibimb ‘cidābhāsa’ yā ‘phala’ kahā jātā hai. cidābhās se yukt hone ke kāraṇ hī cittavṛtti ajñān kā sarvanāś karne meṁ samarth hotī hai, anyathā jaḍ hone ke kāraṇ uske dvārā aiśā koī bhī kāry nahīm ho saktā hai. phalataḥ akhaṇḍākārākārit vah cittavṛtti cidātmā ke pratibimb-cidābhās se yukt ho pratyagātmā se abhinn ajñāt par brahm ko viṣay banā brahmaviṣayak ajñānamātr ko naṣṭ kartī hai; VSV.28.4-5.*

mental event ‘I am Brahman.’ His core argument seems to consist at this point in endorsing and defending against possible objections¹⁰⁵ the idea that (a) the extinction of both follows necessarily from dispelling the ignorance concerning Brahman and that (b) this alone amounts to the attainment or accomplishment of nonduality (*advaitasiddhi*). It is worth noticing that while hitherto Śukla’s discussion of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman has been entirely shaped by the analogy of knowing – though he warned against taking it at face value and asserted that the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is strictly speaking only capable of removing the ignorance concerning supreme Brahman – his discussion of what, allegedly, follows next to the removal of the aforementioned ignorance is shaped by two new analogies: the analogy of the woven piece of cloth and the analogy of the self-extinguishing fire. Both analogies are provided by Sadānanda himself and contain illustrations of certain type of cause-effect relationship that settle the entire discussion.

The analogy of the woven piece of cloth¹⁰⁶ presupposes a certain interpretation of *ajñāna* in suggesting that the ignorance (concerning supreme Brahman) is the stuff (*upādāna*) the entire world is made of. Sadānanda subscribed, indeed, to such theory. In VS.6-11 he gave a quite comprehensive treatment of the topic,¹⁰⁷ providing a concise definition of *ajñāna* together with insights on disputed issues, such as whether it is one or many (*eka* versus *aneka*), on its two powers – ‘concealing’ (*āvaraṇaśakti*) and ‘dispersing’ (*vikepaśakti*) – and on how consciousness ‘attached or put close’ (*upahita*) to ignorance is both the ‘material’ (*upādāna*) and the ‘efficient’ cause (*nimitta*) of the entire world. Appealing to the voice of the tradition, Sadānanda described ignorance (*ajñāna*) as (a) *bhāvarūpaṃ yat kiñcid* ‘something having the form of existence,’ (b) *jñānavirodhiṃ* ‘opposing or hindering knowledge,’ (c) *triguṇātmika* ‘consisting of three qualities,’ (d) *sadāsadbhyām anirvacanīya* ‘indescribable as existent or inexistent,’ and (e) *jaḍa* ‘insentient.’¹⁰⁸ In addition, he explained

¹⁰⁵ The two objections that Śukla seems to pick up on and refutes in VSV.28.9-10 correspond to the second and third objections avowed by Nṛsiṃhāśrama in VSS.28.

¹⁰⁶ Here is the analogy articulated by Śukla: *akhaṇḍākārākārit antahkaraṇavṛtti ke dvārā ajñān kā nās hote hī paṭ ke kāraṇ tantuom ke jal jāne par jaise paṭ jal jātā hai, vaise hī akhil jagat ke kāraṇ ajñān kā nās hote hī uske kāry akhil jagat kā aur uske antargat akhaṇḍabrahmākārā antahkaraṇ vṛtti kā bhī nās ho jātā hai* / ‘Just as a woven piece of cloth burns when the threads constituting [that] woven piece of cloth burn; similarly, as soon as the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] is destroyed by means of the episode of internal organ shaped after the form of the unfragmented, when the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] that is the [material] cause of the entire world is destroyed, its effect – the entire world – and the episode of internal organ shaped after the form of the unfragmented Brahman that is contained in that [i.e., world caused by ignorance] are also destroyed;’ VSV.28.9.

¹⁰⁷ While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine Sadānanda’s concept of *ajñāna* in detail, I will provide in the following a short outline only to the extent it aids to understanding Śukla’s exposition of this third stage in the process of knowing Brahman.

¹⁰⁸ *asarpabhūtāyām rajjau sarpāropavad vastuny avastvāropo ’dhyaropaḥ / vastu sac-cidānandānantādvayaṃ brahma / ajñānādisakalajaḍasamūho ’vastu / ajñānaṃ tu sadāsadbhyām anirvacanīyaṃ triguṇātmakam jñānavirodhi bhāvarūpaṃ yat kiñcid iti vadanty aham ajña ityādyanubhavāt devātmaśaktiṃ svaguṇair nigūḍhām ityādiśruteś ca* / ‘Adscription

the role that consciousness and ignorance put close to each other (*upahita*) play in becoming the efficient as well as the material cause of the world in terms of prevalence or predominance (*pradhāna*) of either consciousness (*caitanya*) or its qualifying adjunct (*upādhi*).¹⁰⁹

Śukla's discussion shares in Sadānanda's portrayal without hesitation.¹¹⁰ Hence, despite the fact that he does not recur in his commentary to the Sanskrit technical terms *upādāna* in order to spell out that the causal relation between the ignorance concerning Brahman and the world that is assumed here is the 'material' one,¹¹¹ the rationale of his argument takes it for granted in holding that once the cause of the world is destroyed, all its effects (*kārya*) must also necessarily perish. That is, once the ignorance concerning Brahman has been dispelled by the mental event 'I am Brahman,' the world will vanish because the entire world (*akhil jagat*) is made out of the stuff (*upādāna*) of that ignorance (*ajñān*). The analogy of the woven piece of cloth that is burned when its threads are burned out seems to have been meant in this context to reinforce

is the imposition of an inexistent entity on an existent entity, like the imposition of a snake on a rope. The existing entity is Brahman; the nondual and infinite being, consciousness, and bliss. The inexistent entity is the collection of the insentient together with all its parts beginning with ignorance. Furthermore, due to such cognitions as 'I am ignorant' and to such scriptural passages as '[Those who follow the discipline of meditation have seen] the deity, the Self, and the power, concealed by their own qualities' [ŚUp.1.3], they [i.e. the Advaita teachers] say that ignorance is something having the form of existence, which is opposite to knowledge, consists of three qualities, and is indescribable as existent or inexistent;' VS.6. Notice that Sadānanda was actually attributing these conceptualizations of *ajñāna* to the tradition of Advaita teachers, as suggested in his use of the third person plural *vadanti*.

¹⁰⁹ *śaktidvayavadajñānopahitaṃ caitanyaṃ svapradhānatayā nimittaṃ svopādhipradhānatayopādānaṃ ca bhavati / yathā lūtā tantukāryaṃ prati svapradhānatayā nimittaṃ svaśarīrapradhānatayopādānaṃ ca bhavati* / 'By its own prevalence, consciousness put together with ignorance endowed with [these] two powers [of concealment and dispersion] becomes the efficient [cause], and by the prevalence of its own qualifying adjuncts [it] becomes the material [cause]; just as, by his own prevalence, a spider is to a yet to be effectuated web the efficient [cause] and, by the prevalence of his own body, the material [cause];' VS.11.

¹¹⁰ In a fine article entitled "Distinctive Features of the Doctrine and Terminology of Śaṅkara: *Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara*" (Hacker 1995: 57-100), Paul Hacker convincingly argued that this portrayal of *avidyā* is, however, typical of "later Advaitins" and may be sharply contrasted to Śaṅkara's own conception as avowed in his BSBh. As Hacker himself acknowledged, this is also the conclusion of Subramanya Rao, alias Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati (1880-1975) who, in his *Mūlāvidyānirāsaḥ* published in 1929, also rigorously contrasted this interpretation of *avidyā* with Śaṅkara's. Just as Sadānanda did in VS.6, Śukla is relying here on the portrayal of *ajñāna* or *avidyā* handed down by the tradition. For a summary and assessment of Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati's views exposed in his *Mūlāvidyānirāsa* on the traditional "misconceptions" concerning Śaṅkara's notion of *avidyā*, see Doherty (2005: 209-241). For a useful article exploring the respective positions of Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati and Paul Hacker on Śaṅkara's teaching, see Alston, J. Anthony, "Śaṅkara in East and West Today", in Malkowski, B.J. (ed.) *New Perspectives on Advaita Vedānta: Essays in Commemoration of Professor Richard De Smet*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

¹¹¹ This, however, seems to be suggested terminologically in Śukla's use of *mūl kāraṇ* 'root-cause' for defining this relation: *nikhil carācar jagat kā mūl kāraṇ avidyā yā ajñān hai* / 'ignorance or nescience is the root-cause of the entire animate and inanimate world;' VSV.28.9.

precisely the notion of the material sort of causal relationship between the world and the ignorance concerning Brahman.

Śukla addresses then the immediate prospect of the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ which has triggered this entire chain of events. He goes on to arguing that, after the ignorance concerning Brahman has been dispelled, this *sui generis* cognition also comes to an end. The explanation he provides to back up this view is avowed in Sadananda’s idea that the mental event shaped after the form of the unfragmented is *tadantarbhūta* ‘contained in that’ world made of ignorance. In VSV.28.9 Śukla paraphrases the same idea (*uske antargat akhaṇḍabrahmākārā antaḥkaraṇ vṛtti*) and argues, in consequence, that because the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is included or contained (*antargat*) in that world of ignorance, it perishes together with the destruction of that world when its material cause – ignorance – is removed.

In sum, then, Śukla conceives that the cognition designated by the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* (BṛhUp.1.4.10) is contained within the world of ignorance.¹¹² However and despite this fact, he holds that, because it is yoked to the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās yukt honā*) and is turned towards supreme Brahman, it is capable (*samarth*) of removing the ignorance concerning Brahman. He also endorses the idea that dispelling this ignorance amounts to the extinction of both, the entire world as well as the cognition ‘I am Brahman,’ as both are material effects (*kāry*) of that ignorance, their root-cause (*mūl kāraṇ*). In this way, Śukla is ready to wrap up his entire notion of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman in stressing that the immediate cognition of Brahman (*aparokṣ anubhav*) – its direct presentation or witnessing (*brahmasākṣātkār hone par*) – as instantiated in the first-person cognition ‘I am Brahman’ entails attaining the state of nonduality (*advaitasiddhi*).¹¹³

¹¹² Hence, it is episodic (*vṛtti*) and impermanent (*anitya*), characterized by arising (*udaya*), functioning (*prayojana*) and cessation (*nivṛtti*).

¹¹³ *ataḥ yah kahnā ki antaḥkaraṇ kī akhaṇḍākārākāritavṛtti ke dvārā ajñān kā nās hone par bhī nikhil carācar jagat aur ukt cittavṛtti to banī hī rahegī tathā un sabkī pratīti bhī hoī hī rahegī to brahmajñān yā mokṣ hone par bhī advait kī niṣpatti saṃbhav nahīm hai, upayukt nahīm ho saktā kyomki nikhil carācar jagat kā mūl kāraṇ avidyā yā ajñān hai atah akhaṇḍākārākārit antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti dvārā jab ajñān kā nās ho jātā hai tab kāraṇ kā nās hote hī uske kāry samgr carācar jagat kā bhī nās anivāry hai, atah brahmasākṣātkār hone par advait kī upapatti meṃ koī bādḥā nahīm hai / ‘Hence, saying that ‘Even when ignorance is destroyed by means of the [mental] episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented, the entire animate and inanimate world and the aforementioned mental episode will certainly remain unchanged – just as the cognition of all those will also continue existing – so that even in the presence of knowledge of Brahman or liberation, the consummation of nonduality is not possible’ cannot be right; for ignorance or nescience is the root-cause of the entire animate and inanimate world. Hence, when the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] is destroyed by means of the episode of internal organ shaped after the form of the unfragmented, then only – since the cause is destroyed – the destruction of its effect – the entire animate and inanimate world – is also unavoidable. Hence, when the direct presence of Brahman takes place there is no impediment whatsoever for the attainment of nonduality;’ VSV.28.9.*

In doing so, he contests in VSV.28.10 an objection against this same idea by appealing to the analogy of the self-extinguishing fire. This new analogy¹¹⁴ is intended to suggest that although nothing destroys it, this mental event does not require any ‘destroying agent or extincor’ (*nāśak*) in order to be extinguished (*bujhnā*). Like the previous one, this new analogy contains an image suggesting the material rather than the efficient cause-effect relationship: the one established between the burning fire and its fuel. Thus, as already pointed out, Śukla’s discussion of the third stage of *brahmajñān kī prakriyā* involving the extinction of the entire world together with the extinction of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is entirely informed by these two analogies provided by Sadānanda and their hint to material causality. Here is how Śukla addresses the issue:

If it would be said that the episode of internal organ is the [active] ingredient that destroys the ignorance as well as its products but that it is not – likewise – the cause of its own destruction, so this statement is not acceptable; for in the way the fire burns out the fuel and is itself also extinguished without requiring anything else for its own extinction; similarly, the episode of internal organ destroys the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] as well as its effect – the entire world – without requiring any other destroying agent, and [it] also destroys itself by itself without requiring any other cause for its destruction. This [specific issue concerning the self-extinction of the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented Brahman] is dealt with in the scholastic literature with the locution ‘simile of the fire and the burned fuel.’¹¹⁵

3.3.6 On the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ and its incapability to reveal supreme Brahman: The analogy of the lamplight

The fourth salient issue in Śukla’s conceptualization of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman concerns what may be regarded as a negative definition of the efficiency (*samarth*) of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ and is entirely shaped by the analogy of the lamplight. While the core of his argument at this point is to endorse the idea that Brahman cannot be revealed by the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ or, to put it otherwise, that this mental event is unable to reveal or incapable (*asamarth honā*) of revealing supreme Brahman, in the course of his argumentation Śukla is able to profile further the limits of the analogy of knowing for conceptualizing the process triggered by the arising of the mental

¹¹⁴ Several other analogies are provided in VSS.28 and SLS.3.7. For a description of this analogy, see Jacob (1983: 37).

¹¹⁵ *yadi yah kahā jāy kī antahkaraṇ kī vṛtti to ajñān evaṃ uske kāryom kī vināśak sāmāgrī hai na kī apne vināś kā bhī kāraṇ hai, to yah kahnā ucit nahīm hai, kyonki jis prakār āg indhan ko jalākar apne āp bhī bujh jātī hai uske bujhāne ke lie kisī any kī apekṣā nahīm hotī vaise hī antahkaraṇ kī vṛtti bhī ajñān tathā uske kāry samagr jagat kā nāś kar any kisī nāśak kī apekṣā na kar svayaṃ hī apne āpkā bhī nāś kar leī hai, uske nāś ke lie kisī kāraṇāntar kī āvāsyakatā nahīm hotī. śāstrom meṃ ise hī dagdhendhanānalanyāy śabd se vyavahṛt kiyā jātā hai; VSV.28.10.*

event ‘I am Brahman’ by providing a brief but clear account on how these two processes (*prakriyā*) differ from each other. Finally, his discussion is also meant to safeguard the putative self-revealing feature of Brahman (*svayaṃ prakāśamān*).

The immediate purport of the analogy of the lamplight is straightforward: just as the light of a lamp cannot reveal the sunlight but is surpassed by it, for the same reason the light of awareness reflecting in the insentient mental episode ‘I am Brahman’ cannot reveal Brahman. Here is how Śukla formulates this far-reaching idea:

Just as the small light of a lamp is incapable of revealing the sun that is the revealer of the endless egg of Brahmā and the sun in sight is surpassed by the light of the sun and its light does not become known; similarly, consciousness reflected in the internal organ (the reflecting light of awareness) is surpassed by that [supreme Brahman], since that [consciousness reflected in the internal organ] is incapable of revealing supreme Brahman – nondifferent from the inner [Self] and self-revealing.¹¹⁶

His analysis builds on several core notions, such as the contraposition of *ḍīpak kā svalp prakāś* and *sūry ke prakāś* ‘the small light of a lamp versus the light of the sun’ – a contrast that later in VSV.28.12 is conceptually better expressed in terms of *parimit prakāś* and *aparimit prakāś* ‘delimited versus unlimited light;’ the main idea that the former is unable to reveal or illuminate the latter (*prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth honā*); and the crucial notion that the small or delimited light is ‘surpassed or subdued’ (*abhibhūt honā*) by the one that is unlimited, the light of the sun. Furthermore, it is worth noticing that the purport of the analogy of the lamplight applies, strictly speaking, to the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*) or the consciousness reflected in the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ (*antaḥkaraṇ meṃ pratibimbit caitany*) and not to that mental event *per se*, which is insentient and devoid of awareness (*jaḍ*).

This essential feature of the analogy comes explicitly to the fore in VSV.28.12 where Śukla distinguishes the process of knowing proper from the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) in terms of what the reflecting light of awareness is and is not capable of in the context of these two different processes. In the course of his argument Śukla allots two different tasks, operations or functions (*vyāpār*) to the mental event on the one hand and the light of awareness reflected therein on the other. Thus, he contends that while the first is responsible for removing the ignorance concerning the object of cognition (*ajñān kā nāś honā*), the latter is responsible for actually

¹¹⁶ *jaise anant brahmāṇḍ ke prakāś sūry ko ḍīpak kā svalp prakāś prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth ho sūry ke samakṣ sūry ke prakāś se abhibhūt ho jātā hai uske prakāś kā patā hī nahīn caltā vaise hī antaḥkaraṇ meṃ pratibimbit caitany (cidābhās) bhī svayaṃ prakāśamān pratyagātmābhinn parabrahm ko prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth hone ke kāraṇ usse abhibhūt ho jātā hai [...]; VSV.28.11.*

revealing or manifesting it (*prakāśan honā*). Within this economy, he distinguishes these two processes arguing that (a) while both events entail removing the ignorance concerning their respective objects – an operation (*vyāpār*) that is brought about by the mental event assuming the shape of the object,¹¹⁷ (b) in the process of knowing proper such as perceiving a pot, the reflecting light of awareness is capable of revealing the object of cognition – the pot – while in the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman the reflecting light of awareness is unable to reveal its object – Brahman. Contesting an objection claiming that the entire account of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman is inconsistent in that it challenges the putative self-revealing nature of Brahman, Śukla puts all these ideas together and goes on to dismiss such binding implication arguing that:

[...] when the episode of internal organ is shaped after such insentient entities as pot and so on, it has two functions: one is to destroy the ignorance regarding its object [of cognition: the pot and so on], the other is to reveal the pot, which is accomplished by the reflecting light of awareness. In this way, in the perception of a pot, both are employed, the episode of internal organ and the reflecting light of awareness. However, the process of cognizing Brahman is different from this one, as the ignorance having Brahman for content is destroyed by the episode of internal organ [shaped after] the form of Brahman, but the light of awareness reflecting in it is not at all capable of revealing Brahman, since what is itself a limited revealer, how can that be capable of revealing Brahman consisting of unlimited light that reveals the entirely endless egg of Brahman?¹¹⁸

Hence, as the passage unmistakably claims, the feature that distinguishes the process of knowing proper from the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman is that in the latter the reflecting light of awareness is unable to reveal (*prakāśit karne meṁ asamarth honā*) Brahman. In other words: while knowing as such entails employing both the mental event and the reflecting light of awareness (*antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti aur cidābhās donoṁ kā upayog hotā hai*), in the context of *brahmajñān kī prakriyā* the reflecting light of awareness is not employed, used or applied (*upayog*), for it cannot reveal Brahman. Śukla reinforces this fundamental notion in VSV.28.14, where he concludes that:

¹¹⁷ Although the issue is not explicitly stressed here, this operation of dispelling the ignorance concerning any given object of cognition is only possible – as Śukla explained in VSV.28.4-5 with regard to Brahman – because the mental event assuming the shape of any given object of cognition is yoked (*yukt honā*) to the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*).

¹¹⁸ [...] *jab ghaṭ ādi jaḍ padārthoṁ se ākārīt antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti hotī hai tab uske do vyāpār hote haiṁ, ek yah ki usse uske viśay ghaṭ ke ajñān kā nāś hotā hai aur dūsrā yah ki usmeṁ sampan cidābhās se ghaṭ kī prakāśan hotā hai. is prakār ghaṭ ke pratyakṣ meṁ antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti aur cidābhās donoṁ kā upayog hotā hai, kintu brahmajñān kī prakriyā isse bhinn hai, jaise antaḥkaraṇ kī brahmākār vṛtti se brahmaviśayak ajñān kā nāś to hotā hī hai, kintu usmeṁ jo cidābhās hotā hai vah brahm ko prakāśit karne meṁ katham api samarth nahīn hai, kyōṁki jo svayam parimiti prakāśavālā hai, vah anantānant brahmāṇḍ ko prakāśit karnevāle aparimit prakāśarūp brahm ko prakāśit karne meṁ kaise samarth ho saktā hai?; VSV.28.12.*

From the abovementioned [discussion] it is established that in the process of cognizing Brahman a mental episode is employed, for it destroys the ignorance the content of which is Brahman; but in that process the reflecting light of awareness is not required.¹¹⁹

To sum up, Śukla maintains that the analogy of knowing holds good for conceptualizing liberating knowledge in so far as both processes involve removing the ignorance concerning their respective objects, be it Brahman or a pot (*brahmaviṣayak ajñān* or *ghaṭaviṣayak ajñān*). It is invalid, however, to the extent that the process triggered by the first-person cognition ‘I am Brahman’ does not entail revealing its object – Brahman – whereas the process of knowing objects does. As interpreted by Śukla, the analogy of the lamplight is therefore intended, chiefly, to narrow down the efficiency (*samarth*) of the mental event denoted by the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṁ brahmāsmi* (BrhUp.1.4.10) by denying it the capability to reveal or manifest supreme Brahman, which amounts to providing a fine distinction between *brahmajñān kī prakriyā* and the process of knowing.

3.3.7 Explaining the threshold of nonduality: The analogy of the face reflecting in the mirror

The fifth and last stage in the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman is illustrated by means of a yet another analogy: the analogy of the face reflecting in the mirror. This example constitutes the core of the theory of reflection (*pratibimbavāda*, *ābhāsavāda*) which, in slightly different versions, cuts across several classical

¹¹⁹ *uparyukt se yah siddh hotā hai ki brahmajñān kī prakriyā meṁ cittavṛtti kā upayog to hotā hai, kyomki vah brahmaviṣayak ajñān kā nāś kartī hai, kintu vahāṁ cidābhās kī koī āvaśyakatā nahīn hotī*, VSV.28.14. The same idea is explicitly addressed in VS.29 and VSV.29, where Śukla explains the issue once again in terms of *vṛttivyāpti* ‘pervasion by the mental event’ and *phalavyāpti* ‘pervasion by the fruit’ on the authority of PD.7.91 quoted by Sadānanda in VS.29: *jaise ghaṭ ke ākār ko dhāraṇ karnevālī ghaṭākārākārit antahkaraṇ vṛtti ajñāt ghaṭ ko viṣay banākar ghaṭaviṣayak ajñān ko dūr kar apne antargat rahnevāle cidābhās se jaḍ ghaṭ ko prakāśit bhī kartī hai. kahā bhī gayā hai – buddhitatsthacidābhāsau dvāv etau vyāpnuto ghaṭam / tatrājñānaṁ dhiyā naśyed ābhāsena ghaṭaḥ sphureṭ || (Pañcadaśī 7.91) arthāt buddhi aur buddhi meṁ rahnevālā cidābhās donom hī ghaṭ ko vyāpt karte haiṁ, unmeṁ buddhi se ghaṭaviṣayak ajñān naś hotā hai aur cidābhās se ghaṭ kā sphuraṇ hotā hai. jaise dīpak kā prabhāmaṇḍal andhakār meṁ sthit ghaṭ, paṭādi ko viṣay banākar unko āvṛtt karnevāle andhakār ko haṭākār apne prakāś se unheṁ prakāśit bhī kar detā hai.* / ‘Just as the episode of internal organ shaped after the form of the pot that bears the shape of the pot makes the unknown pot into the object of cognition and, putting away the ignorance the content of which is the pot, it also reveals the insentient pot by its own indwelling reflecting light of awareness. It has also been said: ‘Both the intellect and the reflecting light of awareness abiding in that pervade the pot. There, the ignorance [regarding the pot] is destroyed by the intellect, [while] the pot is displayed by the reflecting light of awareness’ (PD.7.91). In other words, the intellect and the reflecting light of awareness dwelling in the intellect, both pervade the pot. Among them, the intellect destroys the ignorance the content of which is the pot and the reflecting light of awareness displays the pot. Just as the circle of the lamplight makes a woven cloth or a pot placed in darkness [its] object and, expelling the darkness which covers them, it also reveals them by its own light;’ VSV.29; Śukla (2009: 234).

Indian *darśanas*.¹²⁰ In VS.28 Sadānanda resorts to this analogy (and its specific terminology) in order to explain the threshold of liberation. Śukla discusses its immediate purport at certain length in VSV.28.11/13-14 where his main concern is to argue that: (a) given that the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*) is unable to reveal supreme Brahman, when the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ ceases, the light of awareness that was reflecting therein is set free from its bearer and becomes Brahman-consciousness as such, the original entity; and (b) that, again, is the final attainment of nonduality, the dissolution of all the bonds of the qualifying adjuncts to which pure consciousness has been somehow ‘attached’ or ‘put close together’ (*upahit*). Here is how Śukla introduces this new analogy in the context of the previous one:

Just as the small light of a lamp is incapable of revealing the sun that is the revealer of the endless egg of Brahman and the sun in sight is surpassed by the light of the sun and its light does not become known; similarly, consciousness reflected in the internal organ (the reflecting light of awareness) is surpassed by that [supreme Brahman], since that [consciousness reflected in the internal organ] is incapable of revealing supreme Brahman – nondifferent from the inner [Self] and self-revealing. In this way, just as with the destruction of the mirror the reflecting image of the face contained in the mirror becomes the face as such (the original entity as such); similarly, with the destruction of the episode of internal organ [shaped] after the form of the unfragmented – its own qualifying adjunct – [consciousness reflected in the internal organ] becomes supreme Brahman as such – nondifferent from the inner [Self].¹²¹

¹²⁰ Its presence within the Advaitic tradition can be traced back to BS.2.3.50 and Śaṅkara’s US.1.18. Later on, it seems to have been adopted by the followers of the *Vivaraṇa* trend. According to Alston (2000: 99) *pratibimbavāda* is one among several consequences of conceptualizing *avidyā* as *bhāvarūpa*, a doxastic feature professed by later Advaitins that is in sharp contrast with Śaṅkara’s teaching. As he argues: “The result of reifying ignorance and its effects, and according to a certain degree of reality, ramify through all later Advaita theory and differentiate it from Śaṅkara’s teaching. Two examples may here suffice. In the theory of the constitution of the individual soul, two schools were later established, one which claimed that the soul was primarily a ‘delimitation’ (*avaccheda*) of the Absolute, conceived on the analogy of illusory delimitation of space by pots, and the other which stressed the status of the soul as a ‘reflection’ (*pratibimba*, *ābhāsa*) of the Absolute” (Alston 2000: 99). Alston goes on to argue that Śaṅkara used the analogy of reflection in a loose sense and that, as a theory proper, the *pratibimbavāda* or *ābhāsavāda* belongs to the *Vivaraṇa* trend of Advaita: “The *Vivaraṇa*, however, takes the notion that the soul is a reflection much more seriously as a theory that has to be defended against ‘Avaccheda Vāda’ and justified with an example. If the soul is regarded merely as a delimitation (*avaccheda*) of the Absolute, then the latter would have two contradictory forms in the same place at the same time, one limited and the other unlimited, which is impossible. But if one is armed with the reflection analogy, one can solve the difficulty by an appeal to common experience. For we have all apprehended the infinite ether of the sky reflected in water-pots. And here we have an example of how the same entity, the infinite ether, can be present in the same place, namely the water-pot, *both* as delimited (by the water-pot) *and also* as infinite (in the reflection)” (Alston 2000: 100). For the same ascription, see Potter (2006: 9). For a non-Vedāntic sort of treatment of this analogy, see for example TSĀ.3 by Abhinavagupta and Lawrence (2005).

¹²¹ *jaise anant brahmāṇḍ ke prakāś sūry ko dīpak kā svalp prakāś prakāśit karne meṁ asamarth ho sūry ke samakṣ sūry ke prakāś se abhibhūt ho jātā hai uske prakāś kā patā hī nahīm caltā*

His treatment draws upon technical vocabulary that encapsulates the central ideas of his exegesis. Thus, in the course of his exposition, Śukla turns to such locutions as *bimbamātr* ‘the original entity as such,’ *mukhamātr* ‘the face as such,’ *parabrahmamātr* ‘supreme Brahman as such,’ *bimb brahmācāitany* ‘Brahman-consciousness, the original entity,’ *darpaṇagat mukhapratibimb* ‘reflecting face contained in the mirror’ and *caitany kā pratibimb* ‘reflecting image of consciousness’ in order to address the dialectical tension between *bimb* and *pratibimb*, the original item and its reflection or image displayed in the mirror. He resorts to the use of such phraseology as *cidābhās kī upādhi antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* ‘the episode of internal organ – the qualifying adjunct of the reflecting light of awareness’ and *apnī upādhibhūt antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti* ‘the episode of the internal organ – its own qualifying adjunct’ referring to the consciousness reflected in the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇaṁ meṁ pratibimbī caitany*) in order to convey the key notion that the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is a qualifying adjunct (*upādhi*) of the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*). In addition, he conceptualizes the former as the *āśray* ‘recipient, resting-place, support, or bearer’ of the latter. He deploys the verbs *alag rahnā* ‘to remain unattached [to the mirror]’ and *prthak rahnā* ‘to remain separately [from the mental event ‘I am Brahman’]’ with a view to stressing that neither the image of the face reflecting in the mirror nor the image of consciousness reflecting in the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ can persist once their bearer (*āśray*) is no longer available. And finally, he falls back on such significant terms as *upahit caitany* ‘attached consciousness, or consciousness put close to [the qualifying adjunct]’ and *anupahita suddh svarūp caitany mātr* ‘unattached, pure, and essential consciousness as such’ in order to illustrate the dynamism corresponding to crossing the threshold of nonduality.

Within the logic of this analogy, the mirror is to the reflecting image of the face what the mental event (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*) ‘I am Brahman’ is to the reflecting light of awareness (*cidābhās*): it is its *āśray* ‘bearer’ and its *upādhi* ‘qualifying adjunct.’ Well informed by the accounts provided in VMR.28 and VSS.28, Śukla argues that the point with the analogy of reflection is, therefore, to stress that when the bearer or the qualifying adjunct is removed, the light of awareness reflecting therein becomes the original item or entity as such (*bimbamātr*). Hence, because the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is the qualifying adjunct or bearer of the light of awareness per se, when the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ fades away, the light of awareness reflecting therein can no longer do so and remains, instead, as supreme Brahman as such, the original entity. According to Śukla, this is the final stage of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman, the attainment of nonduality. As he writes:

vaise hī antaḥkaraṇaṁ meṁ pratibimbī caitany (cidābhās) bhī svayaṁ prakāśamān pratyagātmābhinn parabrahm ko prakāśit karne meṁ asamarth hone ke kāraṇ usse abhibhūt ho jātā hai, evaṁ jaise darpaṇagat mukhapratibimb darpaṇ kā nāś hone se mukhamātr (bimbamātr) ho jātā hai, vaise hī apnī upādhibhūt antaḥkaraṇ kī akhaṇḍākārā vṛtti kā vināś hone se pratyagātmābhinn parabrahmamātr ho jātā hai; VSV.28.11.

One should know that when the episode of internal organ – the qualifying adjunct of the reflecting light of awareness – destroys the [entire] ignorance together with the collection of [its] effects and is itself also destroyed, then at that stage the reflecting image of consciousness cannot remain separately due to the destruction of [its] bearer; at that moment, only Brahman-consciousness remains, the original entity. When the mirror is removed, the reflecting image of the face dwelling in the mirror in its corresponding form does not remain unattached [to the mirror]; at that moment, only the face as such remains. The conclusion is that when the qualifying adjunct of the attached consciousness is destroyed, then only the unattached, pure, and essential consciousness as such remains. At that moment, even the possibility of a slight trace of duality is not left.¹²²

After his elucidation of the topic addressed in VS.28, Śukla concludes his learned exegesis of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman with the following description:

When the Brahmanhood of the living being is attained, at that very moment the bonds of all its qualifying adjuncts are destroyed. At that moment, one does not encounter any of these: the ignorance, the diffusion of all things, the episode of internal organ, and the reflecting light of awareness. The ocean of the unfragmented bliss of consciousness begins to wave. The entire entanglement related to wife, son, grandson, and so on; relatives, prosperity, household, earth, body, sense organs as well as internal organ and so on is brought to an end. Like, dislike, envy, fear, aversion, jealousy, as well as sexual desire and so on, the manifold fearsome enemy becomes false like the horn of a rabbit. The cognition that belongs to that state is difficult to attain even for the truth-seeing yogi. That state is not accessible with the internal organs nor with the external organs, since it arises only when they vanish.¹²³

3.4 Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that Badrīnāth Śukla’s elucidation of *Vedāntasāra* 28 dealing with the Vedāntic sentence *aham brahmāsmi*

¹²² *yah jñātavy hai ki cidābhās kī upādhi antaḥkaraṇavṛtti jab ajñān aur uske karyasamūh kā nāś kar svayaṃ bhī vinaśt ho jātī hai tab usmeṃ sthīt caitany kā pratibimb bhī āśray ke naśt hone se pṛthak nahīm rah saktā, us samay keval bimb brahmācāitany hī rah jātā hai. yah thik usī prakār, jis prakār darpaṇ meṃ paṇevālā mukh kā pratibimb darpaṇ ke haṭā lene par alag nahīm rah jātā, kintu us samay mukhamātr hī šeṣ rah jātā hai. niṣkarṣ yah hai ki upahit caitany kī upādhi kā nāś hone par anupahit śuddh svarūp caitany mātr hī sthīt rahtā hai, us samay dvait ke leś kī bhī sambhāvnā nahīm rah jātī; VSV.28.13-14.*

¹²³ *jīv ko brahmatv prāpt hone par uske nikhil upādhiyom ke bandhan tatkal hī vinaśt ho jāte haiṃ. us samay ajñān, viśvaprapañc, antaḥkaraṇavṛtti aur cidābhās in sabom kā patā nahīm lagtā. akhaṇḍ cidānand samudr laharāne lagtā hai. patnī, putr, pautrādi, sage sambandhī, sampatti, grh, bhūmi, deh, indriy tathā antaḥkaraṇādi kā sārā jhamelā samāpt ho jātā hai. rāg, dveṣ, spardhā, bhay, viśād, irṣyā tathā kāmādi vividh bhayaṃkar śatru śaśaśṛṅg kī tarah alīk ho jāte haiṃ. us sthiti kā anubhav tattvadarśī yogi ke lie bhī durlabh hai. vah sthiti antarindriy evaṃ bahirindriy se agamī hai kyomki unkā nāś hone par hī vah udit hotī hai; VSV.28.14.*

(BrhUp.1.4.10) illustrates the voice of a Sanskrit-learned Hindi commentator who, within the socio-political frame of a post-colonial India, provides an engaging and insightful exegesis on liberating knowledge in close relation, and in reaction, to two precolonial Sanskrit commentaries – the *Subodhinī* by Nṛsiṃhāśrama (1555) and *Vidvanmanorañjanī* by Rāmatīrtha Yati (1610) – while at the same time remaining silent about the Western Other. Hence, I have claimed that Śukla’s exegesis of the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge does not intend to mediate nor to participate in the cultural encounter between India and the West. Instead, acting as a commentator, he intends to elucidate the root-text by a meticulous exegetic scrutiny of these previous Sanskrit commentaries and only in the course and logic of that elucidation (*vyākhyāna*) – and respecting always the doxastic outlook provided by Sadānanda’s text – he wields control over the Advaitic conceptualisation of the process of knowing Brahman.

From his attentive examination of the topic, the following picture seems to emerge. The process of knowing Brahman is deeply inserted in the cultural context of the fourfold purifying means and the textual exegesis of the Vedāntas. This culture is believed to assist the qualified students in gaining a nonliteral understanding of the Vedāntic sentence consisting in the instruction *tat tvam asi* (ChUp.6.8-16) which triggers, in turn, the arising of the first-person and immediate cognition ‘I am Brahman.’ The unfolding of the process of understanding oneself as one with Brahman is explained, then, as having five successive stages. First, the episode of internal organ ‘I am Brahman’ faces (or turns) towards supreme Brahman – the one devoid of qualifying adjuncts and the one that is not the object of worship – and assumes its unfragmented shape. It does not, however, convert it, factually, into the object of cognition. Second, because this mental event is *per se* devoid of consciousness and bears, or is yoked to, the reflecting light of awareness, it is capable of dispelling the ignorance concerning Brahman. Third, since the ignorance concerning the unfragmented reality – Brahman – is the stuff that constitutes the world, removal of this sort of ignorance implies the extinction of all its material effects: the entire world as well as the instance of understanding oneself as one with Brahman denoted by the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* (BrhUp.1.4.10). Fourth, although the mental event ‘I am Brahman’ is capable of dispelling the aforementioned ignorance regarding Brahman, the reflecting light of awareness to which it is yoked is unable to reveal Brahman, which is self-revealing. This, according to Śukla, is the fundamental difference between the process of knowing as such and the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman. Fifth, the extinction of the mental event ‘I am Brahman,’ understood analogically now to be a sort of mirror-image corresponding to the original light of unfragmented consciousness, means that the light of awareness reflecting in the instance of understanding oneself as being one with Brahman – the unfragmented reality – is set free or withdrawn from this condition of reflexivity and remains, in consequence, as pure and unattached consciousness as such.

After elaborating on these five events, Śukla endorses, however, the idea that breaking this process of ‘knowing’ Brahman into a well-defined set of five stages is only for the sake of teaching and understanding it and that, in fact, all this sequence of events surrounding the cognition ‘I am Brahman’ is simultaneous.

Śukla seems to maintain, in sum, that the Vedāntic culture of the fourfold purifying means and a refined method of textual exegesis assist and lead their adepts to bring about in their mind a very unique product of ignorance – the first-person cognition denoted by the Vedāntic sentence ‘I am Brahman.’ Although a product of ignorance, Śukla claims that the entire process of coming to understand oneself as one with Brahman is unique in that it is capable of dispelling the ignorance about supreme Brahman, the nondual reality. Besides, the putative unique feature he imputes to this cognitive process seems to be founded on the sheer Advaitic belief that the cognition denoted by the Vedāntic sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* and its replication in the mind of the adepts is an exact image, within the domain of ignorance, that corresponds to the way reality is in its original state: an unfragmented, pure, and nondual awareness.

Although the merits of Badrīnāth Śukla’s elucidation of VS.28, his understanding of the *Subodhinī* and *Vidvanmanorañjanī*, and – in consequence – his entire exegesis of the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge may be open to debate, for the sake of the argument put forward in this study it is noteworthy that Śukla’s exploration of the theme of *brahmajñāna* is conceptually attuned to the precolonial framework set out in the previous chapter. I mean to say that Śukla’s elucidation of the process of ‘knowing’ Brahman clearly stresses the episodic nature of *brahmajñāna* and, not unlike precolonial Advaitins, conceptualises it as a mental event shaped after the form of Brahman, as an instance of intentional awareness, and as an instance of immediate cognition. Moreover, as I have addressed in this chapter, he also stresses the close connection between the arising of *brahmajñāna* understood as a mental event and the fourfold purificatory means as well as the textual exegesis of the Vedāntas through the method of *adhyāropa* and *apavāda*. Hence, though the issue of veridicality of *brahmajñāna* was not directly addressed in Śukla’s exposition of VS.28, it seems reasonable to surmise that, again not unlike the precolonial advocates of Advaita, he would appeal to the Vedāntas as its foremost source of epistemic justification.

By highlighting here this conceptual attunement, I mean to submit that Śukla’s exegetic engagement with VS.28, combined with his non-dialogical attitude towards the Western Other, offers a conceptualisation of the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge that shares in the normative conceptual scheme that defined the discourse on liberating knowledge among the precolonial advocates of Advaita Vedānta. And as I will argue in the following chapters, this feature of his engagement is in stark contrast with those professed by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya.

4. Climbing up the stairways of dissociation through philosophical thinking: Critical assimilation in the ‘confrontative’ philosophy of K. C. Bhattacharyya (1875-1949)

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to argue that K. C. Bhattacharyya’s ‘confrontative’ philosophy is an excellent example of the dialogical attitude toward the Western Other that I will call critical assimilation.¹²⁴ As I will contend, Bhattacharyya’s articulation of liberating knowledge as self-knowledge took place within the domains of Western intellectual discourse. He chose the Western Other – particularly as represented by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant – as the immediate frame of reference where, and in response to which, his discursive practice on liberating knowledge located and articulated itself. However, this orientation in his theories toward the Western Other did not entail uncompromised assimilation, submissive acceptance, or complete fusion of horizons with the Western Other, her ideas and values. On the contrary, Bhattacharyya’s engagement with Western alterity involved a sheer and frontal contrast and confrontation in which certain elements of that Other were targeted, critically examined, and revised. As I will argue in this chapter, the immediate target of such explicit criticism were mostly the epistemological foundations of the Western Other. In both of his key philosophical writings (SF and CPh), Bhattacharyya confronted some of these fundamentals on several fronts, notably: the Kantian project of transcendental philosophy, its in-built scepticism concerning self-knowledge, the advance of science as the only legitimate form of knowledge, and the attitude with which metaphysics, empirical psychology, and epistemology approach the Self.

However, Bhattacharyya’s stance as regards the Western Other was not narrowly adverse. As he addressed the matter conspicuously in SV and SI, there was enough theoretical room there for a middle path between either total acceptance or total rejection; there was space for negotiation and adaptation.

¹²⁴ For a general introduction to Bhattacharyya’s philosophic work, see Burch (1967), Ganeri (2016), Raghuramaraju (2013), and Odyniec (2018). For his approach to the question of subjectivity and the project outlined in SF, see Garfield (2017: 355-377) and Bhushan & Garfield (2017: 264-282).

His dialogical stance in the form of critical confrontation entailed distinguishing between attempting to understand the Other and coming to total convergence and agreement with her. Essentially, it contemplated the possibility of understanding the Western Other as different, one whose alterity should be critically analysed from another – distinctively Indian – perspective and then only partially assimilated and partially contested. Thus, his dialogical stance meant also empowering the Indian colonial subject epistemologically, vindicating it as autonomous and capable of self-narrative, self-assertion, and theory.

Consequently, I submit that K. C. Bhattacharyya confronted the epistemological foundations of the Western Other critically with the intention of revising them in such a manner as to allow and accommodate within its fold the Advaitic soteriological project of self-knowledge. This programmatic revision was meant as an exercise in “Indian contribution in a distinctively Indian style to the culture and thought of the modern world” (SI.4). Bhattacharyya sought to draft such a contribution in his reconceptualization of philosophy as a body of knowledge alternative to science (without excluding it) and in his foundation of a new branch of philosophy that he called – perhaps unfortunately – transcendental or spiritual psychology. This attempt required also rethinking the concept of philosophy by analogy with *manana*; that is, rethinking it as a necessary *means* to a non-theoretical goal – self-knowledge – the fulfilment of which falls by definition outside its domains. The very theoretical intention of this revision was nowhere more conspicuously announced than when he defined boldly and valiantly that the aim of this new branch of philosophy was “to assign an intelligible place to what is ordinarily scouted as spiritual mysticism” (SF.19; Bhattacharyya 2008: 391).

Uncontestably, I think, Bhattacharyya was concerned with negotiating this intelligible space within the epistemology of the Western Other for securing and accommodating therein the Advaitic cult of self-knowledge. His intellectual pursuit was, then, about transferring, translating, and defending the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge within the adopted and conveniently revised framework provided by the Western Other. Such a transfer involved an exercise in decontextualizing the Advaitic cult of self-knowledge from its autochthonous epistemology; that is, it involved dispensing with the intricacies of the *pramāṇa* framework and the episodic paradigm of knowing within which *brahmajñāna* found its intelligibility within the precolonial Brahmanic circles of Sanskrit learning. I submit that the absence of a more explicit engagement with these issues in Bhattacharyya’s philosophical works should be interpreted as a sign of such dispensation. In my view, what explains such omission is the plain fact that Krishnachandra contended that the site of intelligibility of the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge was now, in his colonial context, to be sought and defended in a critical dialogue with a different, and to start with alien, cultural and epistemological framework. Hence, his ‘confrontative’ project entailed conceptualising the Advaitic notion of liberating

knowledge anew in contrast with, but nevertheless in relation to and in terms of the Western Other, opening up in this way new challenges and possibilities of thinking about it.

4.2 Standing at the crossroads

4.2.1 Reading the colonial predicament of the modern Indian mind

Among K. C. Bhattacharyya's writings, "Svaraj in Ideas" (SI) stands out as an insightful and subversive piece of cultural criticism.¹²⁵ As announced in the title, the one theme and concern that runs through the entire text is the author's vehement vindication of cultural or intellectual autonomy, self-determination, and emancipation (*svarājī*) of modern Indian subjects. Endorsed amid hot debates on political independence of India from Great Britain and professed just two decades before its actual achievement in 1947, Krishnachandra's talk must have been to some extent provoking and against the grain. It is in this short but complex piece where we find his reading of the colonial predicament of the modern Indian mind explicitly and conspicuously articulated.

On the whole, K. C. Bhattacharyya reflected on his present cultural situation in terms of the East-West encounter as it was enacted within the colonial predicament. He assessed the relationships between cultures involved in that type of encounter in terms of cultural subjugation. As he defined and assessed it right at the outset of SI, cultural subjugation is at work in that cultural encounter in which "one's own traditional cast of ideas and sentiments is superseded without comparison or competition by a new cast representing an alien culture which possesses one like a ghost. This subjection is slavery of the spirit" (Bhattacharyya 1984: 383). The key terms to be found in SI that shaped Bhattacharyya's discussion of the East-West encounter in the colonial setup betray his overall reading of the situation. Among those shaping terms we find: 'impact,' 'hybridization,' 'patchwork,' 'imposed ideals,' 'response,' 'adjustment,' 'mechanical adjustment,' 'synthesis of the ideals of the East with the West,' 'method of adaption,' 'conflict of the ideas and ideals,' 'confusion,' and so on. Furthermore, the immediate consequences of this subjugating process on modern Indian subjects were condemned as 'habits of soulless thinking,' 'mechanical thinking of the galvanic mind,' and 'shadow mind' – "that functions like a real mind except in the matter of genuine creativeness" (SI.4; 1984: 385). To be sure, Bhattacharyya thought that the East-West encounter as enacted by the British colonialization of India was based upon a relation of asymmetry involving cultural imposition on the one side and dysfunctional

¹²⁵ "Svaraj in Ideas" was first published in *Visva Bharati Quarterly*, 20 (1954, pp. 103–114). It was later reprinted in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, 11(4), pp. 383–393, 1984; and recently presented to a wider audience in Bhushan and Garfield (2011: 101–111).

and uncritical assimilation on the other. This process gave rise to a type of mind – the modern Indian mind – which was essentially emulative and lacking in creativity.

In his “Svaraj in Ideas” K. C. Bhattacharyya was concerned, then, with condemning the uncritical cultural assimilation at work in the colonial setup in which he himself was immersed. He began his subversive narrative on the predicament of East-West encounters with a reflection on the theme of cultural subjugation and asserted fearlessly that “cultural subjection” is a “subtler domination” than “political subjection” (SI.1). To the detriment of uncritical amalgamation, he made a plea for an “open-eyed” and “vital” assimilation of East and West (SI.2-3). To this end, he narrated a powerful etiology and genealogy of modern Indian “habits of soulless thinking” (SI.4-9), pointing to the language policy in colonial India, the imposition of the British education system, “the impact of Western political, social and economic institutions on our daily life” (Bhattacharyya 1984: 387), and – above all – the attitude of assimilating uncritically the Western Other as immediately responsible for what he took as a deplorable state of affairs. His narrative entailed a deep lament and frustration about the lack attested in the cultural sphere of an “Indian contribution in a distinctive Indian style to the culture and thought of the modern world” (SI.4) as well as substantial pronouncements on modern Indian self-perception and narrative (SI.5), politics and social reform (SI.6), modern Indian literary criticism (SI.7), and telling reflections on the project of modern Indian philosophy (SI.9). As he moved on, he addressed the nature of modern Indian mind in terms of hybridization and patchwork (SI.10-13). The notion of cultural hybridization denotes what for Bhattacharyya was a sterile amalgamation of Eastern and Western ideas and values. Hybridization entailed, to be sure, a confusion which was as much intellectual as axiological. He was categorical that cultural patchwork attained through uncritical assimilation is nothing but evil (SI.14). Furthermore, Bhattacharyya linked his analysis of cultural hybridization and patchwork to the language situation. While arguing for the universality of reason, he stressed the embedded nature of ideas in cultures, and timidly remarked on the shortcomings inherent in translating meaning across cultural languages.¹²⁶ To the detriment of English, Bhattacharyya vindicated then the use of Indian vernacular as the medium of intellectual expression and exchange and foresaw that the cultural autonomy he was appeal-

¹²⁶ “Thought or reason may be universal, but ideas are carved out of it differently by different cultures according to their respective genius. No idea of one cultural language can exactly be translated in another cultural language” (Bhattacharyya 1984: 388). Occasionally he warned and advised against translating technical Sanskrit terms into English. See, for instance, SV.1.86 (Bhattacharyya 2008: 70).

ing to required recovering Indian vernaculars as a means of intellectual production.¹²⁷ Strangely enough, he said nothing about whether Sanskrit was to play any special role in regaining the kind of cultural autonomy he was endorsing.

In the context of such reading of his zeitgeist, Bhattacharyya's vindication of cultural autonomy – rather than political, on which he remained silent – built upon the basic insight that cultural subjugation is deeper than the political one, as it soaks deeply into the unconscious and becomes unnoticed to the extent that it remains unacknowledged by the self-consciousness of the subjected and is therefore much more pernicious (SI.1). The plea for cultural emancipation he voiced in SI is to be understood as vindicating the reversion of this colonial and dysfunctional relation. Thus, to the detriment of uncritical amalgamation of cultural elements belonging to both East and West, he made a plea for a critically accomplished and nuanced fusion of horizons, an “open-eyed” and “vital” assimilation of East and West (SI.2-3).

4.2.2 Charting cultural attitudes toward the Western Other

As the call for open-eyed assimilation entails, Bhattacharyya was not altogether against cultural assimilation. Despite his colonial context – or perhaps partially because of it – he professed a dialogical stance.¹²⁸ It was not cultural synthesis per se that he was denouncing in SI. It was, rather, that cultural assimilation which was uncritical; that is, a cultural assimilation in which new ideas and ideals belonging to one culture overtake another “without comparison or competition” (SI.1; Bhattacharyya 1984: 383). It is the lack of this *epistemological factor* in cultural imposition and assimilation that was, above all else, being targeted in SI. In other words, K. C. Bhattacharyya was condemning the non-rational factors operating in the cultural relations between the colonizing Western Other and the colonized Indian subjects and calling for analysing and revising them critically. Providing that the intercultural contact between India and the West were mediated by a reflective and pondering attitude, Bhattacharyya was open and willing to partake in cultural assimilation.

Krishnachandra professed a nuanced attitude toward the East and West encounter. He outlined his thought on the issue explicitly on two different occasions. First, in SV, he foresaw in quite normative fashion that any attempt to

¹²⁷ As he had it: “If the language difficulty could be surmounted, it would mean a big step towards the achievement of what I have called Svaraj in Ideas” (SI.11; Bhattacharyya 1984: 387).

¹²⁸ More precisely, Bhattacharyya advocated a confronting intellectual attitude and outlined in SI.9 a project for what I would like to call Indian ‘confrontative’ philosophy. By calling it ‘confrontative’ I mean to highlight that its main concern while crossing cultural boundaries was to contrast and to confront; and then only, eventually, to assimilate. For my discussion of the ‘confrontative’ feature in Bhattacharyya’s philosophy, see Odyniec (2018).

compare and contrast Eastern and Western thought could take divergent directions. It could attempt to resolve any eventual shortcoming arising from such confrontation by finding them “only apparent” (Bhattacharyya 2008: 5). In such case, the intellectual effort would be invested in legitimatizing the Indian position, arguing for its coherence and consistency. That is, Bhattacharyya thought that Indian theoretical stances could be explored in the face of the Western Other as embodying different theoretical attitudes and orientations which, though different from “European common-sense or scientific thought” (2008: 5), should not be necessarily regarded as exclusive or reciprocally excluding. Despite being perhaps radically different, they could still be compatible. Bhattacharyya was open, however, to acknowledging that in those cases in which the inconsistencies and clashes between Eastern and Western thought proved substantial and could neither be worked out nor ignored, a further critical analysis might eventually reveal that the Eastern alternative was nothing but a chimera.¹²⁹

The second occasion in which Krishnachandra reflected on the attitude toward the Western Other was in SI. In that context, he was exploring the response that Indian traditional ideals could make to imposed ideals coming from the modern Western world.¹³⁰ He laid out three alternative attitudes entailing respect without acceptance, uncompromised pursuit of synthesis, and acceptance of alien ideals as the fulfilment of one’s own. Those were, indeed, three diametrically different cultural attitudes. While the first one is respectful but uninterested in any fusion of horizons, the remaining two are compromised with cultural assimilation, but on different ground and to different extents. One may portray them respectively as involving rejection, mutual assimilation, and totally one-sided acceptance. In the context of such layout of cultural attitudes toward Western ideals, Bhattacharyya did not endorse any of these alternatives univocally. Quite on the contrary, he remained open to any of

¹²⁹ “To European common-sense, certain forms of Indian speculation may appear absurd or puerile at best; while now and then there are presented heights and depths of thought which take away and stifle one’s breath, and which an all too comfortable rationalism designates hyper-subtle and mystical. An attempt should be made to show that in some cases at least the contradiction to European common-sense or scientific thought is only apparent, and that the Indian position, properly understood, whether true or false, is a development of thought in an unsuspected direction, though by no means incompatible with Western thought; while in certain other cases where there is a real contradiction to European common-sense, an analysis of this apparently absolute standard may, peradventure, yield dissolving views in which the Eastern thought is found to alternate with its Western counterpart with the naïveté of a summer dream” (SV.1; Bhattacharyya 2008: 5). As I will argue later on, Bhattacharyya’s own Advaita philosophy and his concept of philosophy defended in 1936 as a body of knowledge alternative to science exemplifies well the first attitude toward the Western Other that was elaborated here much earlier in SV in 1907.

¹³⁰ “But the world confronts us not only with aggressive interests but also with aggressive ideals. What response should our traditional ideals make to these imposed ideals?” (Bhattacharyya 1984: 388).

these attitudes arguing that “Different responses may be demanded with respect to different ideals [...]” (SI.14; Bhattacharyya 1984: 388).

But who or what was the Western Other in Krishnachandra’s writings? Bhattacharyya addressed the Western Other on different occasions, with different purposes, and under different labels. Among them we find: “modern philosophical systems” (SV.Int; Bhattacharyya 2008: 1), “European habits of thought” (SV.Int; 2008: 5), “Western speculation” (SV.Int; 2008: 5), “scientific thought” and “European common-sense” (SV.Int; 2008: 5), or simply “Western thought” (SI.9; 1984: 386).¹³¹ All in all, Bhattacharyya seemed to be acquainted primarily with the philosophy of British empiricism, German (and to some extent British) idealism, and the philosophy of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). He entertained philosophical ideas in debate with David Hume (1711-1776), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Both Kant and Hegel were major influences on Bhattacharyya’s own philosophy (Burch 1967) that recurred time and again in his intellectual production. There were also sporadic references to Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), William James (1842-1910) and Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924).¹³² It was, however, the philosophy of Immanuel Kant that received his greatest attention and Krishnachandra wrote at least two essays on his thought.¹³³ Given these references, together with the simple fact that K. C. Bhattacharyya never mentioned, let alone engaged in, any work of Classical or Medieval Western philosophy, it seems safe to think that the Western intellectual Other was represented in Bhattacharyya’s thought by modern Western philosophy from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.¹³⁴

4.2.3 Retrieving the Indian intellectual past: Theoretic and methodological reflections

It is incontestable that Krishnachandra was not concerned with Indian cultural history at large and per se. Within the framework of his project on Indian

¹³¹ The imprecision of these designations is difficult to miss and may be highly informative. Indeed, it may reflect some fundamental assumptions in K. C. Bhattacharyya’s thinking: the West is Europe (German and British), and it represents philosophical modernity.

¹³² This survey is based on Bhattacharyya’s discussions in SV.

¹³³ “Studies in Kant” which was based upon lectures delivered in 1935 at Calcutta University (Burch 1967: 623) and *Kantdarśaner Tātparyā* which has been translated as *Implications of the Philosophy of Kant* by Tara Chatterjee and J. N. Mohanty (Ganeri 2016: 19).

¹³⁴ It is important to notice in this context that Bhattacharyya did not address Christian theology as a constitutive part of the Western Other; and in relation to this fact, that he was ready to treat Vedānda as primarily a religion, and secondarily as a philosophy (ASS.14; Bhattacharyya 2008: 118), but not as theology.

‘confrontative’ philosophy,¹³⁵ his intellectual quest was after India’s philosophical past only. Bhattacharyya thought that ancient Indian philosophy constituted the greatest contribution of Indian culture to the world. That splendid past, he thought, was now – under the colonial predicament – to be retrieved so as to contrast with and confront modern Western thought. The eventual outcome of this confrontation would translate into some sort of intellectual synthesis or critically achieved debunking of either system. Regardless of its outcome, this retrieval was decidedly meant in SI as an intellectual task in criticism, to be conducted and accomplished by and for the benefit of the modern Indian mind. I suggest that it was conceived as an integral part of the cultural emancipation of India; that is, it was a substantial ingredient of intellectual decolonization that involved vindicating and appropriating Indian philosophical past for cultural emancipation and empowerment.¹³⁶

Bhattacharyya was not, then, interested in the history of Indian philosophical tradition per se so much as in retrieving it because he considered it of direct help in interpreting and accounting for the current state of the world. That is, he fostered a philosophical engagement with India’s philosophical past and meant it to confront the understanding of the world as discussed in modern Western philosophy. This kind of appropriation of classical Indian philosophy had already been well exercised in SV where Krishnachandra aimed to retrieve the “later Vedānta” in relation to and discussion with modern Western philosophical systems. In that context, he understood his enterprise

¹³⁵ This project was not treated on its own in any of Bhattacharyya’s writings. The major traits of this project which I call Indian ‘confrontative’ philosophy—see footnote 128 above—can be reconstructed from SI.9 and his introduction to SV.

¹³⁶ As he wrote: “In philosophy hardly anything that has been written by a modern educated Indian shows that he has achieved a synthesis of Indian thought with Western thought. There is nothing like a judgment on Western systems from the standpoint of Indian philosophy, and although some appraisal of Indian philosophy has been attempted from the Western standpoint, there appears to be no recognition yet that a criticism of the fundamental notions of either philosophy is necessary before there can be any useful comparative estimate. And yet it is in philosophy that one could look for an effective contact between Eastern and Western ideas. The most prominent contribution of ancient India to the culture of the world is in the field of Philosophy and if the Modern Indian Mind is to philosophise at all to any purpose, it has to confront Eastern thought and Western thought with one another and attempt a synthesis or a reasoned rejection of either, if that were possible. It is in philosophy, if anywhere, that the task of discovering the soul of India is imperative for the modern Indian: the task of achieving, if possible, the continuity of his old self with his present-day self, of realizing what is nowadays called the Mission of India, if it has any. Genius can unveil the soul of India in art, but it is through philosophy that we can methodically attempt to discover it” (SI.9; Bhattacharyya 1984: 386-387).

to be both interpretative and problematic,¹³⁷ while deeply motivated by contrasting Vedāntism with European habits of thinking.¹³⁸ Moving away from the role of a mere narrator, apologist, and academic compiler, he presented himself as a sympathetic interpreter and constructor of Vedāntism.¹³⁹

Furthermore, Bhattacharyya showed disciplinary awareness when he endorsed his interpretative engagement with Vedānta. He defended it as a legitimate intellectual endeavour that was alternative to philologically based historical engagement. To be sure, Krishnachandra foresaw intelligently that these two disciplines entail different theoretical aims and methodological procedures. However, despite their diverging agendas he did not conceive these disciplines as being mutually exclusive but rather supplementary to one another;¹⁴⁰ though he plainly showed his own preference for philosophical interpretative engagement. He backed up this disciplinary inclination with three arguments. First, he thought that philosophical study should precede the historical. Second, he asserted that the epistemological danger of interpretative engagement he professed – anachronism, or as he explained it “too easily reading one’s philosophic creed into the history” (Bhattacharyya 2008: 1) – was not as severe as the corresponding danger of the history of philosophy. As he wrote, this danger consisted “in taking the philosophic type studied as a historic curiosity [...] and seeking to explain the curiosity by natural *causes* instead of seriously examining its merits as philosophy” (2008: 1). Third, he criticized a certain ideology of cultural progress according to which the common-sense in effect at each moment in history was absolutely infallible (2008:

¹³⁷ “The following studies in Vedāntism are not so much expositions of the traditional Vedānta as problematic constructions on Vedāntic lines intended to bring out the relations of the system to modern philosophical systems. The work of construction has, however, been subordinated to the work of interpretation. A wide latitude of interpretation has been claimed throughout” (SV.Int; Bhattacharyya 2008: 1).

¹³⁸ “In a reproduction of Vedāntism such as we have proposed, no attempt need be made to distinguish the points common to the Indian systems from those which are specifically Vedāntic. Special care, however, should be taken to develop from first principles such Vedāntic positions as being distinctively Indian present a marked contrast to European habits of thought. There are sundry deep-seated differences between Eastern and Western speculations” (Bhattacharyya 2008: 5).

¹³⁹ “The attitude of the mere narrator has in the case of the historian of philosophy, to be exchanged as far as possible, for that of the sympathetic interpreter” (Bhattacharyya 2008: 1); and “The attitude to be borne towards the present subject should be neither that of the apologist nor that of the academic compiler but that of the interpreter which involves, to a certain extent, that of the constructor, too” (2008: 5).

¹⁴⁰ “The historical study of a school of thought must have methods and aims different from those of a philosophical study, though the studies are mutually supplementary. The philosophical study should come first in the order of time; the historical study of an ancient system of philosophy, to be of use at all, must be preceded by an earnest study of the philosophy, in the expositions traditionally accepted as authoritative. The correctness of these expositions – at any rate, the perspective – may be impugned afterwards by historic research. But the historian here cannot begin his work at all unless he can live in sympathy into the details of an apparently outworn creed and recognise the *truth* in the first imperfect adumbrations of it” (2008: 1).

2) and necessarily superior to any belonging to the past. Such an outlook renders the intellectual achievements of the past into historical curiosities that bear little or no consequence upon the present. He complained about explaining away and assessing Indian philosophical past in terms of something else – like natural causes – and against this sort of reductionism he reasserted his own project for recovering the Indian intellectual past so as to confront the colonial present.¹⁴¹

Confrontation and contrast were, for the most part, the driving forces of Krishnachandra's interpretative undertaking: an intellectual enterprise that he conceived as having different aims and methodology from the project of academic intellectual history. In his philosophical project, the intellectual past of India was called for and regained as a resource for a subaltern meaning-making within colonial India. As Jonardon Ganeri has successfully argued, the discovery of classical Indian culture by Indian intellectuals writing from within the colonial predicament was a conscious strategy and a technique of intellectual decolonization that aimed at provincializing Europe.¹⁴² Bhattacharyya's engagement with the Indian philosophical past was entirely committed to such an intellectual decolonization and provincializing of the Western Other. His engagement with the Indian classics built then on the "aesthetic sympathy" towards the ancient life-ideals and forms of life underpinning ancient Indian thought. As he wrote:

[...] to contemplate with something of an aesthetic sympathy an ancient life-ideal animating an organised body of ancient thought, just to quicken, it may be for a moment, the consciousness, always very torpid, that the dominating ideal of the day is only one among many possible ... a true philosophical system is not to be looked upon as a soulless jointing of hypothesis; it is a living fabric which, with all its endeavour to be objective, must have a well-marked individuality. Hence it is not to be regarded as the special property of academic philosophy-mongers, to be hacked up by them into technical views, but is to be regarded as a form of life and to be treated as theme of literature of infinite interest to humanity.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ "When history thus sits in judgment on philosophy, an Indian student of Vedānta may well be excused if to him a reproduction of the philosophy, such as may bring it into contact with modern problems, appears far more important than any mere historical dissertation" (2008: 2).

¹⁴² See Ganeri (2016: 15-17). Ganeri writes: "To whom do we owe the 'discovery' of a distinctively Indian notion of the classic? We should turn to the work of those undoubtedly brilliant Indian philosophers whose intellectual lives fell during the epoch of British colonialism. They sought, and this was a conscious strategy of intellectual decolonization, to identify some Indian alternative to the European idea of the classical. The idea of an Indian classicity thus served to provincialize Europe. The clearest example of the way in which the notion of an Indian classic is drawn on to serve the purpose of intellectual decolonization is in the work of Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, in particular, his series of brilliant interpretation of the classical Indian philosophical systems of Yoga, Sāṃkhya, Alambkāra, and Vedānta" (Ganeri 2016: 15-16).

¹⁴³ SV.Int; Bhattacharyya 2008: 6.

4.2.4 K. C. Bhattacharyya's agenda for conceptualising liberating knowledge

I have argued so far that Bhattacharyya condemned the colonial predicament of the modern Indian mind for its asymmetry and devastating results. He censured the attitude of uncritical assimilation and the hybridity and patchwork defining modern Indian culture no less than the emulating mentality partaking in such cultural amalgamation. I have stressed that though he damned such dysfunctional mimicking and assimilation of the Western Other, he was not altogether against cultural assimilation. Bhattacharyya held that some sort of synthesis between East and West could be eventually achieved through contrast and confrontation. His project of 'confrontative' philosophy was meant to be a step forward in that very direction. It was committed to approaching and retrieving the philosophical past of India – particularly Advaita Vedānta – as a substantial resource for outlining an alternative and subversive understanding of the world at large that could confront and challenge the modern Western Other. The intersection of these factors allows us to understand K. C. Bhattacharyya's agenda for engaging with liberating knowledge.

As I will explain in this chapter, Krishnachandra thought that the Advaitic cult of the self as self-knowledge could confront some fundamental features of Western epistemology as embodied in Kantian transcendental philosophy. Particularly, Bhattacharyya was concerned with opening and defending a theoretical space within the epistemology and intellectual disciplines of the Western Other for such a cult of self-knowledge. His attempt required elaborating afresh the very concept of philosophy as a body of knowledge distinct from science. In the course of such reconceptualization, Bhattacharyya was particularly careful to avoid what he understood to be an undesirable shortcoming of Kant's transcendental philosophy: a sceptical stance on self-knowledge. To his mind, Advaita Vedānta was a resource that could be fruitfully exploited to this end. The project he embarked on meant rethinking the concept of philosophy by analogy with *manana* and defending the viability of self-knowledge by challenging the necessity for equating knowing with thinking.

While such agenda is not without its problems,¹⁴⁴ I submit that it was deeply driven by an attempt to remediate a certain lack that Bhattacharyya detected in Indian cultural production during the colonial era. As he lamented:

One would have expected after a century of contact with the vivifying ideas of the west that there should be a vigorous output of Indian contribution in a distinctive Indian style to the culture and thought of the modern world – contribution specially to the humane subjects like history, philosophy or literature, a contribution such as may be enjoyed by our countrymen who still happen to retain their vernacular mind and which might be recognized by others as reflecting the distinctive soul of India.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ I will address some of these problems in the concluding section of this chapter.

¹⁴⁵ SI.4; Bhattacharyya 1984: 385.

I suggest that, on the whole, Bhattacharyya's agenda for conceptualizing liberating knowledge was very much about articulating an independent and modern Indian intellectual identity in the context of the modern Western world, its epistemology, intellectual disciplines, and its values. Such a narrative was certainly sought in discussion – in the form of contrast and confrontation – with the Western Other, but it was also meant as a distinctively Indian contribution.

4.3. Philosophy as *manana*: Defining philosophy from the vantage point of Advaita

4.3.1 Philosophy as means to self-knowledge

There are two major features in Bhattacharyya's conceptualization of liberating knowledge. The first one is his notion of philosophy as a means to self-knowledge. The second one is his attempt to legitimize this philosophical project by contrasting and distinguishing it from science as a body of knowledge. Both ideas are intimately related and represent Bhattacharyya's intellectual effort to safeguard the viability and intelligibility of the Advaitic cult of self-knowledge within the epistemological framework of the Western Other. That is, Bhattacharyya's articulation of liberating knowledge entails reflecting on the nature of philosophical endeavour as well as on its specific difference from the scientific pursuit of knowledge. At the same time, his attempt will confront the Kantian project of transcendental philosophy, challenging its scepticism as to the possibility of self-knowledge and its equation of knowledge with thinking.

By interpreting Bhattacharyya's notion of philosophy as *manana* I mean to say that Bhattacharyya regarded philosophic reflection as a cognitive activity that was not to be conducted for its own sake and satisfaction. Neither was it for him an open-ended activity that remained wholly uncommitted to any specific goal. Nor was it an armchair philosophy. Quite the contrary, Bhattacharyya's concept of philosophy implied thinking about it as a necessary cognitive stage partaking in a wider cognitive process that was entirely goal-oriented. Philosophic thinking was, to be sure, defined by its subservience to the Advaitic soteriological programme of self-knowledge. It was inscribed in a well-defined cognitive process culminating in self-knowledge attained in a modality of knowing beyond thinking.¹⁴⁶ Its own worth was then entirely propaedeutic. Conceived in this way, philosophic thinking featured all the major properties of *manana*.

The cognitive process alluded to is of course that of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*. Bhattacharyya's understanding of this process is reflected in a

¹⁴⁶ I will address the issue on the modality of knowing beyond thinking towards the end of this chapter.

number of passages where he addressed it either explicitly or implicitly.¹⁴⁷ Bhattacharyya must have been aware that the original Vedāntic context of these terms is the BrhUp.2.4.5. On one occasion at least, he seemed to be mindful of the original utterance of Yājñavalkya¹⁴⁸ when he made the following important remark on this entire cognitive process:

The self is to be known – accepted in the first instance in faith, which, as confirmed, clarified, and formulated by reason would be ‘inwardized’ into a vision. This work of reason is philosophy, which is thus not only an auxiliary discipline, but an integral part of the religion and its characteristic self-expression.¹⁴⁹

Moreover, Bhattacharyya was certainly aware of at least one Sanskrit definition of *manana*, since in SV.3.85 he defined it by giving a rather free translation of the definition to be found in Dharmarāja’s VP.¹⁵⁰ In these passages, Bhattacharyya is willing to make philosophical reasoning subservient to the Vedāntic injunction to know the self. This injunction is fulfilled subsequently in a progressive cognitive process, as the self is taken to be the object of faith, philosophic reasoning, and finally ‘inwardizing’. The distinctive activity of philosophical reflection is portrayed as having everything to do with confirming, clarifying, and formulating by reason (ASS.14) what is received first in faith from the Vedāntas. Bhattacharyya endorsed the role of faith as the starting point of this entire cognitive process on several occasions. In one of those, for example, he wrote: “[...] how is the enquiry into it [i.e., the self] to begin at all? Some provisional belief (śraddhā) is required to start the enquiry” (SV.3.84; 2008: 69).¹⁵¹ In this scheme of things, philosophical reflection becomes a constitutive part of a goal-oriented process culminating in self-knowledge. Philosophical thinking becomes a necessary cognitive modality in the economy of self-knowledge, though its very nature is to give way to the modalities of cognition that are not defined either by reasoning or thought-

¹⁴⁷ ASS.14; Bhattacharyya 2008: 119; ASS.23; 2008: 123; SV.1.23; 2008: 24-25; SV.3.84; 2008: 69; SV.3.85; 2008: 70.

¹⁴⁸ In the Upaniṣadic passage, Yājñavalkya tells his wife Maitreyī: *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi / ātmano va are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānena idaṃ sarvaṃ viditā* / “You see, Maitreyī, one should see and hear, think and contemplate on the self; for by seeing and hearing, thinking and contemplating on the self this entire [world] is known” (BrhUp.2.4.5).

¹⁴⁹ ASS.14; Bhattacharyya 2008: 119.

¹⁵⁰ “Manana is defined as ‘the mental act which generates knowledge by means of arguments defending the truth embodied in the texts against objections preferred by other evidences (pramāṇa)’” (SV.3.85; Bhattacharyya 2008: 70). Bhattacharyya is translating here VP.9.23, which reads: *mananam nāma śabdādvadhārīte rthe mānāntaravirodhasaṅkāyām tan-nirākaraṇānukūlatarkāmakajñānanako mānasavyāpārah*.

¹⁵¹ On another such occasion, where he spoke of the the “illusoriness of our self” as the central notion of Advaita Vedānda, he wrote: “As we are, it is indeed only in faith, if at all, that we accept the illusoriness of our individuality” (ASS.2; Bhattacharyya 2008: 113).

process.¹⁵² Philosophy becomes thus a means to an end and is in stark contrast to an open-ended and autonomous reflective activity.

Bhattacharyya's will to make philosophical reasoning subservient to scriptural injunctions enacted the Advaitic defence of *manana* over *śuṣkatarka* or 'dry reasoning' that stretches back to Śaṅkara. The principle of *vedamūlatva* or 'being rooted in the Veda' was a decisive criterion for legitimizing reflective activity within the Advaitic tradition.¹⁵³ Thus, in another passage, Bhattacharyya portrayed the activity of *manana* by emphasizing its inherent commitment to refuting heretical objections as well as its efficiency to indicate what by definition cannot be apprehended by the process of reasoning. As he reflected:

At the same time Vedānta allows that for the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman, there is required not only śravaṇa (hearing of revealed texts and trying to understand them) but also manana and nididhyāsana. The exact relation of these processes has been disputed, but the processes themselves are recognised in all Vedāntic schools. Manana is defined as 'the mental act which generates knowledge by means of arguments defending the truth embodied in the texts against objections preferred by other evidences (pramāṇa)'. Inference, and the other natural sources of knowledge, cannot yield the sacred truths but only point to them. So proofs of the existence of God in European philosophy have sometimes been pronounced to be no proofs, for the conclusion there necessarily transcends the premises. Inference, etc., however, show the direction along which one may proceed to the truths. They refute heretical objections; and by detaining the thoughts about the truths, they enable the mind to get a tight grip of them and thus prepare the way for realizing them in ecstatic intuition.¹⁵⁴

Bhattacharyya's treatment of *manana* as refuting heretical objections builds on Dharmarāja's *mānāntaravirodhaśaṅkā* 'hindering doubts related to other means of knowing' occurring in VP.9.23. Seen from this perspective, the task of *manana* seems to entail a sort of intellectual endeavour that would be better translated and regarded as exegetic or theological reasoning.¹⁵⁵ Bhattacharyya, however, conceived *manana* as an entirely philosophical task or – to put it the other way around – conceptualized philosophical reflection on the analogy of *manana*. Accordingly, and given the fact that the contents that *manana* was to defend were given to it by the scriptures of Vedānta and were – in the last analysis – rationally ineffable, philosophical reflection conceived by analogy with *manana* meant endorsing its incapability to give a *de facto* demonstration of its conclusions. Bhattacharyya believed that, just as with establishing proofs

¹⁵² This is how I understand Bhattacharyya's statement in ASS.14 (2008: 119). I take his "'inwardized' into a vision" as denoting precisely such a modality of thought-free cognition. For my discussion of this issue, see below, section 4.4.4.

¹⁵³ See Halbfass (1991: 145).

¹⁵⁴ SV.3.85; Bhattacharyya 2008: 70.

¹⁵⁵ See Clooney (2003: 447-477).

for the existence of God, the contents of philosophy – the Self – transcended the inferential premises and the process of inference. That is, the Self, as with God, is not within the range of the inferential process. Conceiving such incapability on the part of *manana* to reach its content – the Self – meant fostering its ineffability and a somehow nonliteral understanding of the cognitive attainment achieved by means of philosophical reasoning. Strictly speaking, philosophical reflection could not be regarded as a process of proving that would actually yield proofs. Throughout his work, Bhattacharyya addressed this nonliteral attainment of contents in philosophical reflection with his notion of the symbolic.¹⁵⁶ Though scriptural contents such as the injunction to know oneself could not be fully realized in the domain of philosophical reflection, this was far from endorsing its worthlessness as regards this end. Bhattacharyya was thus far from downplaying the importance of rational thinking as enacted in philosophical enquiry within the project of self-knowledge. His resistance to doing so sets him aside from other retrievals of Advaita during the colonial period.¹⁵⁷ On the contrary, he thought that philosophical reflection played an important role in the Advaitic programme of self-knowledge. For though it couldn't reach its truths literally, it could and indeed was called upon to indicate them symbolically.¹⁵⁸ That is, philosophical reflection could point and, indeed, was required for pointing to the “sacred truths” and to “show the direction along which one may proceed to the truths” (SV.3.85). This indicative function of philosophical reasoning was to constitute its own distinctive role in the economy of the entire cognitive process culminating in self-knowledge to which philosophical reflection was but a means.

In fact, Bhattacharyya extended his analysis of the symbolic function of philosophical reflection to the phenomenal world (SV.3.84) and the object at large which he interpreted in terms of “absolute appearance” (ASS.16). Casting his thought into Kantian terminology, he took the phenomenal world to “*suggest* the noumenon” (Bhattacharyya 2008: 69).¹⁵⁹ And he did the same in

¹⁵⁶ This capital idea was most conspicuously addressed by Bhattacharyya in his CPh (1936). I will analyse it in my next section. The fundamental intuition behind it was already outlined in SV (1907).

¹⁵⁷ I am particularly thinking here in Swami Vivekananda. See Rambachan (1994)

¹⁵⁸ When K. C. Bhattacharyya was appealing to the symbolic function of philosophical reasoning he was timidly but unequivocally resorting to one among several methods that Indian philosophy envisaged for approaching and dealing with the ineffable. See “Mysticism and Reality: Ineffability” (Matilal 2002: 3-39). What I mean to say here is that Bhattacharyya's depiction of *manana* as a symbolic activity the function of which is not to literally prove but to indirectly indicate or “show the way” has to be related to what the Sanskrit tradition of philosophical semantics called *lakṣaṇā* ‘connotation’ or ‘implication.’

¹⁵⁹ “If the ecstatic intuition in which alone the supersensuous is knowable is not forthcoming at once, and if the phenomenal world only *suggests* the noumenon as a thought, though it may be necessary thought, how is the enquiry into it to begin at all? Some provisional belief (*śraddhā*) is required to start the enquiry” (SV.3.84; Bhattacharyya 2008: 69).

ASS, where he described Advaita as a “strong spirituality” which “boldly denies the world,” but without taking the illusory object as imaginary or “absolute naught” (ASS.16). That is, Bhattacharyya presumed that, while Advaita ultimately deprives the world of its ontological status, it allows it a symbolic value with an epistemological function to play. Though devoid of being, the world ought to be interpreted as “absolute appearance, as a necessary symbolism of the spirit” (ASS.16). In the end, Bhattacharyya took logic, law, and the entire world as a symbolism subservient to the soteriological aim of self-knowledge. Though in the final analysis he took them to be unreal in themselves, he thought of them as showing the reality beyond, the self. As he wrote:

Advaitism stands for a strong spirituality, for efficient practice of idealism, for unworldliness that is neither sentimental nor fanatical. It does not assert the detachment or freedom of the self from the world, it boldly denies the world, though it does not take even the illusory object to be merely imaginary (*tuccha*) [...] While the spirit is taken as the only reality, the object is understood not as absolute naught, but as absolute appearance, as a necessary symbolism of the spirit. Logic, law, and the revealed word itself are all in this sense symbolism – unreal in themselves and yet showing the reality beyond. The object has thus to be accepted in order to be effectively denied. One has to be a realist to outgrow realism.¹⁶⁰

One major implication of defending philosophical reflection on the analogy of *manana* was to acknowledge it as an integral part of Vedāntic religion. To the extent that philosophical reflection is a constitutive part of a wider cognitive and soteriological process culminating in self-knowledge, and because that process neither begins nor culminates in the domain of philosophy proper, philosophical reflection partakes in a broader programme of self-knowledge advocated by Vedānta. K. C. Bhattacharyya certainly did regard Vedānta as both religion and philosophy. As he wrote, “Vedānta is primarily a religion, and it is a philosophy only as the formulation of this religion” (ASS.14; Bhattacharyya 2008: 118). In his descriptions of Vedānta as a religion, Bhattacharyya was concerned with pointing out its specificity and distinctive merit (ASS.14; 20) and contrasted it with other religions as well as other expressions of Hinduism (ASS.14; 22). Taken together, his statements portray Advaitism as the pinnacle of Hinduism, Hindu society, and in fact of all forms of religion (ASS.22). He sought to establish such a thesis by a tacit presupposition privileging the inner dimension of religion. According to this assumption, religion as such (or natural religion) consists in the realization of the self in self-knowledge. In his own distinctive terminology, he referred to this inner dimension of religion with the neologism ‘inwardizing’ by which he meant the process of “deepening of faith into subjective realization” (ASS.20). Thus, Bhattacharyya held that while “All religion makes for the realization of the

¹⁶⁰ ASS.16; Bhattacharyya 2008: 119-120. For similar statements, see also CPh.3; 2008: 462.

self as sacred [...] the religion of Advaita is the specific cult of such realization understood explicitly as self-knowledge, as sacred knowledge, and as nothing but knowledge” (ASS.14; 2008: 118). And while he conceived that all religions are underpinned by an individualistic attitude in the sense that they entail “‘inwardizing’ of one’s subjective being, a deepening of one’s spiritual individuality” (ASS.15; 2008: 119), he avowed that “The merit of Advaitavāda lies in having explicitly recognized that spiritual work is this ‘inwardizing’, the deepening of faith into subjective realization, the striving after self-knowledge” (ASS.20; 2008: 121). As these statements suggest, Bhattacharyya saw the superiority of Advaita in terms of its uncompromised alliance with the inner dimension of religion, its “striving after self-knowledge” (ASS.20). Thus, he was willing to stress that “Without rejecting any other sādhana, it [Advaita Vedānta] prescribes knowledge as its distinctive sādhana and regards it as a self-sufficing and requiring no supplementation (samuccaya)” (ASS.14; 2008: 119).

On at least one occasion, Krishnachandra also addressed the interface between Vedānta as a religion and as a philosophy in terms of their outlook and attitude. To be sure, Bhattacharyya contrasted the individualistic outlook of religion with the universalistic attitude displayed in philosophy.¹⁶¹ Philosophical reflection was not about individual faith or individual mystic or ecstatic experience. It was, rather, about defending the content of that individual faith with philosophical argumentation accepting that it could not be literally proved by the act of reasoning. Though such demonstration was outside its scope, philosophical reflection was still to be cultivated as a necessary stage on the path to self-knowledge. That is, philosophical reflection was a means to a soteriological end defined as self-knowledge the culmination of which was to be achieved in a domain beyond philosophy proper, in a modality of knowing beyond thinking.

4.3.2 Conceptualising philosophy in contrast with science

Bhattacharyya understood that his willingness to conceive philosophy by analogy with *manana* as a means to a soteriological goal – self-knowledge – had to face science as the defining paradigm of knowledge when he came to present that conception of philosophy to the Western Other. The exact relation between science as a modality of knowledge and philosophy as a means was, however, to be determined and explained. Bhattacharyya addressed this very

¹⁶¹ “Advaitism as religion and philosophy in one is at once individualistic and universalistic in its spiritual outlook. Religion is nothing if not individualistic; it is an ‘inwardizing’ of one’s subjective being, a deepening of one’s spiritual individuality, this being the unspoken inner function even of a religion with the salvation of all as its professed objective. Philosophy, on the other hand, is essentially universalistic in its attitude, presenting a truth that is for all, and is not merely a mystic experience of the individual philosopher” (ASS.15; Bhattacharyya 2008: 119).

issue in one of his most seminal articles, “The Concept of Philosophy” (1936). His attitude here was certainly one of confrontation. That is, Bhattacharyya aimed at confronting the scientific paradigm of knowledge with his notion of philosophy as *manana*. This did not mean trying to invalidate the scientific paradigm of knowledge. Rather, it meant asserting that the notion of philosophy he had in mind was a modality of knowledge different from science. This was also, no doubt, an attempt to legitimize that very notion of philosophy in the face of Western science. In the course of this confrontation, Bhattacharyya was to engage the Kantian project of transcendental philosophy. The reason for doing so was clear enough: as Bhattacharyya read him, Kant’s definition and legitimation of philosophy in the face of science meant adopting a sceptical stance concerning the possibility of knowing the Self. As he interpreted him in SF: “Self-knowledge is denied by Kant: the self cannot be known but only thought through the objective categories – unity, substantiality etc., there being no intuition of it” (SF.22; 2008: 393). Thus, Krishnachandra’s concept of philosophy as a means to self-knowledge had to confront the Western Other on two different fronts. This programme was clearly announced at the very outset of CPh:

An explication of the concept of philosophy appears to me more important than the discussion of any specific problem of philosophy. The possibility of philosophy as a body of knowledge distinct from science is nowadays called in question. I may indicate my general position by stating wherein I differ from the Kantian view of the subject.¹⁶²

To be sure, Bhattacharyya’s intellectual endeavour in CPh was an exercise in his ‘confrontative’ philosophy. It sought to confront Western modern science and Kant’s scepticism with a distinctively Indian alternative, the Advaitic programme of self-knowledge and philosophy as *manana*. At the core of this confrontation was an epistemological issue. That is, Bhattacharyya contested the Kantian scepticism concerning the possibility of self-knowledge by reopening the fundamental epistemological question on the meaning and relation between thinking and knowing (CPh.2)¹⁶³ and confronted science by arguing that philosophy entailed an altogether different modality of speech and kind of judgments. In short, his exercise in ‘confrontative’ philosophy entailed tackling and departing from Kant on the following crucial issues: whereas for Kant – he thought – the self is unknowable but thinkable, Bhattacharyya takes the self to be unknown but knowable in a modality of knowing without thinking. And although the self is literally unthinkable in proper literal judgements, it is symbolically thinkable and believed as known or to be known. In confronting

¹⁶² CPh.1; Bhattacharyya 2008: 462.

¹⁶³ As Raghuramaraju points out: “Bhattacharyya claims that making ‘thinking’ as equivalent to ‘knowing’ in Kant is responsible for the agnosticism. He alleges that it is this equating of ‘thinking’ and ‘knowing’ which underlies the Kantian problematic” (Raghuramaraju 2013: 5).

science, Bhattacharyya worked out the differences between science and philosophy as different modalities of knowledge through his concept and grades of theoretical consciousness. Their differences were addressed in terms of (a) forms of speech that were involved in each knowledge discipline, (b) their respective content, the spoken, (c) in terms of the understanding of the ‘speaking,’ knowledge and belief, (d) in terms of the form of thought and kind of judgment operating in each modality of knowledge, and (e) with relation to whether speaking their contents is necessary or contingent in order to make them intelligible.

Bhattacharyya conceived both science and philosophy to be expressions of theoretic consciousness (CPh.6; CPh.18) to the extent that they present contents that can be expressed in words and systematically communicated.¹⁶⁴ By theoretic consciousness he meant essentially the understanding of what can be spoken. As he defined it, “Theoretic consciousness at its minimum is the understanding of the speakable” (CPh.6; Bhattacharyya 2008: 463). By speaking he meant the act of formulating beliefs¹⁶⁵ and contended that any content of theoretical consciousness that is expressed in words implies necessarily a previous belief in it.¹⁶⁶ Theoretic consciousness entailed, then, the act of understanding the spoken content and that in turn implied a previous belief in it. Thus, he asserted, “It is believed content that is spoken and it is the understanding of what can be spoken that constitutes the theoretic consciousness” (CPh.6; 2008: 463-464). To this extent, as modalities of theoretic consciousness, science and philosophy were equals. Bhattacharyya wished to theorize their difference in epistemological terms. That is, he contended that the understanding of what is expressed in words must not necessarily entail knowing the spoken content. On the contrary, he asserted that theoretic consciousness or the understanding of the spoken in any act of speech could imply knowing it as well as believing it as known or to be known. Understanding the spoken could entail a “belief in something as known or to be known” (CPh.7; 2008: 464). This seminal distinction consisted, then, in ascribing two different epistemological values to the understanding of the spoken: actual knowledge and belief that demanded knowing.

This fundamental distinction was further elaborated by relating these two epistemological values with literal and symbolic thinking. Bhattacharyya held that literal thinking was a *sine qua non* for gaining an understanding of the

¹⁶⁴ Science and philosophy, he contended, “present[s] beliefs that are speakable and systematically communicable” (CPh.6; Bhattacharyya 2008: 463).

¹⁶⁵ “To speak is to formulate a belief. Even imperative or exclamatory speech express some kind of belief of the speaker, though the belief is not primarily intended to be communicated” (CPh.6; Bhattacharyya 2008: 463).

¹⁶⁶ “What is spoken must be in the first instance believed. What is disbelieved must be, to start with, a believed content. The meaning of a sportive combination of words like the ‘hare’s horn’ or ‘square circle’ is only not believed and cannot even be said to be disbelieved. Nor is such combination said to be spoken except as an example of what is not spoken” (CPh.6; Bhattacharyya 2008: 463).

spoken as yielding knowledge. The contents of speech that could only be thought about symbolically could only yield a belief and pose a demand for knowledge. As he wrote: “If a content is literally thinkable in judgment, the belief in it as known is actual knowledge. If it is only symbolically thinkable, it is not said to be known but to be only believed as known” (CPh.16; 2008: 468) and “When the content is spoken symbolically, it may not be believed as known, but is at least understood as pointing to what is believed to be known” (CPh.17; Bhattacharyya 2008: 468). On top of that, Bhattacharyya explained literal and symbolic thinking in terms of judgments on which thinking builds and conceived science and philosophy as two different modalities of theoretical consciousness involving, respectively, literal and symbolic forms of thought as well as judgments proper and symbolical judgments. By judgment proper as displayed in science, Bhattacharyya meant judgments of relation. He exemplified such judgments in the formula ‘A is thus related to B.’ He asserted that when existential propositions in the form of judgment ‘X is’ appears in the context of scientific discourse, they are necessarily a periphrasis for judgments of this relational kind.¹⁶⁷ In addition, he defined judgment proper as the only judgment that is literally intelligible (CPh.10). Contrasting in these terms science and philosophy, he could state that: “In science, the content is spoken literally, and is just the content that is believed to be known and is as such actually known. In philosophy, the content is spoken as at least partially symbolised” (CPh.17; 2008: 468).

The symbolising function of philosophic propositions, the belief in their contents resulting from understanding them, and the deontology that believing posed for actually knowing them were then for Bhattacharyya what set philosophy aside from science. In contrast to the scientific modality of theoretic consciousness, the contents of philosophy were not spoken of literally through relational judgments (‘A is thus related to B’) but addressed symbolically in existential judgments (‘X is’) and could not therefore be known but just believed. Bhattacharyya was determined that believing in the philosophical contents posed a demand for knowing them in a modality of knowledge beyond thinking. Krishnachandra held, to be sure, that the symbolising function of philosophic discourse in which its contents are contemplated entails “the faith that it is just the process of reaching the truth without thinking” (CPh.4; Bhattacharyya 2008: 463). On the whole, then, philosophy was different from science to the extent that its contents were at least partially symbolised, which meant that they were not known in the domain of philosophy but contained a demand for knowing them without thinking in a domain that was beyond the scope of theoretic consciousness. This was in a way but to reassert the notion

¹⁶⁷ “A judgement of the form ‘X is,’ if it expresses belief in a fact of science, is only a periphrasis for a judgment of the above relational form [‘A is thus related to B’]. In ‘X is,’ if X stands for ‘A is related to B’, the assertion means either only that A is related to B or that A that is thus related is related to something else. Fact is always a fact related to facts” (CPh.10; Bhattacharyya 2008: 465).

of philosophy as a means to self-knowledge; for the subject was, certainly, one of the contents of philosophy as elaborated in CPh.

Bhattacharyya charted four grades of theoretic consciousness and three grades of philosophy. The former comprised: (1) science, (2) philosophy of the object, (3) philosophy of the subject, and (4) philosophy of truth (CPh.18). This was in tune with the four grades of thought (CPh.8) and the four grades of speaking (CPh.15).¹⁶⁸ Summarising much of his discussion on science and philosophy, Bhattacharyya wrote that:

Theoretic consciousness is embodied in science and philosophy. Science alone speaks in genuine judgments, the content of which is fact intelligible without reference to speaking and is alone actually known and literally thought. Philosophy deals with contents that are not literally thinkable and are not actually known but are believed as demanding to be known without being thought. Such contents are understood as self-subsistent object, real subject and transcendental truth. We have accordingly three grades of philosophy which may be roughly called philosophy of the object, philosophy of the subject and philosophy of truth.¹⁶⁹

Beside this comprehensive portrayal of theoretic consciousness, Krishnachandra divided the grades of thought into (1) empirical, (2) pure objective, (3) spiritual, and (4) transcendental.¹⁷⁰ He designated their respective contents or 'speakables' as (a) fact, (b) self-subsistence, (c) (subjective) reality or real subject, and (d) truth (CPh.8). In this scheme of things, Bhattacharyya conceived the realm of science to be coextensive with the empirical modality of thought in which conceptualizing, the act of apprehending its contents in language, is contingent for their intelligibility. Thus, in contrast with philosophy, science alone could speak of facts. Bhattacharyya defined 'fact' in several ways. He conceived it in relation to perception as its object; in relation to speech, as what is spoken of thematically and formulated in literal and relational judgments ('A is thus related to B'); and as an object of belief that is entirely independent of its thematisation in language.¹⁷¹ Yet from another angle, he thought of it in terms of objectivity as having no relation whatsoever to the subject. As he wrote: "Where the reference to the subject is no part of

¹⁶⁸ "The so-called grades of thought are really grades of speaking" (CPh.9; Bhattacharyya 2008: 464).

¹⁶⁹ CPh.18; Bhattacharyya 2008: 469.

¹⁷⁰ "Four forms or grades of thought may be distinguished. They may be roughly called empirical thought, pure objective thought, spiritual thought and transcendental thought" (CPh.8; Bhattacharyya 2008: 464). At times, these are also listed as: empirical, contemplative, enjoying, and transcendental thought.

¹⁷¹ "By 'fact' is meant what is perceivable or has necessary reference to the perceivable, is speakable in the form of a literal judgment and is believed without reference to the speaking of it" (CPh.19; Bhattacharyya 2008: 469); "Fact is always expressible as a judgment of the form 'A is thus related to B,' this being the only judgment-form that is literally intelligible" (CPh.10; 2008: 465).

the meaning of the object, the object is called fact and is dealt with in science” (CPh.25; Bhattacharyya 2008: 472).

All in all, in his CPh Bhattacharyya held that in stark contrast to the contents of empirical thought constituting the scientific modality of knowledge, philosophical contents – that is, the self-subsistent object, the real subject, and the truth – are not facts and to this very extent they are not intelligible without being spoken. As he asserted, “Speakability is a contingent character of the content of empirical thought, but it is a necessary character of the content of pure philosophic thought. In philosophy, the content that is spoken is not intelligible except as spoken” (CPh.9; Bhattacharyya 2008: 464-465). By claiming that the three contents of philosophy remain unintelligible if they are not addressed and formulated in language, Bhattacharyya was certainly endorsing some sort of primacy of language in the entire philosophic enterprise.¹⁷² However, there was a fundamental ambiguity here. On the one hand, philosophical contents needed to be thought and addressed in speech in order to become intelligible at all; on the other, they could not be thought nor spoken literally in judgments proper and were therefore not suitable to be actually known in the domain of theoretic consciousness. They were, however, addressed in symbolic judgments (‘X is’) and to this extent they were contents of theoretic belief which contained a demand for knowing them without thinking. Addressing the contents of philosophy in theoretic consciousness and formulating its three contents in symbolic language was thus a necessary stage in the economy of a bigger whole to which philosophy as the embodiment of theoretic consciousness was but a necessary means.

4.4. Climbing up the stairways of dissociation: Transcendental psychology and the promise of liberating knowledge

4.4.1 Opening the theoretic space for transcendental psychology

What I have addressed until now from Bhattacharyya’s concept of philosophy could be well summarized from the vantage point of ineffability and the ineffable. What I mean to say is that Bhattacharyya declared in his distinctive manner the shortcomings of language for denoting the (conceptually) ineffable. He avowed unmistakably the three contents of philosophy – the self-existent, subjective reality, and truth – to dwell beyond the threshold of the literally sayable. Thus, the conceptually ineffable and unsayable contents of philosophy were for him not spoken of as information but only hinted at symbolically. This deficiency of speech for denoting literally the contents of

¹⁷² He actually avowed this primacy explicitly in SF.14. I will come back to this point later on in this chapter.

philosophy implied also denying the possibility for apprehending them in knowledge. Indeed, it meant contending that these contents of theoretical consciousness could only be believed and entailed a demand for being known without thinking. Hence the aforementioned unwillingness of Bhattacharyya to assent to the Kantian confinement of knowing to thinking. Krishnachandra was not prepared to narrow down knowledge to thinking, since he believed that that equation (knowledge and thinking) was the very reason for Kant's scepticism as to the possibility of self-knowledge. The Advaita philosophy he endorsed and portrayed as the cult of self-knowledge made him resist and confront those same underpinnings while legitimising philosophy as a body of knowledge with entirely different, but equally legitimate, commitments.

The Self and the viability of its knowledge was the core occupation of Bhattacharyya's major work entitled *The Subject as Freedom* (1930). It is the main piece where Krishnachandra theorized and articulated his conception of liberating knowledge. In this piece of writing, Bhattacharyya sought to start a new (SF.16) and special (SF.15) branch of philosophy that he called spiritual or transcendental psychology. As he wrote: "The facthood of the knowing function and subjective function in general is believed though not known and is elaborated into a system of symbolism in a new philosophical study which may be called Spiritual or Transcendental psychology" (SF.16; Bhattacharyya 2008: 390).¹⁷³ The overall concern of this new study was to outline and legitimize intellectually the Advaitic programme of self-knowledge in the face of the Western Other and to aid the process of knowing the self as freedom, that is, as entirely dissociated or disentangled from objectivity. The plan for accomplishing this task was to provide an outline of the modalities of relationship through which the subjective gets entangled with the objective with the goal that these modalities of association would be subsequently and gradually turned around and actualized in a sort of spiritual discipline. The eventual outcome of such a "method of cognitive inwardising" (SF.23) was vaguely suggested in SF in terms of "mystic intuition" (SF.11), "ecstatic intuition" (SF.22), or "pure intuition of the self" (SF.24) in which the self or subjectivity – as he invariably addressed it in SF – was to be realized as absolute freedom, that is, as entirely dissociated from the objective.

The newness and specialty that Bhattacharyya was claiming for transcendental psychology has to be interpreted in the light of several sets of confrontations with the Western Other. That is, Bhattacharyya presented his project of transcendental psychology by contrasting its concern and attitude toward

¹⁷³ Another relevant passage is: "The speaking creation of a system of subjective functions or the symbolising elaboration of the positive freedom of the subject constitutes a special study which as not asserting meanable and justifiable truth cannot be called metaphysic and as yet inviting to believe and exhibiting the interval between the self-evidencing I and objectively knowable truth has to be taken as coming within philosophy" (SF.15; Bhattacharyya 2008: 389).

the self with the one displayed in metaphysics (SF.11; 12), empirical psychology (SF.12; 17), and epistemology (SF.12; 16). His strategy entailed addressing their shortcomings for knowing the self before outlining the manner in which self-knowledge was intelligible, viable and to be accomplished through – but not in – this new and special branch of philosophy. His engagement was, then, an exercise in authorization in the sense that it aimed to open, define and defend an intelligible theoretic space within the Western Other and its knowledge disciplines for the Advaitic cult of self-knowledge. Yet from another perspective, his intellectual endeavour can be accurately portrayed as an attempt to redeem what he regarded to be missing within the Western Other, providing in this way a distinctively Indian assessment of Western philosophy the lack of which he lamented.¹⁷⁴ This is precisely how I read his explicit formulation of the aims of transcendental psychology. As he wrote:

Spiritual psychology [...] Its business is in the first place to interpret empirical psychology in terms of the positively felt and believed freedom of the subject from objectivity; and next to elaborate modes of freedom that have no reference to object at all, to conceive the possible illusoriness of all objects and thus to assign an intelligible place to what is ordinarily scouted as spiritual mysticism.¹⁷⁵

Bhattacharyya elaborated his points of contention with metaphysics, empirical psychology, and epistemology regarding self-knowledge in terms of attitude. He contended that these Western disciplines display an objective attitude toward the subject and through that very attitude they objectify the subject, taking it in some sense or another for what it is not – the object. As he wrote, “The attitude of metaphysics like that of sciences including psychology is objective. It seeks to know reality as distinct from the knowing of it, as objective, at least, in the sense of being meant” (SF.12; Bhattacharyya 2008: 387). The objectifying attitude of these disciplines signalled for Krishnachandra their fundamental shortcoming for approaching and apprehending the subject as such; that is, as a radical subjectivity that resists all sort of objectification. Furthermore, Bhattacharyya provided a minimal definition of the subject-objectifying attitude in relation to language. He wrote that “The thinnest sense in which it [the subject] is objectified is ‘being taken as meant’” (SF.11). To be meant in an act of speech was actually the very distinctive definition of the object that Bhattacharyya put forward at the opening of SF. As he had it there: “Object is what is meant, including the object of sense-perception and all contents that have necessary reference to it” (SF.1; 2008: 381). He then defined subjectivity in juxtaposition and contrast with this concept of the object: “Object as meant is distinguished from the subject or the subjective of which there

¹⁷⁴ In SI, Bhattacharyya wrote that “[...] There is nothing like a judgment on western systems from the standpoint of Indian philosophy” (SI.9; Bhattacharyya 1984: 386).

¹⁷⁵ SF.19; Bhattacharyya 2008: 391.

is some awareness other than the meaning-awareness” (SF.1; 2008: 381).¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, Bhattacharyya thought that the pursuit of the self as embodied in metaphysics and empirical psychology was entirely illegitimate, if not contradictory. As he reflected: “There is properly no metaphysic of the subject and the apparent problems about the existence of the subject and its relation to the object are illegitimate. The question if the subject is real is unmeaning, for the subject as I is not a meaning” (SF.15; Bhattacharyya 2008: 389).¹⁷⁷ Similarly, the failure of empirical psychology to know the subjective as such without objectifying it was to be accounted for in terms of its commitment to portray ‘known-ness’ as a feature of the object known, instead of treating it as a subjective function through which the subject gets entangled with the object. As Bhattacharyya contended:

Psychology, as has been pointed out, deals not properly with knowing but with knownness as a character or aspect of the object. It deals, as we may say generally, not with subjective function but with the object regarded explicitly as distinct from it, as known, felt or willed. If there be a metaphysic of psychology, its problem would be what there is in the object to make it known, felt or willed [...] The distinguishing of knownness etc., as an abstraction from the object, as the objectivity of the object is what is called psychological introspection.¹⁷⁸

Finally, the problem with epistemology – as Krishnachandra saw it – was that while it did actually distinguish knowing from the object known and therefore acknowledged it as a subjective function, it did not treat this knowing as a known fact. That is, Bhattacharyya was condemning epistemology’s inability to interpret the fact of knowing. As he stated: “Epistemology indeed deals with the subjective function behind the accomplished meaning but it does not assert

¹⁷⁶ The opposition of subjectivity and objectivity was, certainly, a major underpinning of the entire SF and Bhattacharyya’s thinking. As he wrote in SV, it is “the deepest of all distinctions, viz., that between the subject and object [...]” (SV.1.30; Bhattacharyya 2008: 29).

¹⁷⁷ In another similar statement, he wrote: “The metaphysical controversy about the reality of the subject is only about the subject viewed in some sense as object. The thinnest sense in which it is objectified is ‘being taken as meant’. Ordinarily the validity of this degree of objectification of the subject is not questioned, nor therefore the possibility of a dispute about its reality. If, however, the subject is taken, as explained, to be what is expressed by the word *I* as expressing itself, it is not meant or at best meant as unmeant and is accordingly above metaphysical dispute. There is properly no metaphysic of the subject, if by metaphysic is understood an enquiry into the reality conceived as meanable” (SF.11; Bhattacharyya 2008: 386).

¹⁷⁸ SF.17; Bhattacharyya 2008: 390. This is reasserted in another passage: “The attitude of metaphysics like that of the sciences including psychology is objective. It seeks to know reality as distinct from the knowing of it, as objective, at least, in the sense of being meant. Knowing as a fact from which the known is distinct is not properly the subject either of psychology or of metaphysics. Psychological introspection is at best awareness of the *knownness* of the object, the knownness being meant as an accident of the object, as an abstraction from the known object, as the difference between the object as known and the object that is only believed, or as the object *coming* to be known. If there be a metaphysic of the psychological fact of knownness, its problem would be to determine what it is in the object that makes it known and not what the subject should be in order that it may know” (SF.12; 2008: 387).

it as fact. It *assumes* the facthood of the function – knowing *of* object – and only paraphrases the intention of the preposition *of* in reference to the different modes of knownness of the object such as presented in psychology” (SF.16; 2008: 389-390).¹⁷⁹

Beyond and despite these nuances, however, the failure of these Western knowledge disciplines for approaching the self was essentially accountable in terms of their inherent objectifying attitude. In the context of this shortcoming, Bhattacharyya’s discussion of transcendental psychology entailed avoiding this same inability. It meant theorizing transcendental psychology in terms of a switch from an objective to a subjective attitude. The consequences of such a reversal were worked out further in terms of the phenomenological primacy of the subject as free or entirely dissociated from objectivity and a certain idealism in which objectivity was interpreted as a self-denying moment or stance of the subject. As Bhattacharyya wrote conspicuously:

In the objective attitude [as displayed by metaphysics and science], the knownness or feltness of the object appears positive and knowing or feeling appears as its problematic negation. In the subjective attitude, the case is reversed: freedom is positively believed and the relatedness of the object to the subject – its objectivity – appears as constructed, as not belonging to the object in the sense change belongs to it and is thus understood as the self-negation or alienated show of subject. In the objective attitude again, *this* or object appears to exist beyond its *this-ness* or relatedness to the subject, while in the subjective attitude not only is the transcendent *this* rejected as meaningless, *this-ness* meaning the so-called psychological entities, knownness or feltness – appears also as not to be *given* as distinct to introspection but to exist only as distinguished or constructed, this distinguishing or constructing being felt as less certain than the self-evident subject behind it.¹⁸⁰

Moreover, as I will explain shortly, it also meant interpreting the objectified contents of empirical psychology as subjective functions, taking them as symbolizing certain grades of entanglement of subjectivity with objectivity that could and should, eventually, be taken as the reference point of backtracking and interpreted as grades of disentanglement. Addressing the concerns of spiritual psychology by contrasting them with the prospects of metaphysics, Bhattacharyya wrote that “From the standpoint of spiritual psychology, this transcendent object [as sought in metaphysics] is simply meaningless and metaphysic is the quest of a chimera. All so-called metaphysical problems are to it symbolisms for modes of freedom, the forms of spiritual discipline by which

¹⁷⁹ A similar assessment is to be found in SF.12 where he contends that: “Knowing from which all that is known or objective is distinct is dealt with in epistemology which distinguishes it as a function from the object but does not, therefore, take it to be a known fact” (SF.12; 2008: 387).

¹⁸⁰ SF.19; Bhattacharyya 2008: 391-392.

the objective attitude has to be renounced and the positive subjective functioning has to be reversed in direction towards the realisation of the subject behind it” (SF.19; Bhattacharyya 2008: 392).

4.4.2 Status of self-knowledge in transcendental psychology: Towards a happy medium between mysticism and metaphysics

To a large extent, then, Bhattacharyya criticized the knowledge disciplines stemming from the Western culture for their alleged objective attitude toward the subjective. The minimal account of this inadequate attitude appealed to their treatment of the subjective as what is meant in their respective discourses. The pretension to thematise the subject fully and directly in language was, according to Bhattacharyya, but a chimera. As we saw in CPh and now SF, Bhattacharyya took subjectivity beyond the threshold of the literally sayable, denying therefore that the self could be known by thinking about it. Thus, transcendental psychology was endorsed as a new and special branch of philosophy setting out to address and rectify this inadequate objectifying attitude and the illegitimate claim to regard the Self as conceptually effable and transparent. In transcendental psychology, Bhattacharyya was concerned with reversing these shortcomings by vindicating the need to approach the Self with a subjective attitude and an epistemological stance professing conceptual ineffability of the subjective. Now, what did this reversal mean on the level of theory? How was the status of the Self within the domain of transcendental psychology theorised?

Bhattacharyya opened his SF addressing these very issues. He approached the subject and the object through a reflection on language by treating them both as capable of being spoken (or in his terminology, “speakables”). Bhattacharyya was certainly willing to admit that philosophy was to build on what can be spoken.¹⁸¹ His crucial contention was then to advocate that, in sharp contrast with the object that can be and is actually spoken of as meant, the subject cannot be so spoken of. Bhattacharyya argued in consequence that there could not be anything like the awareness of subjectivity proper in the awareness of it as meant. This was simply objectifying the self or confusing it with what it is not—the object. As he wrote: “Object as the meant is distinguished from the subject or the subjective of which there is some awareness other than the meaning-awareness” (SF.1; Bhattacharyya 2008: 381).

However, despite this radical irreducibility of the subjective to the objective by treating it as meant, Bhattacharyya thought that the subject was not altogether unknown and unknowable. He maintained that there must be some sort of awareness of the subject that is not the awareness of it as meant; that

¹⁸¹ “The three believed contents – the subject, the positive freedom of the subject and the meant object – are all speakable and it is from the speakable that we have to start in philosophy” (SF.14; Bhattacharyya 2008: 388).

is, an awareness of the subject that is not the objectifying awareness. He defined that sort of non-objectifying awareness of the subject as what expresses itself through the first-person pronoun 'I'. As he claimed, "The subject is understood as what intends by the word *I*" (SF.127; 2008: 450). To the extent that the subjective was suitable of being spoken through the first-person pronoun 'I' but not of being meant, it required conceiving that what can be handled and spoken in language is more than what can be meant by it. As Bhattacharyya crisply asserted, "Apparently, the significant speakable is wider than the meanable: a content to be communicated and understood need not be meant (SF.1; 2008: 381).¹⁸²

In SF, Bhattacharyya thought consequently that the self was not entirely unknowable in philosophy. On the contrary, he claimed that it is somehow directly understood by the speaker through her use of the first-person pronoun. Transcendental psychology was to build precisely on such an awareness of the subject as expressed by the use of the first-person pronoun. Bhattacharyya interpreted this particular status of disclosure of the subjective within the domain of transcendental psychology to be midway between its mystic intuition on the one side and its objectification as meant on the other. As he wrote:

The subject which is also believed is formulated as *I* which is, however, understood as unmenable though not as a mere word like *abracadabra*. The understanding here is not a mystic intuition though it may point to its possibility, nor the intuition of a meaning that can be a term of a judgment, nor yet the thought of a meaning that is not known because not intuited or that is known without being intuited. It is somewhere midway between a mystic intuition and the consciousness of a meaning, being the believing awareness of a speakable content, the negation of which is unmeaning and which, therefore, is not a meaning. What is claimed to be mystically intuited is speakable only in metaphor which presents a contradiction in meaning and what is affirmed or denied in metaphysic is meanable. The subject as *I* is neither contradictory nor meanable and the exposition of it accordingly is intermediate between mysticism and metaphysic.¹⁸³

Transcendental psychology was not then to approach the self as either completely known nor as entirely unknown. It was to approach it as a believed reality to the extent it was 'speakable' and somehow disclosed through using the first-person pronoun. Just as in CPh, Bhattacharyya's contention in SF was that this same belief in unobjectified subjectivity posed a demand for disclosing it in an awareness without thinking, "in an ecstatic intuition" (SF.22; 2008:

¹⁸² This distinction between the speakable and the meanable was later in CPh elaborated in terms of what is literally spoken of and what is only symbolically spoken.

¹⁸³ SF.11; Bhattacharyya 2008: 386-387. In a similar passage he asserted: "There is properly no metaphysic of the subject and the apparent problems about the existence of the subject and its relation to the object are really illegitimate. The question if the subject is real is unmeaning, for the subject as *I* is not a meaning. The reality of the subject is known in the direct understanding of the word *I* as used by a speaker, which is neither the understanding of its meaning nor a mystic intuition of an unspeakable content" (SF.15; Bhattacharyya 2008: 389).

394) to which transcendental psychology was but a means. Spiritual psychology was to outline the stairways of dissociating subjectivity from objectivity through which the pure subject was eventually to be disclosed and released from objectivity.

4.4.3 Transcendental psychology and liberating knowledge

Krishnachandra conceived transcendental psychology as a sort of subjective idealism (SF.19; 21). He was clear that it involved a “spiritual cultivation of subjective attitude” (SF.16) and spiritual progress which he defined in terms of its orientation as “the realization of the subject as free” (SF.23). He thought of it as a “spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason, a method of cognitive inwardising” (SF.23). Precisely such a method, he contended, had been denied by Kant: “Realism should, therefore, be held as suspect though idealism is only a faith and not knowledge. But the faith has to be cherished and there should be a subjective discipline to get rid of the persisting realistic belief. Kant does not admit such a discipline at least for theoretic reason” (SF.21; Bhattacharyya 2008: 393).¹⁸⁴ Moreover, it is out of the question that K. C. Bhattacharyya believed that such a method of cognitive ‘inwardizing’ was entirely an Indian specialty. As he wrote: “The Indian conception of a specific activity of realisation on the part of the individual spirit is alien to modern philosophy generally and specially to Hegelian philosophy” (SF.54; 2008: 410). Here again, then – to the extent that Bhattacharyya thought it absent or even denied in modern (Western) philosophy, in the Hegelian system, and in Kantian transcendental philosophy – we encounter the idea that such a method of cognitive ‘inwardising’ as outlined in transcendental psychology and its commitment to knowing the self without thinking it was endorsed as something distinctively Indian and arguably presented as an “Indian contribution in a distinctive Indian style to the culture and thought of the modern world” (SI.4).

To outline such a method of cognitive introspection was certainly a major commitment of transcendental psychology. It theorised a turning away from the objective and towards the subjective, a move which was concerned with “freeing oneself from the modes of objectivity” (SF.16). More specifically, it was about charting the different modalities of association through which the subjective gets entangled with the objective with a view to turning them around. As Bhattacharyya wrote: “The possibility of such a method [of cognitive ‘inwardising’] has to be exhibited in Spiritual psychology. A method implies a series of consecutive steps for the realisation of an end. The steps in

¹⁸⁴ In another relevant passage, he stated that: “The persisting objective attitude of Kant in his first critique explains not only his admission of the thing-in-itself and his denial of self-knowledge but also his disbelief in the possibility of a spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason through which self-knowledge may be attainable” (SF.21; Bhattacharyya 2008: 393).

this case should correspond to a gradation of subjective functions, of modes of freedom from the object” (SF.24; 2008: 394). Bhattacharyya conceived this radical change of attitude through the metaphor of interiority/exteriority. Thus, he spoke of objective attitude in terms of the “out-going reference to the object” and conceived the subjective one as a “turning backward” movement or “inwardising” (SF.22). In this scheme of things, the subjective attitude had everything to do with withdrawing the self from outside, where it is entangled with the object, and turning inside which is but a metaphor for a gradual letting go of the objective. As I have already intimated, Bhattacharyya thought that such a process of disengagement from the objective would lead eventually to the realization of the subject as entirely free from the object; that is, it would induce a full revelation of the self as freedom from objectivity.¹⁸⁵ Bhattacharyya regarded this method of introspection or cognitive ‘inwardizing’ to be the “cult of the subject *par excellence*,” which was also – quite literally – how he defined Advaita as a religion. As he wrote:

This cult of the subject, as it might be called, takes various forms but they all involve feeling of dissociation of the subject from the object, an awareness of the subject as what the object is not. The specific activity demanded is primarily in the inwardising direction and secondarily, if at all, in the direction of creating objective or social values. One demand among others – all being absolute demands – is that the subjective function being essentially the knowing of the object as distinct from it, this knowing which is only believed and not known as fact *has* to be known as fact, as the self-evidencing reality of the subject itself. This would be the cult of the subject *par excellence*, a spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason, a method of cognitive inwardising, the possibility of which, as indeed of any method of realisation, is not ordinarily recognised.¹⁸⁶

Bhattacharyya claimed that there were three broad grades or modalities of associating/dissociating the subjective with/from the objective.¹⁸⁷ As he explained, he thought of them in a relative sense, so that they could be equally

¹⁸⁵ There are innumerable passages in SF where this is endorsed. To quote but a few: “The modes of relating are at the same time the modes of freeing from objectivity, the forms of the spiritual discipline by which, it may be conceived, the out-going reference to the object is turned backwards and the immediate knowledge of the *I* as content is realised in an ecstatic intuition” (SF.22; Bhattacharyya 2008: 394) and “The elaboration of these stages of freedom in spiritual psychology would suggest the possibility of a consecutive method of realising the subject as absolute freedom, of retracting the felt positive freedom towards the object into pure intuition of the self” (SF.24; Bhattacharyya 2008: 395).

¹⁸⁶ SF.23; Bhattacharyya 2008: 394. Compare this statement with “All religion makes for the realization of the self as sacred, but the religion of Advaita is the specific cult of such realization understood explicitly as self-knowledge, as sacred knowledge, and as nothing but knowledge” (ASS.14; 2008: 118-119) and with “The merit of Advaitavāda lies in having explicitly recognized that spiritual work is this ‘inwardizing’, the deepening of faith into subjective realization, the striving after self-knowledge” (ASS.20; 2008: 121).

¹⁸⁷ The interest for outlining several grades of relation between the subjective and the subjective was a major theme in Bhattacharyya’s philosophy and can be traced back to his SV (1907):

interpreted as grades of entanglement and of disentanglement, depending on whether they were looked upon from the perspective of the objective or the subjective respectively.¹⁸⁸ In this way, outlining theoretically the grades in which the subjective was steeped in the objective meant also drawing an itinerary through which the subject could be gradually withdrawn from it. However, while transcendental psychology was primarily concerned with offering a synopsis of these modalities of associating the subject with the object and sketching the stairways of their dissociation, this disentangling itinerary was to be enacted in a subsequent spiritual discipline. But to my knowledge, Bhattacharyya did not elaborate on how such a spiritual discipline was to be conducted.¹⁸⁹

Indeed, the largest part of SF is devoted to outlining – in very dense and at times even obscure prose – the grades of association/dissociation. Presented from the vantage point of the subject, those are addressed as grades of subjectivity in the sense that the free and disentangled subject is disclosed step by step to the degree that it is no longer thought of – and there is no longer awareness of it – in relation to the objective. Those broad grades of subjectivity are: bodily subjectivity (SF.57-79), psychic subjectivity (SF.80-100), and spiritual

“Waking, dream, dreamless sleep, and ecstasy with the intermediate stages constitute, then, a *new dimension* of the mind. This is not only *a* dimension of the mind but *the* one dimension of existence in which even the deepest of all distinctions, viz., that between the subject and object, has place. The ordinarily conceived duality between them gives place in Vedānta to the conception of a gradation of existences, one pole of which is the lowest waking stage in which the self completely forgets itself, the stage of the mere object, and the other pole, the ecstatic stage in which the self not only denies the existence of everything else but denies the denial itself, the stage of the pure subject. The gradation is not eternally spread out; the samādhi state is not only a stage among stages, it is the truth of the other stages. So, too, in the series, each stage is the truth of the preceding stage. The gradation between subject and object is also the gradation between truth and untruth, between good and evil. The self, as identified with any stage, feels the stage below it to be illusory; thus there is a reconciliation between the absolute distinction of truth and untruth on the one hand, and the continuous gradation of truth on the other” (SV.1.30; 2008: 29). Its outline as presented in SF is then but one version of such theme.

¹⁸⁸ “The grades of subjectivity imply grades of objectivity, the terms being conceived in a relative sense” (SF.24; Bhattacharyya 2008: 395). Occasionally, he also designated these modalities of association/dissociation with the terms positive/negative freedom (SF.16).

¹⁸⁹ As Daya Krishna saw correctly, Bhattacharyya took philosophy to be a necessary, but not the final, step in the economy of self-knowledge. Daya wrote: “According to this conception, then, Indian philosophy is the essential theoretic counterpart to that which, when practically realized or verified, is called *sādhana* (practice) or *yoga*. It is philosophical reflection alone which leads to the awareness and envisagement of certain possibilities which are then actualized or realized by a practical process of *sādhana* or *yoga*. The point, basically, is that without so-called philosophical reflection man would not become aware of *mokṣa* as the only innermost reality of his being, without realizing which he would always remain essentially ignorant and incomplete. *Mokṣa* is certainly non-conceptual, but only a conceptual reflection can make us aware of it as the ultimate and inmost possibility and reality of our being. In the language of Bhattacharyya, it is philosophic reflection alone which makes us aware of certain possibilities which demand to be actualized, even though the process of actualization itself is not philosophical in nature. Philosophy, thus, is an essential and inalienable preliminary to spiritual liberation, for without it we could not even have become aware of the idea of spiritual liberation itself” (Krishna 1965: 43).

subjectivity (SF.101-126). That is, the subject as entangled and confused with the body, the psychic fact, and the spiritual. Furthermore, each of those ladders contains three subdivisions. Thus, bodily subjectivity or the awareness of the subject in relation to the body is subdivided into (1) the body as externally perceived or observed, (2) the body as internally perceived or felt, (3) and the knowledge of absence as a present fact. Psychic subjectivity or the awareness of the self in relation to the psychic facts entails the stair rods of (4) the image as not dissociated from the idea, (5) the idea as dissociated from the image, and (6) the non-pictorial thought. Finally, spiritual subjectivity or the awareness of the subject without any reference to the object is subdivided into the levels of self-awareness in which the subjective is disclosed as (7) feeling, (8) introspection, and (9) beyond introspection. This progressive and introspective itinerary culminates in a sort of implosion where the subjective is disclosed as such; that is, as absolute freedom in the sense of being entirely dissociated and disentangled from the objective. This is what Bhattacharyya calls the realization of the subject as freedom.¹⁹⁰

4.4.4 ‘Inwardising’ and the language of ecstasy: Conceptualising the fulfilment of philosophical belief

The phenomenology-like account that Krishnachandra offers of this path of cognitive introspection is complex and beyond the immediate scope of this chapter. What I suggest here is to interpret this account of dissociating the subjective from the objective as Bhattacharyya’s distinctive way of articulating liberating knowledge. Moreover, I suggest that one looks upon this account as reflecting the motivations of Bhattacharyya’s ‘confrontative’ philosophy: a commitment to a sort of dialogical pursuit through contrast and confrontation beyond the paradigm of a full convergence by which Bhattacharyya met the Western (epistemological) Other half-way and professed a stance of critical assimilation. As I have argued, the very idea of philosophy as a means to self-knowledge that he endorsed throughout his writings was inspired on the analogy of *manana*. And, indeed, to the extent that he theorised that the description of the stairways of dissociation outlined in SF was a method of cognitive introspection that was necessarily to be complemented and actualized in a sort of introspective praxis, the narrative on the nine grades of subjectivity or self-consciousness seems to be a precondition for what would structurally correspond to the Vedāntic *nididhyāsana*, the actual introspective journey of self-knowledge. As I have already pointed out, Bhattacharyya thought that in the domain of theoretic consciousness the contents of philosophy were beyond the threshold of the literally sayable – and the subjective

¹⁹⁰ For a closer reading and interpretation of this itinerary as well as Bhattacharyya’s notion of the grades of subjectivity, see Garfield (2017: 355-377) and Bhushan & Garfield (2017: 264-282).

could not be spoken as meant – and therefore could not be known but only believed to be known. Such a belief was also a demand, “the faith that it is just the process of reaching the truth without thinking” (CPh.4; Bhattacharyya 2008: 463). The introspective itinerary of self-knowledge as outlined in SF was to conclude in a modality of knowing without thinking. The possibility and viability of such a modality of self-knowledge was, certainly, at the very core of Bhattacharyya’s confrontation of the Western Other (Kant) with Advaita.

However, despite claiming and defending the viability of such a modality of knowing beyond thinking in which the self could be disclosed and the importance it assumed in the framework of Bhattacharyya’s ‘confrontative’ philosophy, he never conceptualized it thoroughly. The most that can be said with any certainty about his conception of this modality of knowing is that from early on he conceived it in stark contrast with the discursive modality of knowledge. Thus, already in his SV (SV.128), Bhattacharyya distinguished between discursive reason – which he thought was embodied in science and philosophy – and intuitive reason, correlating them respectively with the relational and the mystic (non-relational) aspect of the phenomena. As he wrote, “The method of attaining this ecstasy is not the method of scientific investigation. A phenomenon has not only a relational aspect but also an intrinsic *aesthetic* aspect merging into a mystic aspect. The former aspect is caught by our discursive reason, the latter by imagination which is in fact intuitive reason” (SV.1.28; Bhattacharyya 2008: 27). This distinction is close to what was much later in CPh (1936) presented as the distinction between discursive knowledge attained in scientific literal propositions, the belief in the contents of symbolic judgments of philosophy, and the knowing without thinking that believing those contents demanded. To the extent that Bhattacharyya contrasted this modality of knowing with the discursive one, he must have been thinking of a sort of non-conceptual or non-discursive modality of knowledge. But he did not theorize much about it.¹⁹¹ He did, however, from early on entertain the idea that in such a modality of knowing the duality between the

¹⁹¹ There are, of course, passages in which he speculated about it. For example: “This imaginative isolation is effected by prolonged attention. Discursive thought about the relations of an object may no doubt help in this imaginative isolation, for it means a detaining of the aspects of the object in the mind, an oscillation of the mind round it, though it may not always be followed by a definite settling of the mind on it. Generally the mind buzzes round an object, and then moves on to another and then returns to it; and thus if making progress at all, it moves in wider and more complicated figures, but still never effectually settles on any object. While science or philosophy is thus ever and anon *moving* in its figures, with or without a consciousness of the whole, one quite loses sight of the other discipline, viz., that of contemplating an individual object, of getting glued down to it, of sinking into the heart of it, by suppressing within us the urgency of distracting desires and the subtle caprices of thought, and by tranquilising the surface of the mind while holding before it a symbol of the object we are seeking to know, instead of struggling to catch the object with a self-stultifying eagerness.” (SV.1.28; Bhattacharyya 2008: 27-28).

subject and the object was obliterated.¹⁹² SF offered precisely the itinerary of the cognitive introspection through which such obliteration was to be achieved. But that was all.

On top of that, throughout his work Bhattacharyya denoted such a modality of knowing by several terms and locutions. In SF, he insinuated it as “mystic intuition” (SF.11), “ecstatic intuition” (SF.22), and “pure intuition of the self” (SF.24). In CPh, he addressed it negatively as “knowing without thinking” (CPh.4). In ASS and SV, he had it as “ecstatic intuition” (2008: 69-70) “in which alone the supersensuous is knowable” and in which the Advaita truths are realized after the “other natural sources of knowledge” “prepare the way for realising them;” he used the idiom of “satisfaction or realisation” of Advaitic truth (2008: 69); he talked of “mystic experience of the individual philosopher” (2008: 119) while discussing the individualistic and universalistic spiritual outlook of Advaitism (ASS.15); he talked of *Upaniṣads* as “embodying mystic intuitions” (2008: 3); he used “intuition” alone when he asserted that the cosmic determination (in contrast to the subjective construction) determines “The form in which the truth is intuited by an individual” (2008: 121); he talked about ‘inwardizing’, by which he meant “the deepening of faith into subjective realization, the striving after self-knowledge” and which he regarded as the merit of *advaitavāda* (2008: 121); he talked about “realization of subjectivity or self-knowledge” (2008: 122) when he regarded *advaitavāda* as “the religion in the simplified and unified form” (2008: 122); he talked in terms of “self-realisation” (2008: 122), “subjective realisation” (2008: 122); and “intuition which amounts to ecstasy” (2008: 124). And he used several forms of a neologism: “inwardization” (2008: 123), “inwardize” (2008: 121), “inwardized” (2008: 119), “inwardizing” (2008: 121) and “inwardizing direction” (2008: 394) in order to denote the process of cognitive introspection as the immediate means to this non-theoretical goal.

As these uses suggest, K. C. Bhattacharyya resorted throughout his writing to the idiom of ‘realization,’ ‘intuition,’ ‘inwardizing,’ ‘mystic experience,’ ‘mystic intuition,’ and ‘ecstasy’ or ‘ecstatic intuition’ in order to denote the culminating point of the liberating process. The idiom of ‘ecstatic intuition’ and ‘ecstasy’ was particularly relevant in this respect.

¹⁹² See for example the passages in SV.1.25-29 where Bhattacharyya theorises on the differences between *suṣupti*, *savikalpasamādhi*, and *nirvikalpasamādhi* (SV.1.25-29; Bhattacharyya 2008: 26-29) and SV.1.30 where he takes the distinction between the subject and the object to be the deepest one.

4.5. Conclusion: Confrontation and vindication of cultural sovereignty in Bhattacharyya's retrieval of the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge

I have argued in this chapter that K. C. Bhattacharyya's dialogical attitude toward the Western Other is 'confrontative' in that it seeks to critically approach, examine, and contest the epistemological foundations of the Western Other – mostly as they were discussed in Kantian transcendental idealism – from a perspective he regards and vindicates as distinctively Indian. In doing so, Bhattacharyya conceives the intellectual past of South Asia in general, and the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge in particular, as a resource for provincializing the Western Other and seeks to retrieve it hermeneutically in such a manner as to contest a number of targeted aspects of that Western Other. In other words, in professing his dialogical and hermeneutic attitude, Bhattacharyya aims to identify shortcomings within the epistemology of the Western alterity and to show how, provided that it is skilfully and hermeneutically retrieved *in relation to* the Western Other, the classical Indian Advaita may offer distinctively Indian solutions to these same problems.

As I have discussed above, the itinerary of Bhattacharyya's 'confrontative' engagement implied rethinking the concept of philosophy as a body of knowledge different from science without committing himself to the scepticism inbuilt in Kantian transcendentalism toward the possibility of self-knowledge. Thus, Bhattacharyya breaks away from Kant in thinking that the Self cannot be known but only thought through the objective categories and defends instead the idea that the Self is unknown but believed, insofar as it is symbolically thinkable, and that it is eventually knowable in a modality of knowing without thinking. Moreover, he distinguishes philosophy from science by claiming that these two forms of theoretic consciousness entail different forms of thinking – literal versus symbolic – and are expressed through different sort of judgments. Furthermore, Bhattacharyya claims that though both forms of theoretic consciousness formulate beliefs, only the understanding of the beliefs professed in the domain of science amounts to knowing, whereas understanding the beliefs that are proper to philosophy poses a demand for knowing them in a modality of knowing without thinking.

In addition to rethinking the difference between philosophy and science without subscribing to Kantian scepticism toward the possibility of self-knowledge, Bhattacharyya rethinks the concept of philosophy by analogy with the Advaitic *manana* and inserts the task of philosophic discursivity within a larger cognitive and goal-oriented process of self-knowledge culminating in a nonconceptual or thought-free realisation of the Self as a subjectivity that is entirely disassociated from objectivity. To be sure, in rethinking the concept of philosophy by analogy with *manana*, Bhattacharyya aims to inaugurate a

new philosophical study (SF.16) within the Western Other that he calls ‘transcendental or spiritual psychology.’ In doing so, he is concerned with assigning therein “an intelligible place to what is ordinarily scouted as spiritual mysticism” (SF.19) and asserts that, in contrast to the objective attitude toward the Self displayed in empirical psychology, epistemology, metaphysics, and Kant’s critical philosophy (SF.11-21), transcendental psychology is a “spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason” (SF.23) that entails the cultivation of a subjective attitude. Its distinctive task lies in providing a symbolic outline of the grades of subjectivity – or stages of dissociating the subject from the object – which ought to be actualised subsequently through a process of cognitive introspection culminating in an ecstatic intuition or the realisation of the subject as freedom (SF.24). As I have shown in this chapter, Bhattacharyya believed that such a spiritual method of self-knowledge was specifically Indian: it was the very specificity of the religion of Advaita (ASS.14), it was denied by Kant (SF.21-22), and it was alien to modern philosophy in general and to Hegelian philosophy in particular (SF.54).

On the whole, I think it is safe to submit that K. C. Bhattacharyya’s ‘confrontative’ philosophy aimed to contest some of the targeted aspects of the Western Other mentioned above and to revise them in such manner as to allow and legitimise the Advaitic soteriological project of self-knowledge within the parameters of intelligibility of the Western Other. I mean to say that Bhattacharyya rethought the viability of the Advaitic project of liberating knowledge in confrontation with the Western Other but by doing so he critically assimilated and retained to a large extent the Western Other as the ultimate frame of reference and intelligibility of this project. That is, in Bhattacharyya’s hands, the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge becomes intelligible in the context of Kantian transcendental philosophy and its inbuilt scepticism toward the possibility of self-knowledge as well as the objective attitude Bhattacharyya imputes to empirical psychology, epistemology, metaphysics, and Kant himself with regard to the Self.

I suspect that it is because of this orientation of his that we don’t find in Bhattacharyya’s ‘confrontative’ philosophy a more prominent engagement with the *pramāṇavāda* and the episodic paradigm of knowing underpinning the precolonial notion of *brahmajñāna*. It is not that Bhattacharyya was completely unaware of these theoretical underpinnings. He certainly knew about the episodic paradigm of knowing and was acquainted with Dharmarāja’s exposition of the *pramāṇavāda* from very early on in his career (SV.1.23; SV.1.84-126). However, he seems to have chosen to dispense with them, or at least does not bring them to the fore of his philosophic reflexion and retrieval to the extent that he does not consider them to be immediately relevant within the frames of his ‘confrontative’ project.

Finally, I have suggested in this chapter that the overarching aim of Bhattacharyya’s philosophy was to provide in his own specific way an “Indian contribution in a distinctively Indian style to the culture and thought of the

modern world” (SI.4) that he found missing in the body of Indian intellectual literature produced during the colonial period. Imputing this lack to cultural subjugation and acritical assimilation rather than to the political predicament of the colonial India, Bhattacharyya stressed the need for modern Indian subjects to achieve epistemic and cultural autonomy that he called ‘*svarāj* in ideas.’ However, I think that his own contribution to this laudable end seems flawed at least in one important sense. For one thing, in retrieving the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge in contrast to, and in order to contest, Kantian transcendentalism, Bhattacharyya seems to retain on a fundamental level a reified and polarised understanding of East and West, India and Europe, that informed the colonial discourse on Indian culture he condemned and sought to overthrow. I agree with Raghuramaraju’s insightful observation that K. C. Bhattacharyya’s search for Advaitic solutions to the shortcomings of Kantian transcendental philosophy seems as problematic as the rethoric of the colonial power in that both share a one-sided way of thinking about the cultural relations between India and the West, each seeing the other as the source of problems and itself as the source of solutions. As Raghuramaraju has argued convincingly: “The two important aspects of Bhattacharyya’s engagement with Kant are – his critique of Kant and his Advaitic solution to the Kantian problem. While holding Bhattacharyya’s critique of Kant in high regard, let me however add a caveat, namely, that there is a problem associated with Bhattacharyya, particularly in his attempt at fashioning a mode, or participating in an already existing fashion, in which Indian solutions are offered for Western problems. This, wittingly or unwittingly, makes the West a reservoir of problems and, correspondingly, the East, or India, a reservoir of solutions. More specifically, this merely inverts the view, which at the structural level was authored by the colonial discourse, in which India is the reservoir of problem and the West, that of solutions. What I find problematic is not so much the question of who is the reservoir of what but the very binary that underlies this formulation” (Raghuramaraju 2013: 8).¹⁹³

¹⁹³ This feature of Bhattacharyya’s work is also somehow acknowledged by Jay Garfield and reflected in the title of his recent and insightful article “Solving Kant’s Problem: K. C. Bhattacharyya on Self-Knowledge” (Garfield 2017: 355-377).

5. Towards world harmony: Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) and the hermeneutics of religious experience

5.1 Introduction

In the present chapter I am going to argue that Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's cosmopolitan and highly eclectic philosophy was a deep and visceral response to what he took to be a troublesome predicament of the globalizing model of Western modernity.¹⁹⁴

My main contention in the following lines will be that Radhakrishnan skillfully translated the Sanskrit Advaita – particularly in his eclectic reinterpretation of the term *anubhava* as 'experience' – deploying it as a resource for contesting and eventually controverting the course of the globalizing model of Western modernity. Furthermore, though his interpretation of Advaita Vedānta may not be philologically sound or historically accurate – something he himself hardly claimed – I will suggest that the distinctive feature and value

¹⁹⁴ Following Ishwar C. Harris's study entitled *Radhakrishnan: The Profile of a Universalist* (1982), Sharma (1998: 124-134) distinguished five major phases in the development of Radhakrishnan's career as a philosopher. These are: (1) 1888-1908, from his birth to the submission of his Masters' thesis; (2) 1908-1926, from the submission of his Masters' thesis to his Upton Lectures held in 1926; (3) 1926-1945, a period during which he published *The Hindu View of Life* (1927) and *The Idealist View of Life* (1932), *East and West in Religion* (1933), "The Spirit in Man" (1936), *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (1939); (4) 1945-1967, during which he published *The Bhagavadgītā* (1948), *The Dhammapada* (1950), *The Principal Upaniṣads* (1953), *Recovery of Faith* (1955), *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (1957), *The Brahmasūtra: The Philosophy of Spiritual Life* (1960), *Fellowship of the Spirit* (1961) etc.; and finally (5) 1967-1975, a period which he spent mostly retired in Madras (Sharma added this last phase to the previous four identified by Harris). In my exposition of Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience I will principally engage with the ideas and insights that he avowed during the third among these periods – that is, between 1926 and 1945. It is important to keep this in mind, since during the course of his long career as a philosopher, Radhakrishnan did change his points of view on some fundamental issues. Such is, for instance, the case with regard to his approach to East and West: during the fourth period of his career, Radhakrishnan overcame his earlier concern (particularly avowed during the third period which I will be discussing below) to polarise and oppose East and West. See Harris (1982: 143-144) and Sharma (1998: 131-132). For a religious biography of Radhakrishnan, see Minor (1987). For a compelling analysis of Radhakrishnan's role as an Indian who occupied the Spalding Chair in Eastern Religion and Ethics at All Souls' College, Oxford, see Ram-Prasad (1992).

of Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience lies in his attempt and ability to entertain the ideal of nonduality as a resource for (i) accommodating religious pluralism and the plurality of religious claims within one unique overarching model, as well as (ii) confronting the process of secularization which he took to be an immediate offshoot of the advance of modern Western science.

Thus, I will submit in what follows that his distinctive solution to what he saw as a malaise of the globalizing paradigm of Western modernity entailed two major and pioneer claims in philosophy of religion. I will argue that, together with William James, Radhakrishnan believed that (a) religious experience constitutes the core of religion and that (b) supra-personal religious experience is the most genuine among the many varieties of religious experiences. As I will contend, these two claims, together with (c) his belief that the appeal to religious experience as the core of religion entailed a partial convergence between religion and science and (d) his somehow imprecise and inconsistent yet mindful reflections on interpretation and mediation operating within religious experience itself allowed Radhakrishnan to profess a kind of stance that I will call 'nondual hierarchical inclusivism.' This unique outlook combined simultaneously a firm personal conviction about the truth of ontological nondualism with a serious commitment to epistemological hierarchical pluralism and was meant to avoid the two extremes of dogmatic affirmation and dogmatic denial of religious claims.

Finally, I will conclude this chapter by avowing the idea that Radhakrishnan's acute anxiety for harmonizing the tensions among the world religions in their diverging claims about their ultimate referent and his vivid concern to restore the fragmentation in meaning brought about by the Western experience of modernity entailed a sort of hermeneutics of similarity and homogenization through which the otherness of Advaita's other – Western, Hindu or otherwise – was seriously jeopardized, decentralised, and finally rearticulated and relocated within a worldview with an eminently Advaitic centre.

5.2 Reading the present situation and the nostalgia for a lost unity of meaning: Outlining the fractures and challenges of the emerging global paradigm of modernity

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan began entertaining the notion of religious experience toward the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. His engagement with the idea was presented to Western audiences during his Upton and Hibbert lectures delivered respectively at Manchester College, Oxford, in 1926 and at the University of Manchester in 1929. In the course of those famous lectures – which were soon after published under the title *The Hindu*

View of Life (1927) and *An Idealist View of Life* (1932) and become two of his seminal works – Radhakrishnan addressed the idea of religious experience alongside his discussions on the multi-layered and deep-seated challenges that the globalising model of Western modernity posed to religion and outlined the anatomy of its cultural substitutes. Such a layout was again reproduced in his insightful article “The Spirit of Man” published in a collective volume with the title *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (1936) where his discussion and juxtaposition of intellect and intuition was deliberately preceded by a vivid narrative on – and in a way a summary of his earlier assessment of – his present circumstance under the suggestive headline “The Need for a Spiritual Renewal.” This, I contend, is not a sheer coincidence. On the contrary, it reflects the fact that Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan engaged in his hermeneutics of religious experience driven by his pessimistic reading of the zeitgeist which mourned the demise of religion and the consequent cultural confusion, malaise, unrest and fragmentation which he saw taking over in the modern world. As I will argue here, Radhakrishnan authored his pioneer philosophy of religion featuring his hermeneutics of religious experience as a proactive and forceful response to the predicament of the globalising paradigm of Western modernity.

Despite its complexity and somewhat general tone, the main line of argumentation and the salient features of his narrative are clear enough.¹⁹⁵ Radhakrishnan believed that chaos and fragmentation were the tangible characteristics of the modern world. These, he thought, were nothing but symptoms of a deeper confusion taking place on the level of human consciousness and affecting cultural ideals and values. To be precise, Radhakrishnan believed that the malaise of the globalising predicament of Western modernity had much to do with the demise of religion. His etiology on its imminent death counted both epistemic and non-epistemic factors. As he wrote in IVL summarising his own account of modernity’s challenge to religion:

The present unrest, it is clear, is caused as much by the moral ineffectiveness of religion, its failure to promote the best life, as by the insistent pressure of new knowledge on traditional beliefs. (Radhakrishnan 1932: 49)

On the one hand, the non-epistemic factors were sketched in terms of a *de facto* inefficiency of religion for providing a good and decent life within the world. Radhakrishnan thought that this inefficiency was – among other issues – an offshoot of separating the sacred from the secular order¹⁹⁶ and the criticism that religion received from the political thought informing the profound

¹⁹⁵ My account here is entirely based on the first two chapters of his *The Idealist View of Life* (1932) which I take to be the most informative source concerning Radhakrishnan’s interpretation of the global situation.

¹⁹⁶ In this respect, he wrote: “Religion asks us to separate the things of God from those of Caesar. Its principles should not be allowed to interfere with the free play of selfish impulse in a secular order. If religion asks us to adopt brotherly love, avoid force, disregard wealth, the

social revolutions of the twentieth century.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, it was certainly related to the issue of plurality of religions and the conflictive meeting between their respective worldviews that was increasingly taking place within the framework of the globalising modern world. On the other hand, the epistemic causes were provided by the advent of the scientific modality of knowledge, its fast specialisation and proliferation, and its extension to the many aspects of human life. In this respect, Radhakrishnan was arguing that due to the progress and the many achievements of scientific culture, religion and the legitimacy of human belief have been deeply challenged if not entirely dismissed. Against the grain of the then in vogue positivism,¹⁹⁸ he diagnosed that such a dismissal of religion by science – dismissal of faith and belief by the scientific practice of reason – comported a deeply shattering disease. As he wrote in a poetic and almost prophetic tone:

The denial of the divine in man has resulted in a sickness of soul. (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 482)

Radhakrishnan's review of the achievements and challenges of modern science to religion with which he opened his IVL entailed brief but powerful allusions to modern physics, cosmology, evolutionary biology, critical theory, anthropology, sociology, psychology, historical criticism (higher criticism) and comparative religion. Though I cannot address them in detail here, my core contention is that the one relevant thread that runs through Radhakrishnan's entire review is his visceral disapproval of what I would call the 'hypothesis of total immanence' by which I mean a metatheory and an existential stance asserting that any phenomena occurring within any given system (solar,

religious people seem to emphasize war, success and efficiency. Such a judicial separation between the two means degrading of both the secular and the sacred" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 42). And "Religion has weakened man's social conscience and moral sensitivity by separating the things of God from those of Caesar. The socially oppressed are seduced by hopes of final adjustment in a celestial fatherland, a sort of post-mortem brotherhood. No wonder religion is condemned as a piece of capitalistic propaganda." (Radhakrishnan 1932: 46)

¹⁹⁷ In a rather cynical (but surely, prescient) tone he remarked that: "Communism is the new religion; Lenin is its prophet and science its holy symbol. Karl Marx's theory of communism transplanted into the mystic soil of Russia has become a religion practising sanctified methods for its propagation. The active agencies of the communistic parties, the Red Army, the schools, the press and the platform, are struggling to rid the country of all religion. The driving force of Bolshevism is faith, mysticism and willingness to sacrifice even unto death" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 47).

¹⁹⁸ As the following passage reflects, Radhakrishnan charged positivism with several shortcomings, from a deficient economy and politics to atheism and immorality: "What is the result of this new positivist criticism on life? We have a world of rationalist prophets, of selfish individualists, of a monstrous economic system compounded out of industrialism and capitalism, of vast technical achievements and external conquests, of continual craving for creature comforts and love of luxury, of unbridled and endless covetousness in public life, of dictatorship of blood and brutality, anxious to make the world a shamble dripping with human blood, of atheism and disdain for the soul, a world in which nothing is certain and men have lost assurance" (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 481-482).

biological, social etc.) within the world can and should be explained mechanically and internally without appealing to any external factor that is not itself a part of the world-system as a whole. Thus, in his disapproval of the hypothesis of total immanence, Radhakrishnan surveyed with preoccupation (a) the mechanical explanations of the material world, (b) the idea of natural selection as entirely explaining the diversity of the natural world, (c) the portrayal of ethics and moral values as culturally relative, and (d) the psychological determinism which he saw embodied as much in behaviourism as in psychoanalysis.¹⁹⁹ He protested against (e) the psychological explanations of the idea of God, (f) the relativity and evolution of human conceptions of God which vouch for the truth of scepticism, and (g) the critical outlook on religious scriptures as products of human culture and history. He also registered bitterly (h) the pitfalls of the ontological, causal, and design arguments for the existence of God. On top of that, (i) he addressed the confrontation of science and religion on the epistemological level. He observed that while science and the scientific method build on scientific propositions which require verification, religion and religious beliefs rest upon the authority of tradition and cannot be otherwise proved. Radhakrishnan assumed that all these scientific theories and insights into the different regions and aspects of existence could have but one undeniable – though for him deeply troublesome – implication: they vouched for the fact that the hypothesis of God is superfluous. As he wrote on one occasion:

[...] the need for religious mystery diminishes as the scope of scientific explanation extends. We generally indent on the hypothesis of God when knowledge reaches its limits. Popular use of expressions like ‘it is an act of God’, ‘God only knows’, shows how ignorance is the source of the knowledge of God. God is the name we tremblingly give to the unseen and the inexplicable. He is the ‘sanctuary of ignorance’, an indication of incomplete knowledge. The realm of mystery before which man feels humble slowly withdraws its frontiers. We can know the world and live our life without feeling our utter dependence on unknown forces. (Radhakrishnan 1932: 21-22)

In addition to sketching these points of contention between modern science and religion, Radhakrishnan outlined also a sort of anatomy of modern Western escapism by portraying some of its distinctive ideologies and emerging cults as responding to the different manners of coping with the empty space left by the demising religion. As he wrote: “Those who are assailed by religious doubts are devising several ways to escape from the present confusion”

¹⁹⁹ On the implication that identifying the mind with the brain had on religion, he had the following to say: “The bearing of these doctrines on the religious issue is profound. If ‘the mind, the spirit and the soul are manifestations of the living brain just as flame is the manifest spirit of the burning candle’, when the brain is destroyed there is an end of it all. The gradual evolution of the human species under the influence of natural forces shows that man is of a piece with the rest of nature. His religious intuitions are only the dreams of a being with an ape pedigree” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 31).

(Radhakrishnan 1932: 52). His anatomy of modern Western escapism surveyed naturalistic atheism, agnosticism, scepticism, humanism, pragmatism, modernism (by which he meant a sort of reformism), and authoritarianism or traditionalism (Radhakrishnan 1932: 52). In another note, he pointed to Theosophy, Anthroposophy, Christian Science, New Thought, the cult of the superman, the worship of the eternal feminine, and spiritualism as concrete examples of these modern forms of escapism (Radhakrishnan 1932: 52; 82). All in all, Radhakrishnan showed little understanding for these ideologies and cults. From his perspective, these were just partial and unsuccessful attempts to retrieve and retain the religious within the frames of modernity and the only real significance that they carried was to testify that, despite the multi-layered challenges that modern science posed to religion, the religious was a human need that was not to desist but to transform, adapt, and persist in a different fashion.²⁰⁰ As he insightfully remarked:

The different attempts to accommodate God to the needs of the modern mind are not quite successful in their ambition. Their one lesson is that, notwithstanding the transformation of life, the shifting of moral values and the preoccupations of the time, the primal craving for the eternal and abiding remains inextinguishable. Unbelief is impossible. Along with deep discontent with the standard forms of religion there is a growing seriousness about it. The forms are dissolving but the needs persist. The millions who neither dare to have a religion nor do without one are rushing hither and thither seeking for direction. The philosophical fashions of naturalism, atheism, agnosticism, scepticism, humanism, and authoritarianism are obvious and easy, but they do not show an adequate appreciation of the natural profundity of the human soul. (Radhakrishnan 1932: 82)

Radhakrishnan's response to this exasperating and nostalgic portrayal of the present situation, which he saw bearing the mark of fragmentation in life-meaning and withdrawal of God, is complex and multi-layered. Without claiming it to be exhaustive, I think that four major sites of contention may be identified in Radhakrishnan's thought: (a) his idealism in the 'third sense',²⁰¹ (b) his philosophy of religion, (c) his normative ideal of religion of the spirit and fellowship of the spirit, and (d) his ideal of harmonization or *samanvaya*. On the whole, these sites were where he contested the two major predicaments

²⁰⁰ In this sense, Radhakrishnan foresaw perceptively the return of the religious quite early, already during the second decade of the twentieth century!

²⁰¹ By this he meant a worth-assigning component in human awareness (Matilal 1995: 61). Radhakrishnan's idealism in the third sense was principally committed to assigning value and purpose to human existence in the world. In the face of the troublesome predicament of the globalising model of Western modernity, Radhakrishnan's spiritual idealism – as he also sometimes called it (Radhakrishnan 1932: 87) – was concerned with retrieving *ideas* in that it aimed at outlining the global dynamism and the driving forces which make the world intelligible as one unique system of ends. See his opening remarks in IVL (1932: 13-17). For a critical examination of Radhakrishnan's idealism in the third sense, see Chakrabarty (1995: 423-441).

of modernity: on the one hand, the challenge of religious pluralism and dogmatism and, on the other hand, the challenge of scientific naturalism and secularism. However, since these four major points of resistance converge in the one overarching idea of religious experience, I contend that Radhakrishnan's ideology of religious experience was the core of his intellectual attempt to meet the challenges of the globalizing model of Western modernity.

5.3 Contesting challenges, recollecting fragments: The hermeneutics of religious experience

5.3.1 Centripetal and centrifugal forces

As Wilhelm Halbfass has rightly observed (Halbfass 1988: 378-402), the concept of 'experience' has been a privileged locus of encounter between India and the West in the recent past and continues to be so to this day.²⁰² The horizon of this encounter encompasses the many intersections, real or imaginary, of three major and complex cultural trajectories of discourse. First, there is the historic emergence of the concept of experience and its successive fragmentation into aesthetic experience, religious experience, and its articulation into the domains of science, history, and politics in the West.²⁰³ Second, there is another and by no means less fascinating history of translating and reinterpreting some aspects of the cultural past of South Asia into English in the face of the Western modernity through the concept of experience and – most importantly – religious experience. Finally, there is also a long and rich history of Sanskrit scholastic literature discussing the technical meanings of those Sanskrit terms which could and have been eventually translated by Indologists as 'experience.'

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was undoubtedly one of the most outstanding participants in the second among these trajectories.²⁰⁴ His distinctive voice

²⁰² For both Indian and Western antecedents of Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of experience and the role of 'experience' in the cultural encounter between India and the West, see the excellent and still useful essay "The Concept of Experience in the Encounter Between India and the West" in Halbfass (1988: 378-402). On the Indian side, Halbfass points to Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884), Rāmākṣṇa Paramahansa (1838-1886), Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Rāmāṇa Maharṣi (1879-1950), Aurobindo Ghose (1878-1950) and Viṣṇu Bhikāṇi Gokhale alias Viṣṇubhāvā Brahmācārī (1825-1892) as spokesmen of 'experience.' Halbfass also mentions Appayya Dīkṣita the Younger (second half of the nineteenth century), who "wrote a series of Sanskrit treatises on the 'non-dualism of experience' (*Anubhavadvaitaparakaraṇa* and *Anubhūtimīmāṃsāsūtra* with *Bhāṣya*, etc.) which give the concept of *anubhava* much more prominence than traditional Advaita Vedānta" (Halbfass 1988: 397).

²⁰³ For this fascinating history see Martin Jay's *Songs of Experience: A Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (2005).

²⁰⁴ Hence, Paul Hacker saw Radhakrishnan as the "most typical" Neo-Hindu (Hacker 1995: 244) and together with Aurobindo – whom he saw as the "most original" (1995: 244) – "as representing a pure form of Neo-Hinduism" (Hacker 1995: 252). Wilhelm Halbfass described

entertained the idea of religious experience as the main hermeneutic principle through which to reinterpret both classical Indian philosophy and religion as well as the status quo of the globalising model of Western modernity. Thus, by the locution ‘hermeneutics of experience’ I mean to denote the distinctive process by which Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan interpreted (a) one particular area of his own cultural past and (b) foresaw an alternative prospect for the global cultural situation of his present.²⁰⁵

Although I do think that both the itineraries of this hermeneutics are motivated by one central anguish at the prospect of the globalising predicament of Western modernity, the dynamism of its specific articulation takes different

Radhakrishnan as “without question one of the most effective spokesmen of the Neo-Hindu ideology of experience, providing us with some of the most memorable formulations concerning experience” (Halbfass 1988: 381). He characterised his ideology of experience in the following telling terms: “‘Religious,’ ‘spiritual,’ even poetic experiences, scientific ‘experiments,’ ‘intuition’ as an epistemological term, indicating a direct mode of awareness – while Radhakrishnan does occasionally distinguish between these ideas, the manner in which he blurs the distinctions and combines the different connotations is much more typical of his approach (Halbfass 1988: 381). However, although Radhakrishnan occupies, undeniably, a prominent place in this trajectory, he was not by any means alone, let alone the first one among modern Indian philosophers writing in English, to profess this hermeneutics. As Halbfass himself states, “It is indeed obvious that Aurobindo is trying to respond to the Western achievements in natural sciences, i.e., experimentation in the external world by revitalizing an Indian tradition of inner ‘experimentation,’ i.e., experimentation with modes of awareness” (Halbfass 1988: 384-385). Similarly, Stephen Phillips tells us that “I call Aurobindo a ‘mystic empiricist’ in that he would count particular extraordinary experiences as providing important data for his metaphysical theory-building” (Phillips 1986: 3). Yet, and despite its popularity, it is important to underscore here that not all modern Indian intellectuals turned to the idea of ‘experience’ as a means to contesting the many cultural challenges posed by the encounter with the modern West. As Halbfass rightly observes, “Rammonhan tries to meet these challenges [of Western thought and Christian religion] by rediscovering the ‘original’ spirit of Hinduism and by revitalizing a forgotten potential past of Hindu universalism. In doing so, he does not pay much attention to ‘experience.’ It is obviously not very significant for him in his attempt to articulate Hinduism, and in particular Vedānta, for the modern World” (Halbfass 1988: 395).

²⁰⁵ Despite the eloquence and commitment with which Radhakrishnan professed his hermeneutics, several of its core ideas were already anticipated by Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. As Halbfass writes with regard to Debendranath: “He poses the question of the authority and legitimacy of the sacred Hindu texts, the Upaniṣads in particular, in a new sense [...] and he tries to determine which traditional texts deserve recognition as authoritative sources of the ‘religion of the devotees of *brahman*’ [...] The texts themselves do not provide us with a criterion of their legitimacy: Debendranath finds this criterion in his own ‘pure heart, filled with the light of intuitive knowledge’ (*ātmapratyayasiddhajñānojvalita viśuddha hṛdaya*). Only those texts deserve to be recognized as authoritative which are confirmed by the testimony of the heart, i.e., one’s own inner experience. The Upaniṣads are documents of what ancient seers (*ṛṣi*) have experienced as well as examined (*parīkṣita*), and they invite and challenge us to perform our own ‘examinations of the heart’ (*hṛdaya-parīkṣā*) or ‘inner experiments.’ Accordingly, Debendranath tried to place himself in the position of a *ṛṣi* and to re-experience and examine what is authentic and verifiable in the Upaniṣads, thus effectively substituting his own ‘intuition’ for scriptural authority” (Halbfass 1988: 396). For a very similar turn in Radhakrishnan’s thought, see section 5.3.2, under the headline “Hinduism is the religion of experience par excellence.” Important antecedents to what I will call, in section 5.3.3, the ‘centrifugal dynamism’ of his hermeneutics are to be found in Keshab Chandra Sen (see Halbfass 1988: 397; Kopf 1979: 247-286).

shapes. Accordingly, I think it is necessary to distinguish between two different although related forces operating within his hermeneutics: centripetal and centrifugal. By the first I mean to denote the distinctive manoeuvres in self-understanding and reinterpretation that fall back upon what Radhakrishnan identified as his own centre of reference: first and foremost, Advaita Vedānda and Hinduism. By the second I mean to say the ensemble of strategies that were directed towards what Radhakrishnan identified as the threatening presence of his other: the conflictive dogmatism among world religions (with particular emphasis on Christianity) and the demise of religion in the face of scientific culture. I will examine the centripetal dynamism in Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of experience by analysing his engagement with the Sanskrit term *anubhava* – as well as other related Sanskrit terms – and his reconstruction of Hinduism as a religion of experience par excellence. Next, I will examine the centrifugal dynamism by addressing three issues: the argument identifying religious experience as the core of all religions, the idea of mediation and interpretation of religious experience as a remedy for the disharmony among religious claims, and finally the issue of convergence between religion and science.

5.3.2 Radhakrishnan's ideology of religious experience: The centripetal dynamism

Religious experience and its Sanskrit equivalents

Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience entailed identifying and correlating in some way or another a number of Sanskrit terms and compounds with the term 'experience' – alone or qualified by several adjectives – as well as a certain practice of translation. Among those Sanskrit terms and compounds, we find *aparokṣa*, *darśana*, *saṃyagdarśana*, *siddhadarśana*, *ātmadarśana*, *drṣṭi*, *sākṣātkāra*, *brahmasākṣātkāra*, *brahmasvarūpasākṣātkāra*, *prajñā*, *pratibhā*, *ārśajñāna*, *yogipratyakṣa*, *parāsaṃvid*, *jñāna*, *ātmajñāna*, *nityajñāna*, *anubhava*, and *brahmānubhava*.²⁰⁶ Without any doubt, the most recurrent among these was the term *anubhava*, to which Radhakrishnan came back time and again, right from 1923 to 1960, associating it invariably with (a) the idea of experience, (b) the immediacy of awareness, and (c) the faculty of intuition. Hence, his translation of *anubhava* involved a wide range of locutions featuring these associations, such as 'integral experience,' 'intuitional consciousness,' 'direct experience,' 'innermost experience,' 'intuition,' 'intuitional experience,' 'vital

²⁰⁶ For the sources of this list, see Appendix 3. Halbfass (1988: 386-387) identified some of these terms when he wrote: "The Neo-Hindu advocates of experience mention several original Sanskrit terms as corresponding to what they call 'experience,' in particular *anubhava*, *anubhūti* and *sākṣātkāra*; as we have seen, *darśana* is also a familiar term in this connection. In a more general sense, the whole vocabulary of immediate awareness and manifestation (*prakāśa*, *svaprakāśa*, *cit*, *saṃvit*, *svasaṃvedana*, and so forth) may be referred to."

spiritual experience,’ ‘experience of reality,’ ‘interior awareness,’ ‘direct awareness,’ and ‘immediacy.’²⁰⁷ Furthermore, his translations of the remaining Sanskrit terms involved appealing to at least one among these three categories.²⁰⁸ Thus, for example, he resorted to a number of terms and compounds involving nominal derivations of the verb $\sqrt{dṛṣ}$ ‘to see’ – *darśana*, *saṃyagdarśana*, *siddhadarśana*, *ātmadarśana*, *dṛṣṭi* – and rendered them as ‘insight into the nature of reality,’ ‘perfect intuition,’ ‘integral insight,’ ‘self-knowledge,’ ‘vision of the self,’ and ‘spiritual intuition.’ He took the term *aparokṣa* to denote ‘non-sensuous immediate knowledge’ and distinguished it from the immediacy of perception (*pratyakṣa*). He translated the important term *sākṣātkāra* as ‘direct perception,’ saw it as the defining feature of *anubhava*, and took it as synonymous with *saṃyagjñāna* or *saṃyagdarśana*. In addition, he rendered the compounds *brahmasākṣātkāra* and *brahmasvarūpasākṣātkāra* respectively as ‘God-vision’ and ‘the realisation of the Supreme.’ And on the top of that, he took such diverse terms as *prajñā*, *pratibhā*, *ārsajñāna*, *siddhadarśana* and *yogipratyakṣa* to denote equally and somewhat structurally a kind of ‘apprehension which is not due to the senses or inference,’ taking on another occasion *prajñā*, *pratibhā*, and *ārsajñāna* to denote ‘intuitive consciousness,’ by which he meant a modality of cognition characterized by immediacy, clarity, and independence from both perception and inference.²⁰⁹

As this last feature of his practice of translation already suggests, Radhakrishnan was concerned with stressing that all these Sanskrit terms denoted – beyond their specific connotations – a *sui generis* modality of cognition that he usually designated by the English term ‘intuition’ or such connate locutions as ‘intuitive insight,’ ‘intuitive knowledge,’ ‘intuitive wisdom,’ and ‘intuitive consciousness.’ In this way, Radhakrishnan’s practice of translation was closely linked to what I will call his trimodal epistemology.²¹⁰ This theory of knowledge – which Radhakrishnan claimed at least once (1960: 105) to be rooted in the *Upaniṣads* – distinguished between three types or modalities of knowledge: (a) sense perception, (b) logical understanding, and (c) intuitive insight.²¹¹ He conceptualized them as epistemologically reliable sources of veridical cognition that are non-reducible to each other and he regarded the third

²⁰⁷ See Appendix 3, under the entry ‘*anubhava*.’ Radhakrishnan’s hermeneutics of (religious) experience and its close association with the term *anubhava* sparked a long academic discussion concerning the epistemologic status of *anubhava* within classical Advaita Vedānta. See, for instance, Halbfass (1988: 378-402), Sharma (1992), Rambachan (1994; 1996), and recently Gupta (2009) and Preti (2014).

²⁰⁸ The following description is based on the survey of Sanskrit terms presented in Appendix 3.

²⁰⁹ See Appendix 3, under the entry “Intuitive consciousness.”

²¹⁰ Bimal Krishna Matilal called it Radhakrishnan’s *pramāṇa* theory (“Ideas and Values in Radhakrishnan’s Philosophy” in *Radhakrishnan Centenary Volume* (ed.) G. Parthasarathi and D. P. Chattopadhyaya. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 23).

²¹¹ To be sure, Radhakrishnan also used another set of terms to denote these three modalities of cognition. For instance, in IVL (1932) he had them as (a) sense experience, (b) discursive reasoning/logical knowledge, and (c) intuitive apprehension. And in “The Religion of the Spirit

among these modalities – intuition – as the ultimate authority in religious matters.²¹² Radhakrishnan actually appealed to several Sanskrit terms – notably *prāmāṇyam nirapekṣam*, *svaśamvedana*, *svayaṁ prakāśa*, *svataḥ siddha*, and *svataḥ prāmāṇya* – in order to stress the ‘self-evidencing’ or ‘self-certifying’ quality of this third type of cognition which he saw embodied in religious experience.

These translations reveal that in his hermeneutics of religious experience Radhakrishnan was keen to identify broad and loose equivalents to what were anyway rather vague, albeit extremely complex, ideas of ‘experience,’ ‘intuition’ and ‘immediacy.’²¹³ In his eclectic endeavor, Radhakrishnan was not interested in exploring the meaning of those Sanskrit terms and locutions textually. Nor did he treat these words as technical terms, assuming quite specific and well-defined meanings in scholastic Sanskrit literature. I therefore think that, in the main, Halbfass’ diagnosis of the rhetoric of experience and the deployment of *anubhava* by colonial Indian intellectuals captures well Radhakrishnan’s own practice of translation. As Halbfass assessed:

The role of the concept of experience in Neo-Hinduism is not a mere continuation or extension of that of *anubhava* and similar notions in traditional Hinduism. The changes are not only a matter of emphasis; they reflect a radically new situation - the encounter of the Indian tradition with Western science and philosophy; and they represent one of the most exemplary cases of reinterpretation and revision of the tradition in response to Western ideas and perspectives.²¹⁴

and the World’s Need: Fragment of a Confession” (1952) he had it as (a) perceptual knowledge, (b) conceptual knowledge, and (c) intuitive knowledge. For the sources of this trimodal terminology, see for example his IVL (1932), Chapter 4, under the headline “Different ways of knowing;” his “The Religion of the Spirit and the World’s Need: Fragment of a Confession” (1952) under the headline “Religion of the Spirit;” or his introduction to *The Brahma Sūtra: The Philosophy of Spiritual Life* (1960) under the headline “Reason and Revelation.” For accounts of at least one of the three modalities of knowledge see for example *The Hindu Way of Life* (1927), Lecture 1, “Religious Experience: Its Nature and Content;” *The Idealist View of Life* (1932), Chapter 3, “Religious Experience and Its Affirmations.” See also Appendix 3, under the entry ‘Cognitive experience, variety of,’ ‘Modes of consciousness,’ ‘Knowledge, three types of’ and also ‘Empirical knowledge,’ ‘Integral knowledge,’ ‘Intuition,’ ‘Intellectual and intuitive knowledge, justification of,’ ‘Logical or conceptual knowledge,’ and ‘logical reasoning.’

²¹² “The spiritual sense, the instinct for the real, is not satisfied with anything less than the absolute and the eternal. It shows an incurable dissatisfaction with the finiteness of the finite, the transiency of the transient. Such integral intuitions are our authority for religion. They reveal a Being who makes himself known to us through them and produces revolt and discontent with anything short of the eternal” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89).

²¹³ For these complexities, see Appendix 3, under the entry ‘Immediacy,’ ‘Integral experience,’ ‘Intellectual and intuitive knowledge,’ ‘Intuition,’ ‘Intuitive consciousness,’ ‘Intuitive insight,’ ‘Intuitive knowledge,’ ‘Intuitive truth,’ ‘Intuitive wisdom’ and ‘Knowledge, types of.’ For a critical examination of Radhakrishnan’s concept of intuitive knowledge, see Vohra (1997).

²¹⁴ Halbfass (1988: 395).

By establishing these correlations, Radhakrishnan was certainly reinterpreting those Sanskrit terms and assigning them brand new shades of meanings. By precipitating them in a rather creative and eclectic fashion into an entirely new set of associations and connotations established by the grammar of a radically new context of discourse, he chose to act as an enabler and a catalyst of a new self-understanding facilitated by the asymmetric encounter with the cultural West and the English language, instead of acting as a meticulous exegete concerned with retrieving the original, historical, meaning of those terms. Thus, I submit that though his translations and interpretations may not have been always philologically sound or historically accurate (I think it is important to stress that more often than not they just weren't) this does not *ipso facto* render them as mistranslations; for philological and historical accuracy are not the only criteria through which to assess the merits of any given translation nor the only criteria for assessing the achievements of any given intellectual engagement with classical philosophy, Indian or otherwise. I suggest that we can arrive at a much more constructive appreciation of Radhakrishnan's practice of translation – which does not necessarily imply unreserved concession – by placing it within the asymmetric encounter between India and the West, and see it as avowing a proactive and eclectic effort to arrive at a new self-understanding within such a complex predicament.²¹⁵ As I will argue in what follows, this new self-understanding was grounded in the hermeneutics of religious experience and entailed conceiving Hinduism as the religion of experience par excellence and hoped that stressing the relevance of religious experience as the core of any – not only Hindu – religious life could provide a firm and deep ground for harmonizing the tensions among the plurality of religious claims.

Hinduism is the religion of experience par excellence

As it has been argued in secondary literature, Radhakrishnan's philosophy identified the imminent cultural dangers of modern life in the geographical West while it sought for its solutions in the geographical East (Kaylor 1977:

²¹⁵ I am closely following Wilhelm Halbfass here, and the following assessment of his work by Franco & Preisendanz (1997: xv): "[...] Halbfass has done more than any other Indological scholar to dispel contempt for Neo-Hindus by Western scholars, a contempt that often leads to general disregard. He has taught us to see how interesting and fascinating the Neo-Hindu writings can be and has impressed on us that the Neo-Hindu interpretation of the classical Sanskrit tradition and its texts should not be judged solely with a view to philological and historical accuracy; in this respect it obviously proves to be rather deficient. Halbfass possesses a strong philological background, and he is no less capable than other philologists to point out the Neo-Hindu distortions and misinterpretations of the Indian tradition in the self-representation *for* and at the same time *against* the West – this he has done, and masterfully, for the key concepts of *dharma* and *darśana*. But Halbfass goes beyond that: he instructs us in the appreciation of these 'mistakes' in the light of the hermeneutical situation of the Neo-Hindus and presents those who 'commit' them as serious thinkers who try courageously and innovatively to come to grips with the inescapable European modernity without thereby losing their cultural or religious identity."

59; Minor 1995: 34). Concerning the dangers, I have already addressed his concerns with the globalising predicament of Western modernity. As for his search for solutions, perhaps the most significant in this respect was his attempt to map his trimodal epistemology geographically, situating the faculty of ‘creative intuition’ in the East and the faculty of ‘critical intelligence’ in the West.²¹⁶ One immediate and far-reaching effect of doing so was Radhakrishnan’s reinterpretation of Hinduism as a religion of experience par excellence, which relied on two crucial claims, namely: there is a derived authority for the Veda within Hinduism, and that Vedānta is the absolute standard of Hinduism.

Radhakrishnan’s efforts to reinterpreting Hinduism through his hermeneutics of religious experience dates back to his *The Hindu View of Life* (1927), where it appeared already abreast his concerns for its unification and early suggestions regarding the potential it might entail for solving the problems of religious conflicts within the global context.²¹⁷ As avowed in his arguments, Radhakrishnan believed that accounting for the achievements of Hinduism required finding an underlying ‘unity of spirit’ behind its many diverse expressions.²¹⁸ Moreover, he believed that, assessed from this – somehow higher – perspective of unity, the differences found among the sects of Hinduism would prove to be superficial.²¹⁹ Radhakrishnan presumed that the one fundamental contention that could safeguard this ‘unity of spirit’ was his hermeneutics of experience; that is, his claim that in Hinduism religious dogma, the work of the intellect, and the outer expressions of religious life are all respectively subordinated to religious experience, intuition, and the inner realisation. As he eloquently wrote:

The Hindu attitude to religion is interesting. While fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself no such limits. Intellect is subordinated to intuition, dogma to experience, outer expression to inward realisation. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstractions or the

²¹⁶ See for example his IVL, Chapter 4, “Intellect and Intuition” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 127-174). In this chapter Radhakrishnan asserted that “While the dominant feature of Eastern thought is its insistence on creative intuition, the Western systems are generally characterized by a greater adherence to critical intelligence. This distinction is not to be pressed too closely. It is relative and not absolute. It describes chief tendencies, and there are in fact many exceptions. It is only a question of the distribution of emphasis” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 129). However, and despite his own warning that this mapping should not be taken in absolute terms, he concluded that “From the Socratic insistence on the concept to Russell’s mathematical logic, the history of Western thought has been a supreme illustration of the primacy of the logical” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 133).

²¹⁷ Thus, already in 1927, Radhakrishnan made the following suggestive remark: “Perhaps the Hindu way of approach to the problem of religious conflicts may not be without its lesson for us” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 15).

²¹⁸ “But, if there is not a unity of spirit binding its different expressions and linking up the different periods of its history into one organic whole, it will not be possible to account for the achievements of Hinduism” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 12).

²¹⁹ “The differences among the sects of the Hindus are more or less on the surface, and the Hindus as such remain a distinct cultural unit, with a common history, a common literature and a common civilization” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 14).

celebration of ceremonies, but a kind of life or experience. It is insight into the nature of reality (*darśana*), or experience of reality (*anubhava*). This experience is not an emotional thrill, or a subjective fancy, but is the response of the whole personality, the integrated self to the central reality. (Radhakrishnan 1927: 15)

In this way, by avowing the audacious idea that religious experience dwells at the core of Hindu religion as a whole, Radhakrishnan could explain the diversity of its theological and ritual manifestations, its internal pluralism, by appealing to the different apprehensions of reality that were disclosed within religious experience itself.²²⁰ In other words, the putative unifying feature of religious experience required an entire philosophy of religious experience which could provide a reasonable explanation of the plurality and variety of religious experience itself.²²¹

Privileging religious experience over theological production and ritual life within Hinduism meant relocating the ultimate authority in religious matters, shifting it now from the Vedas to religious experience.²²² Radhakrishnan relied here upon a three-step argument: first, he conceptualised the Vedas in terms of ‘records’ or ‘transcripts’ that ‘register’ intuitions given during religious experience to ‘perfected souls’ who are ‘experts in the field of religion’;

²²⁰ “By accepting the significance of the different intuitions of reality and the different scriptures of the peoples living in India (*sarvāgamaprāmānya*), Hinduism has come to be a tapestry of the most variegated tissues and almost endless diversity of hues [...] Hinduism is therefore not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. Its tradition of the Godward endeavor of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through the ages” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 20-21).

²²¹ As Radhakrishnan saw very well: “If religion is experience, the question arises, what is it that is experienced? No two religious systems seem to agree in their answer to this question” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 24). I will come back to this issue later on in my text in the section 5.3.3.

²²² For a convincing article on Radhakrishnan’s conception of the Veda in contrast to the traditional Advaitic outlook, see Chemparathy (1995: 103-127). In one among several of his conclusions, Chemparathy writes: “Secondly, though the traditional Advaita admits experience (*anubhava*) of the Ultimate Reality or Brahman, it is declared possible *only through* the Veda. Śaṅkara was never tired of stating that Brahman can be known in his own nature only through Śruti, though a subsidiary role is allotted to reasoning in attaining the knowledge of Brahman as the cause of the universe. The direct experience of Brahman is preceded by the Veda; in other words, the Veda is prior to, and is the cause of, our knowledge of Brahman. Radhakrishnan, on the other hand, reverses this order, making the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality by the seers take precedence over the Veda, by declaring the Veda to be the record of the experience of the seers” (Chemparathy 1995: 122-123). In a last note dedicated to assert the radical difference between these two conceptions of the Veda, Chemparathy suggested that in the last analysis Radhakrishnan’s stance seemed to correspond to his own confession made in 1952: “Although, I admire the great masters of thought, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, I cannot say that I am a follower of any, accepting his teaching in its entirety. I do not suggest that I refused to learn from others or that I was not influenced by them. While I was greatly stimulated by the minds of all those whom I have studied, my thought does not comply with any fixed traditional pattern. For my thinking had another source and proceeds from my own experience, which is not quite the same as what is acquired by mere study and reading. It is born of spiritual experience, rather than deduced from logically ascertained premises” (Radhakrishnan 1952a: 10).

then he applied a sort of principle of derivation according to which the authority of the Vedas is derived in that it originates from the authority of religious experience; and finally he conceived of a principle of replication according to which the truths recorded in the Vedas can be ‘re-experienced,’ which seemed to work also as their principle of verification. Here is how he put the entire argument:

The chief sacred scriptures of the Hindus, the Vedas, register the intuitions of the perfected souls. They are not so much dogmatic dicta as transcripts from life. They record the spiritual experiences of souls strongly endowed with the sense for reality. They are held to be authoritative on the ground that they express the experiences of the experts in the field of religion. If the utterances of the Vedas were uninformed by spiritual insight, they would have no claim to our belief. The truths revealed in the Vedas are capable of being re-experienced on compliance with ascertained conditions. We can discriminate between the genuine and the spurious in religious experience, not only by means of logic but also through life. By experimenting with different religious conceptions and relating them with the rest of our life, we can know the sound from the unsound.²²³

All in all, the centripetal dynamism of Radhakrishnan’s hermeneutics of experience entailed relocating the source of authority within Hinduism, downplaying in this respect the role of the Vedas, theological production (orthodoxy), as well as ritual life (orthopraxy) by subordinating them to the unquestionable certainty and primacy of religious experience.²²⁴ Thus, in 1932 Radhakrishnan could write with all clarity that the distinctive feature of Hinduism lies in its “adherence to fact” in that its “distinctive characteristic has been its insistence on the inward life of spirit” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89).

Furthermore, Radhakrishnan’s move to stress the overall authority of religious experience within Hinduism came in 1927 through his vindication of Vedānta as the one ‘common standard’ of Hinduism. Thus, not unlike his appeal to religious experience, Radhakrishnan’s expectations toward Vedānta were part of his wider concern for the unification of Hinduism. Radhakrishnan used the Sanskrit term *vedānta* in more than one sense. He used it (a) in a

²²³ Radhakrishnan (1927: 17). For several statements on the authority of the Vedas see Appendix 3, under the entry “Veda, authority of.” Two more passages must suffice here to underpin the point I am trying to make: “The acceptance of the authority of the Vedas by the different systems of Hindu thought is an admission that intuitive insight is a greater light in the abstruse problems of philosophy than logical understanding” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 128); and “The authoritativeness of the śruti is derived from the fact that it is but the expression of experience, and since experience is of a self-certifying character, the Vedas are said to be their own proof, requiring no support from elsewhere” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 518).

²²⁴ He wrote for instance that: “However much we may quarrel about the implications of this kind of experience [i.e. religious experience], we cannot question the actuality of the experience itself” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 93). For several statements by Radhakrishnan on the inherent certainty of religious experience see Appendix 3, under the entry “Religious experience, feeling of certitude in,” “Intuitive experience and certitude,” “Intuitive character of knowledge and certainty,” or even “Philosophy of religion.”

restricted sense, as a term denoting a number of texts, in particular the *prasthānatrayī* or the ‘triple canon’ constituted by the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahmasūtra*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*; and (b) in a looser sense, as denoting religion par excellence or religion per se, a kind of transcendental or universal religion.²²⁵ Both uses of the term were not exclusive, since Radhakrishnan believed that the *prasthānatrayī* was the textual loci where the transcendental religion was best instantiated.²²⁶ Mapping the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahmasūtra*, and the *Bhagavadgītā* respectively onto faith, knowledge/logic, and discipline – and in this way ascribing implicitly a certain primacy to the *Upaniṣads* – Radhakrishnan could regard them as the ‘absolute standard,’ the ‘common standard,’ and the ‘one true canon’ of Hinduism in reference to which all the remaining expressions of Hindu religion should be assessed. In other words, already in 1927 Radhakrishnan avowed conspicuously the view that the Vedānta was the one and only normative frame of reference within Hinduism. As he wrote:

The three *prasthānas* of the Vedānta, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma Sūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, answer roughly to the three stages of faith, knowledge and discipline. The *Upaniṣads* embody the experiences of the sages. Logic and discipline are present in them, though they are not the chief characteristics of those texts. The *Brahma Sūtra* attempts to interpret in logical terms the chief conclusions of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Bhagavadgītā* is primarily a yoga śāstra giving us the chief means by which we can attain the truly religious life. They form together the absolute standard for the Hindu religion. It is said that other scriptures sink into silence when Vedānta appears, even as foxes do not raise their voices in the forest when the lion appears. All sects of Hinduism attempt to interpret the Vedānta texts in accordance with their own religious views. The Vedānta is not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance. Thus the different sects of Hinduism are reconciled with a common standard are sometimes regarded as the distorted expressions of the one true canon.²²⁷

²²⁵ On the theme of universal religion in Radhakrishnan, see Sharma (1998: 124-134).

²²⁶ Stressing the second meaning of the term Vedānta, Radhakrishnan endorsed the idea according to which “Vedānta is not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 23). That is, in its second meaning Radhakrishnan held Vedānta to be *the* universal religion, not *a* religion.

²²⁷ Radhakrishnan (1927: 22-23). At the same time, through the second meaning of the term, he was endorsing already in 1927 (though without drawing out yet its implications) the idea that Vedānta is the normative scheme of reference for all historically given religions. Hence, just like the “different sects of Hinduism” with respect to *prasthānatrayī*, all world religions can be potentially reconciled with a “common standard” and can be regarded as historical expressions of the one true universal religion, (Advaita) Vedānta, in its “most universal and deepest significance.”

5.3.3 Radhakrishnan's ideology of religious experience: The centrifugal dynamism

Religious experience as the common ground of all religions of the world and reconciliation

But Radhakrishnan's zeal to see in religious experience the unifying factor of Hinduism was not to stop there. Quite the contrary. Although he was keen to stress that Hinduism was the religion of experience par excellence – where “intellect is subordinated to intuition, dogma to experience, outer expression to inward realisation” (1927: 15) – a few years later Radhakrishnan was also determined to claim that religious experience is the essence of all historically given religions. As he wrote plainly already in 1932, “While the experiential character of religion is emphasised in Hindu faith, every religion at its best falls back on it” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 90). Thus, what set Hinduism aside from other faiths was just a matter of emphasis, degree or conscious acknowledgment of this fact rather than a matter of essence. In fact, Radhakrishnan often wrote about the distinctive features of religion in general, without distinguishing whether it was this or that particular religion.²²⁸ When he did so, he used to stress the primacy of religious experience or feeling over intellectual constructions and was therefore against eliminating the mysterious or even the mystical from religion through making religion an entirely rational affair as in the Kantian identification of religion with moral consciousness. He therefore disagreed that religion was a mere consciousness of value, and agreed with Alfred Whitehead that religion was not a mere social phenomenon. For Radhakrishnan, religion as such was essentially a personal and experiential affair, an autonomous phenomenon not reducible to either intellectual, moral, or aesthetic activity, involving an “experience of or living contact with ultimate reality” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 492).

An important offshoot of the idea that religious experience is the common ground of all religions of the world was Radhakrishnan's project in ‘harmonization,’ ‘reconciliation’ or *samanvaya* of world religions, which was inspired

²²⁸ For some of his statements on religion as such see Appendix 3, under “Religion, essence of.” Here is one representative instance: “Religion is, in essence, experience of or living contact with ultimate reality. It is not a subjective phenomenon, not mere cultivation of the inner life but the apprehension of something that stands over against the individual. The real is known not as the conclusion of an argument but with the certainty of a thing experienced. We cannot prove the reality of God in the same way in which we prove the existence of a chair or a table. For God is not an object like other objects in nature. God is spirit which is distinct from the knowing subject or the known object. All proofs for the existence of God fail because they conceive of God as an objective reality. Spirit is life, not thing, energy not immobility, something real in itself and by itself, and cannot be compared to any substance subjective or objective. The divine is manifested in spiritual life or experience. It is given to us in life and not established by ratiocination” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 492).

on his interpretation of BS.1.1.4.²²⁹ This was a major and far-reaching proposal that he endorsed in name of religious tolerance and regarded as the “need of our age,” (1960: 249) providing a definitive solution to both religious dogmatism and conflict as well as the demise of religion within the frames of Western modernity.²³⁰ Essentially, it relied on an argument that he applied in 1927 to the Vedas and the internal plurality of Hinduism. Through centrifugal dynamism, the idea was now extrapolated to the global context and entailed assuming that (1) if religious experience is the core of all world religions and (2) if the foundational scriptures of each historical religion could be recognized and regarded as embodying the records of religious experiences, then, by acknowledging religious experience as the one common source underlying all different religious scriptures and diverse religious claims, the conflict among religions that arises as a consequence of too much literal textualism and theological rigidity – or “intellectualism” as he sometimes put it (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 503) – would no longer be feasible. In other words, Radhakrishnan believed that acknowledging the primacy of religious experience in each and every historical manifestation of religion would provide a firm and common foundation underneath the level of scripture, theology, and ritual on which historical religions distinguish themselves. Such acknowledgment would lead then to an eventual reconciliation among religions eroding their dogmatic self-affirmation and differentiation. Thus, evoking his early assessments on the troublesome predicament of the globalising model of Western modernity, and departing knowingly and purposefully from Śaṅkara’s exegesis of BS.1.1.4, in 1960 Radhakrishnan wrote that:

Today the *samanvaya* or harmonisation has to be extended to the living faiths of mankind. Religion concerns man as man and not man as Jew or Christian, Hindu or Buddhist, Sikh or Muslim. As the author of the B.S. tried to reconcile the different doctrines prevalent in his time, we have to take into account the present state of our knowledge and evolve a coherent picture. Beliefs retain their vigour for a long time after their roots have withered or their sources have

²²⁹ Historically, the term *samanvaya* appeared in BS.1.1.4, which reads *tat tu samanvayāt* and Radhakrishnan translated as “But that is the result of the harmony (of the different scriptural statements)” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 246). As it emerges from his engagement with this aphorism, Radhakrishnan was sufficiently aware of the sense that Śaṅkara made of it in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (Radhakrishnan 1960: 246-249). In addition, he knew well enough that Śaṅkara’s exegesis was motivated and informed by an entirely different context – signalled at least partially by the *pūrvapakṣa* voices present in his text – out of which he interpreted *samanvaya*. And he knew well enough that that sense of *samanvaya* would prove unsuccessful for the task he had set for himself. Informed by Śaṅkara’s exegesis, Radhakrishnan endorsed instead the need to adapt and appropriate the attitude of *samanvaya* as to satisfy what he saw to be the needs of his present global situation. Thus, his appropriation entailed both an act of imaginative *decontextualisation* as well as *recontextualisation* of the Vedāntic *samanvaya*.

²³⁰ “It is the function of philosophy [of religion] to provide us with a spiritual rallying centre, a synoptic vision, as Plato loved to call it, a *samanvaya*, as the Hindu thinkers put it, a philosophy which will serve as a spiritual concordat, which will free the spirit of religion from the disintegrations of doubt and make the warfare of creeds and sects a thing of the past” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 83).

silted up. We must express our beliefs in the context and shape of the real questions and search of modern men. The way in which faith has hitherto expressed itself, the categories which it has evolved, the very nature of the world and the hope towards which faith directs its attention have lost their meaning and reality for the modern world. Our society is shaken to its foundations. The conventional call on the part of religions to believe in God, work for his glory and purpose has become open to questions. Philosophy is not a mere intellectual pursuit labelling and classifying the contents of thought but the creation of a new awareness of oneself and the world. *Samanvaya* or reconciliation is the need of our age. The global, all-comprehensive changes which are taking place represent something new in the structure of human society, though they are not deviations from the normal course of history. The world community which we envisage can be sustained only by a community of ideals. We have to look beyond the political and economic arrangements to ultimate spiritual issues. We have to fashion a new type of man who uses the instruments he has devised with a renewed awareness that he is capable of greater things than mastery of nature. Unfortunately, rivalries among religions are retarding the growth of an international community, the fellowship of man. If we accept the view that the Scriptures of the world are the records of the experiences of the great seers who have expressed their sense of the inner meaning of the world through their intense insight and deep imagination, we will not adopt an attitude of a dogmatic exclusiveness. (Radhakrishnan 1960: 249-250)²³¹

²³¹ As a concluding remark of this section, it is worth stressing on a footnote that Radhakrishnan's claim that religious experience is the hallmark of religion was probably indebted to William James. In his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), James also privileged *feeling* or *personal experience* over theology, philosophy, or institution as the defining element of religion. In his second lecture, entitled "Circumscription of the Topic," James wrote: "Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us *the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine*. Since the relation may be either moral, physical, or ritual, it is evident that out of religion in the sense in which we take it, theologies, philosophies, and ecclesiastical organizations may secondarily grow. In these lectures, however, as I have already said, the immediate personal experiences will amply fill our time, and we shall hardly consider theology or ecclesiasticism at all" (James 1905: 31). Furthermore, in a letter written to Frances Morse on 12 April 1900 James clearly stated that taking and defending *experience* as the core of religion was one of his main contentions in writing his Gifford Lectures: "The problem I have set myself is a hard one: first, to defend (against all the prejudices of my 'class') 'experience' against 'philosophy' as being the real backbone of the world's religious life - I mean prayer, guidance, all that sort of thing immediately and privately felt, as against high and noble general views of our destiny and the world's meaning; and second, to make the hearer or reader believe, what I myself invincibly do believe, that, although all the special manifestations of religion have been absurd (I mean its creeds and theories), yet the life of it as a whole is mankind's most important function. A task well-nigh impossible, I fear, and in which I shall fail; but to attempt it is my religious act" (as quoted in Niebuhr 2005: 215). Additionally, in his lecture eighteen entitled "Philosophy" he unmistakably repeated the same idea: "I do believe that feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products, like translations of a text into another tongue [...] When I call theological formulas secondary products, I mean that in a world in which no religious feeling had ever existed, I doubt whether any philosophic theology could ever have been framed" (James 1905: 431).

Disharmony among religions and the variety of religious experience: Facing a problem

I have argued above that Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience was motivated by unifying the internal plurality of Hinduism (centripetal force) as well as harmonizing world religions (centrifugal force). I have portrayed this hermeneutics as a forceful response to the putative status quo of dogmatism and disharmony among religions which, together with scientific secularism, were deemed responsible for the imminent decline of religion within the globalising framework of Western modernity – a prospect that Radhakrishnan deeply opposed. His response entailed challenging the very idea of religious pluralism at its root by claiming that religious experience is the unifying feature of all religious faiths underneath their theological and ritual expressions. But this claim, on its own, was insufficient. It just relocated the problem of religious pluralism, shifting it now to religious experience but without explaining it. Radhakrishnan was well aware of this fact when he acknowledged that:

If religion is experience, the question arises, what is it that is experienced? No two religious systems seem to agree in their answer to this question. (Radhakrishnan 1927: 24)

In other words, Radhakrishnan knew well that religious experiences (or their accounts) were far from being uniform and monothematic,²³² and he knew that in order to safeguard the tenability of his hermeneutics and its goals he had to account for this variety itself. What does this variety mean? How might it challenge harmonization? Is it not the case that the very idea of the variety of religious experience jeopardises its putative unifying feature? Facing such questions entailed reflecting upon several major philosophical issues. First, as the excerpt calls for, it meant addressing the question whether the variety that is reflected in what is claimed to be apprehended in religious experience – the epistemic domain – must necessarily be interpreted ontologically, that is, as indicating plurality of ontological referents. Second, it meant asking whether the variety of accounts of religious experience proves its futility in that it betrays an unwarranted postulation of objective referent(s) to subjective experience(s). Third, it implied rethinking the very idea of immediacy as a distinctive feature of religious experience. And finally, it meant reflecting upon the relationship between religious experience and its reception, account or interpretation, as well as introducing the key concept of psychological mediation.

²³² Hence, he could write without hesitation that: "As the experiences themselves are of varied character, so their records are many-sided (*viśvatomukham*) which Jayatīrtha in his *Nyāya-sudhā* interprets as 'suggestive of many interpretations' (*anekārthatām*).” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 17)

In order to defend the viability of his project, Radhakrishnan took a clear stance on these issues, although doing so brought several tensions into his philosophy.²³³ As for the first dilemma, Radhakrishnan was unwilling to withdraw ontological conclusions from the factual variety of religious experience. His standpoint entailed advocating ontological nondualism combined with epistemological pluralism. That is, Radhakrishnan's believed that while reality is essentially nondual, its experiential apprehension is manifold. This stance meant relegating the plurality or variety of religious experiences – conceptualised as cognitive apprehensions – to the domain of epistemology and implied addressing the entire issue in terms of difference in apprehension, reception, account or interpretation.²³⁴

In connection to the second dilemma, Radhakrishnan's response was perspicuous albeit philosophically weak. It boiled down in the end to a bold assertion of a realist outlook, without providing any substantial argument to back it up. Hence, for instance, while discussing the manifold conception of deity within Hinduism, Radhakrishnan could simply claim that "From such variety [of the pictures of God] the Hindu thinker did not rush to the conclusion that in religious experience we ascribe objective existence to subjective suggestions" (Radhakrishnan 1927: 24).²³⁵ The same uncritical attitude reappeared while distinguishing between intuitive knowledge (surely at work in religious experience) and imagination. Once again, Radhakrishnan was just able to endorse naively that intuitive knowledge is a '*bona fide* discovery of reality' since its contents correspond to real entities – without providing any further warrant for this claim.²³⁶ In fact, this bold avowal of the realist outlook for which the contents of epistemic apprehension correspond to real entities 'out

²³³ Those are best exemplified in Radhakrishnan's discussions on the issue of religious experience as being mediated/immediate, its validity in terms of religious certitude (i.e. self-certifying character) and logical certainty, and in his concept of intuition as contrasted with discursive type of knowledge and with sense experience. See Appendix 3.

²³⁴ By way of illustration: "The Hindu philosopher became familiar very early in his career with the variety of the pictures of God which the mystics conjure up. We know to-day from our study of comparative religion that there are different accounts of the mystical vision" (Radhakrishnan 1927: 24).

²³⁵ And in a similar vein: "It is sometimes urged that the descriptions of God conflict with one another. It only shows that our notions are not true. To say that our ideas of God are not true is not to deny the reality of God to which our ideas refer" (Radhakrishnan 1927: 25) and "The Hindu never doubted the reality of the one supreme universal spirit, however much the descriptions of it may fall short of its nature (1927: 25).

²³⁶ "The reality of the object is what distinguishes intuitive knowledge from mere imagination. Just as in the common perception of finite things we become directly and inevitably aware of something which has its own definite nature which we cannot alter by our desires or imagination, even so intuitive consciousness apprehends real things which are not open to the senses. Even as there is something which is not imagined by us in our simplest perceptions and yet makes our knowledge possible, even so we have in our intuitions a real which controls our apprehension. It is not fancy or make-believe, but a *bona fide* discovery of reality" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 143).

there' was often reinforced out of hand,²³⁷ suggesting that Radhakrishnan's attitude was here one of assuming it rather than that of proving its tenability.

Furthermore, rethinking the issue of immediacy of religious experience and introducing the idea of psychological mediation and interpretation were crucial measures to safeguarding the epistemological soundness of religious experience and the ontological status of its contents without having to compromise its unifying feature. Radhakrishnan took a clear stance here: he dismissed the idea of pure experience altogether and explained that the common propensity to regarding immediacy as the hallmark of (religious) experience should not be taken literally as denoting the absence of all sorts of mediation within experience, but only the absence of conscious mediation.²³⁸ Thus, as early as 1927 Radhakrishnan could write with all clarity that "religious experience is psychologically mediated" (Radhakrishnan 1927: 25), avowing that "religious experience is not the pure unvarnished presentment of the real in itself, but is the presentment of the real already influenced by the ideas and possessions of the perceiving mind" (1927: 24), that "The divine reveals itself to men within the framework of their intimate prejudices" (1927: 25), and that "each religious genius spells out the mystery of God according to his own endowment, personal, racial, and historical" (1927: 25).

In short, the argument consisted in explaining the factual variety of religious experience by introducing a certain complexity within religious experience itself, conceptualising it as an aggregate of two components: (a) the given, of which not much could be said, and (b) the constructed, which was shaped by the psychological syncretism and interpretation of each individual undergoing such experience.²³⁹ In this scheme of things, each and every enactment and account of religious experience was a *sui generis* way of receiving that which, in the last analysis, was one and the same ontological referent.

²³⁷ For additional examples, see Appendix 3, under 'Intuition, and its object, 'Intuitive consciousness,' 'Intuitive wisdom.'

²³⁸ "Again, there is no such thing as pure experience, raw and undigested. It is always mixed up with layers of interpretation. The alleged immediate datum is psychologically mediated. The scriptural statements give us knowledge, or interpreted experience, a that-what. The 'that' is merely the affirmation of a fact, of a self-existent spiritual experience in which all distinctions are blurred and the individual seems to overflow into the whole and belong to it. The experience is real though inarticulate" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 99) and "What is regarded as immediately given may be the product of inference. Immediacy does not mean absence of psychological mediation but only non-mediation by conscious thought. Ideas which seem to come to us with compelling force, without any mediate intellectual process of which we are aware, are generally the results of previous training in traditions imparted to us in our early years. Our past experience supplies the materials to which the new insight adds fresh meanings. When we are told that the souls have felt in their lives the redeeming power of Kṛṣṇa or Buddha, Jesus or Mohammad, we must distinguish the immediate experience or intuition which might conceivably be infallible and the interpretation which is mixed up with it" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 98-99).

²³⁹ Although this was a crucial distinction in Radhakrishnan's philosophy of religious experience, I think that he was unclear about how deep his constructivism was – that is, whether the shaping of its content pertained to the instance of experience itself or to its aftermath and account.

Addressing the issue in terms of simple facts and accounts, in 1932 Radhakrishnan wrote that:

We must distinguish the simple facts of religion from the accounts which reach us through the depth of theological preconceptions. That the soul is in contact with a mighty spiritual power other than its normal self and yet within and that its contact means the beginning of the creation of a new self is the fact, while the identification of this power with the historic figures of Buddha or Christ, the confusion of the simple realization of the universal self in us with a catastrophic revelation from without, is an interpretation, a personal confession and not necessarily an objective truth. Something is directly experienced, but it is unconsciously interpreted in the terms of the tradition in which the individual is trained. The frame of reference which each individual adopts is determined by heredity and culture. (Radhakrishnan 1932: 99)²⁴⁰

Finally, introducing the idea of psychological mediation within religious experience allowed Radhakrishnan to counter the disharmony among religions by vindicating their ‘kinship of spirit’ and the related idea of mutual tolerance and acknowledgment. Against religious literalism and dogmatism, Radhakrishnan insisted that each reception and conception of the religious referent within any given historical tradition (as it is recorded in religious scriptures and elaborated in theology) should not be taken too rigidly by their followers, since accounts and testimonies of religious experience pertain to the domain of the symbolic and the mythical which can only suggest but not describe literally.²⁴¹ Moreover, Radhakrishnan believed that beyond each and every symbolic language there was a sort of transcendental unity of its referent – just as there was only one ontological referent beyond each and every psychological reception – which he addressed with such locutions as ‘kinship of the spirit,’ ‘unity of the spirit,’ and ‘religion of the spirit.’ On one occasion, he wrote for instance that:

²⁴⁰ The same argument was also applied to the scriptures conceived as records of religious experience: “Every revealed Scripture is at once both divine self-manifestation and the way in which human beings have received it. There is a reciprocity of inward and outward. Revelation and its reception are inseparably united. We are the receptacles of the revelation. Our own form of reception cannot be confused with ‘an assumedly undiluted and untransformed revelation’ in Professor Paul Tillich’s words. ‘Wherever the divine is manifest in flesh, it is in a concrete physical and historical reality’” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 113). For more statements on this theme, see Appendix 3, under ‘Religious experience, expression and interpretation,’ ‘Spiritual facts and their interpretation,’ ‘Spiritual experience, report and replication.’

²⁴¹ “The seers who were at least as wise and as subtle as ourselves, by letting their imagination work on the experience, devised symbolic conceptions such as crossing the ocean of samsāra, ascending into heaven, meeting God face to face [...] If we insist on interpreting these symbols literally, difficulties arise. But if we go behind the words to the moods they symbolise, agreement is possible. The symbols and suggestions employed are derived from the local and historical traditions [...] The myths require to be changed as they lose their meaning with the lapse of time, but they are in no case to be accepted as literal truths. They require to be interpreted [...]” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 97). See Appendix 3, under ‘Religious experience, imagination, symbols and myths.’

Though religious experience has developed into varied doctrines and expressed itself in different intellectual notations, there is a certain kinship of the spirit among the religious geniuses who have made their mark on history, who join hands across the centuries and bid us enter into the kingdom of the spirit. They affirm that the self perceives directly the ultimate reality which is there, existing in its own right, untouched by the imperfections of the world. It is intimately present to and in ourselves. Truth, beauty and goodness are not subjective fancies but objective facts. They are sometimes brought out by calling them attributes of God. We have a consciousness that we belong to that which is ultimately real. (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 493-494)

In the end, Radhakrishnan believed that this transcendental unity of religion was the one underlying core of all historical religions, embodied by the mystic tradition of East and West, and professing a tolerant stance which avoided both dogmatic affirmation and dogmatic denial of each and every religious tradition. In virtue of its uncompromised commitment to reconciliation, Radhakrishnan believed that religion of the spirit will be the religion of the future.²⁴²

Religious experience and the reconciliation of religion with science

Besides vindicating the need for and the viability of harmonization among world religions, the centrifugal dynamism of Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience entailed also contesting the challenge of scientific naturalism. As I have already stressed, Radhakrishnan's account of the troublesome predicament of Western modernity involved foretelling the demise of religion. The 'death of God' was partially brought about by the fast and successful advance of secular science which relied on the hypothesis of total immanence (scientific naturalism) and was keen to dispense entirely with the hypothesis of God. At the same time, however, Radhakrishnan advocated outspokenly that this demise was nothing else but a call to transform the outer expression of the religious need in man. That is, he was convinced that if religion is to survive within the frames of the globalising predicament of Western modernity, it must transform. The question was really then: how? I submit that for Radhakrishnan an important aspect of this much-needed transformation

²⁴² "I am not a trained theologian and can only speak from the point of view of a student of philosophy who has endeavored to keep abreast with modern investigations into the origins and growth of the chief religions of the world, and it seems to me that in the mystic traditions of the different religions we have a remarkable unity of spirit. Whatever religions they may profess, the mystics are spiritual kinsmen. While the different religions in their historical forms bind us to limited groups and militate against the developments of loyalty to the world community, the mystics have always stood for the fellowship of humanity. They transcend the tyranny of names and the rivalry of creeds as well as the conflict of races and the strife of nations. As the religion of spirit, mysticism avoids the two extremes of dogmatic affirmation and dogmatic denial. All signs indicate that it is likely to be the religion of the future" (Radhakrishnan 1939: viii-ix). For his account of the essential tenets of this transcendental or universal religion as implied in his philosophy of religious experience see Appendix 3, under 'Religious experience, its final affirmations' and 'Idealist tradition and the spirit in man.'

had to do with reconciling religion with science and that his hermeneutics of religious experience was committed to making such reconciliation feasible by regarding the idea of experience and experimentation their common basis.²⁴³

Although this intention is visible on several fronts, it was most conspicuously articulated while presenting his agenda in philosophy of religion.²⁴⁴ As his statements on the same reveal, Radhakrishnan's philosophy of religion was concerned with vindicating the scientific or even the empirical approach to the study of religion, and it implied several commitments.

Foremost among these was his experientialism. The claim that religious experience constitutes the core of religion was a measure that Radhakrishnan took in order to bring religion and science closer to each other by stressing their mutual commitment to the empirical and the related processes of verification. Hence, Radhakrishnan endorsed the idea that religious experience – or the “direct apprehension of God” as he sometimes paraphrased it (Radhakrishnan 1932: 84) – must be acknowledged as a *fact* of religious consciousness and become the bedrock of philosophy of religion because he thought that this concession was paramount for philosophy of religion becoming scientific.²⁴⁵ He assumed that by way of recourse to the testimony and authority of experience, philosophy of religion could become akin to empirical science. Indeed, in Radhakrishnan's point of view, empirical science and philosophy of religion – which he plainly defined as “religion come to an understanding of itself” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 84) – were not to be pursued with a different outlook and methodology.²⁴⁶ In this way, his experientialism meant conflating the idea of scientific experiment and experimentation with the idea of religious experience: just as the data of scientific experiment is the bedrock of scientific theory-building, religious experience (recall now its connection with the Sanskrit term *anubhava*) is to be regarded as the primary data upon which philos-

²⁴³ For the theme of reconciliation of religion and science through the idea of experience, see Halbfass (1988: 378-402). In a conclusive mood Halbfass wrote that: “As we have noticed, the Neo-Hindu appeal to religious or mystical experience often involves the claim that religion can and should be scientific, and that Hinduism, and Vedānta in particular, has a scientific and experimental basis. The concept of experience has thus become one of the most significant devices for presenting and interpreting the Hindu tradition to a world dominated by science and technology. Westerners, too, have been attracted by this idea: ‘Experience,’ with its suggestive ambiguity and its broad range of connotations, seems to indicate a possible reconciliation or merger of science and religion, providing religion with a new measure of certainty and science with a new dimension of meaning” (Halbfass 1988: 398-399).

²⁴⁴ For his statements, see Appendix 3, under ‘Philosophy of religion.’ My account here will be based on the views avowed in these statements.

²⁴⁵ “If philosophy of religion is to become scientific, it must become empirical and found itself on religious experience.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 84)

²⁴⁶ “There is no reason why the intuitions of the human soul with regard to the ultimate reality should be studied in any other spirit or by any other method than those which are adopted with such great success in the region of positive science.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 85)

ophy of religion was to construe its insights about the nature of ultimate reality.²⁴⁷ Besides, it meant entertaining the idea of replication of religious experiences.

Another prominent commitment in Radhakrishnan's philosophy of religion that reflects a further compromise with empirical sciences was his acute concern with the process of *verification* of religious experiences and claims derived therefrom, stressing in this manner its epistemological orientation.²⁴⁸ This preoccupation is well attested in Radhakrishnan's work. From his recourse to the Sanskrit *prāmāṇyam nirapekṣam, svasaṃvedana, svayaṃ prakāśa, svataḥ siddha*, and *svataḥ prāmāṇya*; through his insistence on the self-certifying character of religious experience and the distinction between faith and 'the testing process of logical thought'; all the way up to his distinction between religious certitude and logical certainty, Radhakrishnan seemed to be concerned with the epistemology of religious experience and reflecting on the issue of verification of religious experiences.²⁴⁹ Although his elucubrations were far from consistent, I think that it is safe to surmise that he tended towards a stance in which religious experience is marked by (a) the highest degree of certitude and (b) low degree of conceptual clarity. He conceived religious experience to be self-certifying in that it yields religious certainty – that is, innermost conviction about its (conceptually ineffable)²⁵⁰ content to

²⁴⁷ This conflation is, to say the least, problematic; for it fuses (and maybe even confuses) the idea of experience as an organized process of accumulation and confirmation of scientific knowledge with the idea of religious experience as a sporadic event which is hardly subject to any sort of systematic rule and framework of planning. It also challenges the idea of experiment as referring to standardised procedures for obtaining objective results with the idea of religious experience as denoting a subjective state of awareness. On top of that, it seems to ignore both the active and the rather passive roles that the human subject seems to be playing in the process of scientific experimentation and religious experience respectively. Besides, this conflation challenges the very idea of religious experience as a unique and autonomous modality of experience, in which "feelings are fused, ideas melt into one another, boundaries are broken and ordinary distinctions transcended [...]" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 91-92). For this conception, see Appendix 3, under 'Religious experience, as a unique and autonomous modality of experience.' For the idea that religious experience challenges any framework of planning, see for instance Appendix 3, under 'Intuitive experience, transitory character of.'

²⁴⁸ As he wrote, the business of philosophy of religion is to "find out whether the convictions of the religious seers fit in with the tested laws and principles of the universe." (Radhakrishnan 1932: 85)

²⁴⁹ See Appendix 3, under 'Faith, reason, and intuition,' 'Religious experience, feeling of certitude in,' and 'Religious experience, test the claim to truth of.'

²⁵⁰ For his statement on the ineffability of religious experience, see Appendix 3, under 'Religious experience, sense of the ineffability of.' Although in this passage Radhakrishnan explicitly acknowledges two components in religious experience – a feeling of certitude and the sense of ineffability (1932: 95) – his account of religious experience deals with other features. His discussions seem to be directly inspired by William James, who in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), famously argued that mystical experience is defined by four characteristic features: (a) ineffability, (b) noetic quality, (c) transiency, (d) passivity (James 1905: 380-382). Moreover, James regarded the presence of the first two qualities a necessary and sufficient condition to regard any state as mystical: "These two characters [ineffability and noetic quality]

those undergoing them. He took such ‘trust’ or ‘spiritual conviction’ to be the defining feature of religious faith. However, such subjective certainty required another sort of warrant and an additional process of verification granted by the objective means of logic as well as contrasting and checking with other bodies of knowledge as soon as it was conceptualized and involved a claim to objective truth. In the end, the process of *testing* religious experience became equivalent to checking the tenability of its propositional content, which was not to be confused with challenging the innermost certainty – despite its low degree of conceptual clearness – left by religious experience in those undergoing it.²⁵¹

This had yet another direct implication. It meant regarding religious creeds as claims to truth that are equivalent to or analogous with scientific theories.²⁵² In the same manner as any scientific theory was, propositional contents of religious faith, to the extent they entailed a claim to objective truth, were conceived as theoretical constructs suitable for and requiring the same type and process of verification. Hence, Radhakrishnan believed that the endeavour of the philosophy of religion is intimately related to accountability, in that the philosophy of religion ought to “define the world to which our religious experiences refer” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 85).

Finally, inbuilt in his philosophy of religion was a commitment to spiritual idealism – that is, a compromise with an outlook that carefully avoided the two extremes of scientific naturalism and religious dogmatism. By vindicating this feature in his philosophy of religion, Radhakrishnan was decidedly departing from both, religious dogmatism as well as scientific secularism. He was far, then, from advocating the need for a convergence of religion and science at any cost. Although he believed that this reconciliation was the *sine qua non* for safeguarding the presence of the religious within the framework of the globalizing paradigm of Western modernity and meant adopting a scientific view on religious experience as well as rethinking a number of other

will entitle any state to be called mystical, in the sense in which I use the word. Two other qualities are less sharply marked, but are usually found” (James 1905: 381).

²⁵¹ Three passages must suffice to underpin my assessment: “Religious experience is of self-certifying character. It is *svatassidha*. It carries its own credentials. But the religious seer is compelled to justify his inmost convictions in a way that satisfies the thought of the age. If there is not this intellectual confirmation, the seer’s attitude is one of trust. Religion rests on faith in this sense of the term. The mechanical faith which depends on authority and wishes to enjoy the consolations of religion without the labour of being religious is quite different from the religious faith which has its roots in experience” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 15-16); “While intuitional experience carries with it the highest degree of certitude, it has only a low degree of conceptual clearness. This is why interpretation is necessary, and these interpretations are fallible and so require endless revision” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 514); and “The only way to impart our experiences to others and elucidate their implications for the rest of our life and defend their validity against hostile criticism is by means of logic. When we test the claim of the experience to truth, we are really discussing the claims of the forms or propositions in which the nature of the experience is unfolded.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 98)

²⁵² “The creeds of religion correspond to theories of science.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 86)

fundamental aspects of religious life through insights, rules, and formal procedures that defined the modern culture of empirical sciences as such, he forcefully rejected the underlying ‘ideology’ of this same scientific culture that abhorred the religious. This denial of the religious *per se*, he believed, was no less dogmatic than the displayed by religious exclusivism. Wishing to depart from both, he wrote that:

Philosophy of religion as distinct from dogmatic theology refuses to accept any restricted basis but takes its stands on experience as wide as human nature itself. It rejects the high *a priori* road of speculative theology and the apologetic method of dogmatic theology and adopts a scientific view of religious experience and examines with detachment and impartiality the spiritual inheritance of men of all creeds and of none. Such an examination of the claims and contents of religious consciousness, which has for its background the whole spiritual history of man, has in it the promise of a spiritual idealism which is opposed to the disintegrating forces of scientific naturalism on the one hand and religious dogmatism on the other. (Radhakrishnan 1932: 87)

From these contentions, I think it is safe to conclude that Radhakrishnan’s project in his philosophy of religion was an attempt to reconcile religion with science and to make room for the religious within the framework of Western modernity. His strategy for doing so entailed vindicating the scientific or empiric approach to the study of religion by stressing its reliance on the data of religious experience while contesting scientific naturalism and the hypothesis of total immanence.

5.4 A view from the Advaita centre: Towards a nondual hierarchical inclusivism

The kind of hermeneutics of religious experience that Radhakrishnan practiced came along with a sort of inclusivism that is best described as hierarchical and nondual in that it combined ontological nondualism with epistemological hierarchical pluralism. By upholding this outlook, Radhakrishnan avowed his commitment to the idea that, on a fundamental level, reality is nondual, while its apprehension is manifold. As I have already discussed, Radhakrishnan believed that the factual variety of religious experience responded to the many ways in which ultimate reality is apprehended and received by men. The idea of psychological and symbolic mediation could explain this plurality while at the same time it safeguarded the actual possibility for reconciliation among religions by appealing to religious experience as their common core. A further theoretical issue involved in those considerations was concerning typology. It meant asking whether those apprehensions of reality could be systematised and if that was the case, how were its putative modalities related to each other. Particularly relevant was the question concerning

whether that relation was of hierarchical kind. Simply put, it entailed inquiring whether there is some sort of inherent hierarchy among these experiential but psychologically mediated apprehensions of the one reality. Certainly, this rather abstract question entailed another more concrete one: Is there a hierarchy among religions, or among different traditions belonging to one and the same historical religion? Once more, Radhakrishnan was clear about his stance: he believed that there is. Avowing it meant centralising Advaita while dislocating other religious identities, Hindu and otherwise.

As for the typology, Radhakrishnan believed that all religious experiences have ultimately one and the same ontological referent which he addressed with such appellatives as ‘mystery of divine reality,’ ‘divine spirit,’ ‘God,’ and ‘the supreme,’ of which there are two principal modalities of apprehension. Accordingly, the one reality is apprehended as (a) in itself, supra-personal, absolute, self-existing, Brahman; or as (b) for us, personal, relative, self-determining principle manifesting in temporal process, Bhagavān. As he wrote:

The supra-personal and the personal representations of the real are the absolute and the relative ways of expressing the one reality. When we emphasize the nature of reality in itself we get the absolute Brahman; when we emphasise its relation to us we get the personal Bhagavān. (Radhakrishnan 1927: 31)²⁵³

He saw the first among these modalities embodied in the apophatic approach to the “mystery of the divine reality” (1927: 26) that is present in both Hinduism and Christianity.²⁵⁴ He thought that the absolute and apophatic approach which highlights the ‘otherness of the divine’ and its elusive character is unnatural to human mind which continuously seeks to conceive and articulate the indefinite and the ineffable in relational and concrete terms.²⁵⁵ Conversely, he believed that the different conceptions of personal God that may be found among the different religions of the world correspond to ‘what God is to us’

²⁵³ The following passage, together with others quoted in this section, completes my list of epithets through which Radhakrishnan discussed the two principal modalities of religious experience: “These different representations [of God] do not tell us about what God is in himself but only what he is to us. The anthropomorphic conception of the divine is relative to our needs. We look upon God as interested in flowers and stars, little birds and children, in broken hearts and in binding them up. But God exists for himself and not merely for us” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 29).

²⁵⁴ “The Hindu thinkers bring out the sense of the otherness of the divine by the use of negatives, ‘There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor mind, we know not, we understand not how one would teach it.’ The *neti* of Yājñavalkya reminds us of the *nescio* of Bernard, of ‘the dim silence where all lovers lose themselves’ of Ruysbroeck, of the negative descriptions of Dionysius the Areopagite, Eckhart and Boehme” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 26).

²⁵⁵ “But the human mind finds it extremely difficult to resign itself to absolute silence or negative descriptions. Man is a talking animal. He insists on interpreting the religious mystery in terms of his own experience. The completely other, the absolutely unlimited, seems to be akin to the utterly indefinite. The human mind craves for something definite and limited and so uses its resources for bringing down the Supreme to the region of the determined [...] The highest category we can use is that of self-conscious personality. We are persons “*puruṣas*,” and God is perfect personality (*uttamapuruṣa*)” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 26-27).

and that they are all 'partially true' in that they all respond and remit to some kind of need or mood of our human mind.²⁵⁶

Radhakrishnan's typology of religious experience reflected a theological tension between the personal and the supra-personal, the relational (or relative) and the absolute conceptions of the divine.²⁵⁷ Although he acknowledged that both conceptions are legitimate in that they both are equally informed by experience, and that more often than not they are professed to be conflicting and incompatible, he departed from such exclusivism and argued for the need to reconciling them, alleging that this tension is unwarranted insofar as it is absent from religious experience itself. As he wrote on one occasion, reconciling the personal and the supra-personal conceptions of reality was a major achievement to be gained in philosophy of religion:

There are aspects in religious experience, such as the sense of rest and fulfilment, of eternity and completeness, which require the conception of a being whose nature is not exhausted by the cosmic process, which possesses an allfulness of reality which our world faintly shadows. This side of religious experience demands the conception of the supreme as self-existence, infinity, freedom, absolute light and absolute beatitude. On the other hand there are features of our religious experience which require us to look upon God as a self-determining principle manifested in a temporal development, with wisdom, love and goodness as his attributes. From this point of view God is a personal being with whom we can enter into personal relationship. Practical religion presupposes a God who looks into our hearts, knows our tribulations and helps us in our need. The reality of prayer and sacrifice is affirmed by the religious life of mankind. It assumes the reality of a concrete being who influences our life. To leave the Absolute in abstract isolation dwelling in Epicurean felicity is to reduce it to an ornamental figurehead who lends an atmosphere to an essentially agnostic view of the cosmic process. The permanent reality beyond the transient world of struggle and discord is also here and in everything.

²⁵⁶ "Every view of God from the primitive worship of nature up to the Father-love of a St. Francis and the Mother-love of a Rāmakṛṣṇa represents some aspect or other of the relation of the human to the divine spirit. Each method of approach, each mode of address answers to some mood of the human mind. Not one of them gives the whole truth, though each of them is partially true" (1927: 28-29).

²⁵⁷ It is worth mentioning here on a footnote that in in the Appendix V to his *Das Heilige* (1917) Otto argued the following: "Thus already, at the outset, we find in the numen of primitive religious feeling that tension between the personal and the supra-personal which recurs again in the mature stages of the developing experience of God [...] But exactly the same thing is seen at the highest stage, at which the unfolding of the numinous consciousness reaches its climax in India: *brahmán* is the everlasting God and Lord, the personal Brahṁá; while *bráhman* is the divine absolute, the supra-personal Bráhma, an 'It' rather than 'He.' And the two are bound together in indissoluble union as the two essential poles of the eternal unity of the Numen" (Otto 1923: 203-204). In connection to Radhakrishnan's nondual hierarchical inclusivism that, as I will explain in the following lines, privileged the supra-personal over the personal aspect, it is also relevant to notice that Otto endorsed just the opposite view and saw in it an indication of the superiority of the Biblical conception of God: "We have seen that it is an indication of its superiority that in the Biblical conception of God the pole of the personal rather than of the impersonal is altogether preponderant" (Otto 1923: 206).

In religious experience itself there is no conflict. The supreme satisfies both sets of needs. But for philosophy of religion, the central problem is to reconcile the apparently conflicting views of the supreme as eternally complete and of the supreme as the self-determining principle manifesting in the temporal process. (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 497)

However, despite his call for reconciliation, Radhakrishnan believed and unmistakably endorsed the view that the personalist apprehension and conception of the divine is somehow inferior. Hence, in consonance with what surely was a personal confession of faith, in 1927 Radhakrishnan could portray Hinduism through his nondual hierarchical inclusivism as a religion that welcomes each and every conception of the divine, ordering them according to their ‘intrinsic significance’ – that is, arranging them in such a manner as to privilege the absolute over the personal conception. Quoting an unidentified source, Radhakrishnan spelled his own distinctive conception of Hindu inclusivism in the following manner:

Hinduism accepts all religious notions as facts and arranges them in the order of their more or less intrinsic significance [...] Hinduism insists on our working steadily upwards and improving our knowledge of God. ‘The worshippers of the Absolute are the highest in rank; second to them are the worshippers of personal God; then come the worshippers of the incarnations like Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha; below them are those who worship ancestors, deities and sages, and lowest of all are the worshippers of the petty forces and spirits.’ (Radhakrishnan 1927: 32)

In the end, Radhakrishnan believed that the domain of this nondual hierarchical inclusivism was bound to transcend Hinduism and include all other religions of the world.²⁵⁸

5.5 Conclusion: Harmonization and the otherness of the other in Radhakrishnan’s hermeneutics of experience

I have argued in this chapter that Radhakrishnan’s hermeneutics of experience was an existential response to the troublesome predicament of the globalising model of Western modernity. As I have examined, Radhakrishnan foresaw

²⁵⁸ “The personal category is transcended in the highest experiences of the Christian mystics. Hinduism affirms that some of the highest and richest manifestations which religion has produced require a personal God. There is a rational compulsion to postulate the personality of the divine. While Hindu thought does justice to the personal aspect of the Supreme, it does not allow us to forget the supra-personal character of the central reality. Even those who admit the personal conception of God urge that there are heights and depths in the being of God which are beyond our comprehension” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 30-31).

that Western experience of modernity entailed challenging religion on an epistemological basis and entailed two distressing attitudes. On the one hand, there was the dogmatic denial of religion by scientific naturalism which was keen to dispense with the hypothesis of God altogether and adopting the hypothesis of total immanence instead. On the other hand, the expanding frame of Western modernity was a domain where different cultures and religions met each other challenging their respective worldviews, faiths and identities in a manner without precedents. For Radhakrishnan, this demanding and in many ways provocative process of religious encounter on a global scale was responsible for triggering parochial attitudes among religious men who felt compelled to defend the immediate boundaries of their own religious identity with an attitude that Radhakrishnan assessed as dogmatic affirmation.

Furthermore, I have argued that Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience was responding to the troublesome prospect of both these attitudes of dogmatic affirmation (of one particular religious creed to the detriment of another) and dogmatic denial (of religion by science) and that it involved rethinking Hinduism and Advaita Vedānta as well as controverting the course of Western modernity. In short, Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of experience meant rethinking the classical Sanskrit (Advaita) Vedānta so as to provide what he thought to be a sound response to the abovementioned shortcomings. To be sure, it entailed an innovating practice of translating and interpreting the Sanskrit term *anubhava* which, taking it out of its original classical context, was committed to stressing the primacy and authority of religious experience above all other aspects of religious life, particularly religious scriptures and theological production. Moreover, it was committed to reconciling religion with science by rethinking several crucial aspects of religious life in terms and procedures that are proper to empirical science while professing 'spiritual idealism.' As I have discussed in this chapter, this interpretation of the term was closely linked to privileging Hinduism over other world religions by portraying it as the religion of experience par excellence (the religion of the fact) and privileging Advaita Vedānta over other expressions of Hinduism as its absolute standard. This trend culminated eventually in vindicating Advaita as religion itself or universal religion. At the same time, Radhakrishnan claimed that to the extent that religious experience is the common core of each and every historical manifestation of religion it allowed for harmonizing or reconciling (*samanvaya*) them. As I have examined, he problematized the notion of pure experience and introduced the idea of psychological mediation operating within religious experience itself in order to safeguard its putative potential to unifying world religions without having to override the data suggesting the actual variety of religious experiences. However, despite his commitment to harmonizing religions by his eclectic philosophy of religious experience, Radhakrishnan professed his 'nondual hierarchical inclusivism' which, acknowledging each and every experience of the divine, included them

all within a hierarchical scheme privileging the experience of the supra-personal and absolute over the personal and relative.

Putting all these trends of his thought together, I think it is safe to conclude that in response to the challenges of the globalising model of Western modernity, Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience sought for a solution through (i) unifying and exalting Hinduism, (ii) harmonizing world religions, and (iii) reconciling religion with science. I submit that it is because he did not regard them to be relevant for this purpose that we don't find in Radhakrishnan's philosophy a more substantial engagement with the *pramāṇavāda* and the episodic paradigm of knowing that shaped the precolonial discourse on *brahmajñāna* in Sanskrit. Not unlike Bhattacharyya, Radhakrishnan was aware of the episodic paradigm of knowing and was acquainted with at least some salient features of the *pramāṇa* framework from very early on in his career (Radhakrishnan 1923: 485-502). However, I think he chose to dispense with them in his own conceptualisation of the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge to the extent that he did not consider them to be relevant to his task.

Whether Radhakrishnan succeeded or not in his enterprise, and in which sense and to what extent he did or didn't do so, is of course open to scholarly debate.²⁵⁹ Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to assess the merits and demerits of his hermeneutics, I will finish this chapter by stressing the fact that the kind of experiential universalism that Radhakrishnan professed with a nondualist leaning and endorsed in the name of religious tolerance may not pay sufficient attention, nor display sufficient respect, to the otherness of his religious other, be it Hindu or otherwise. I mean to say that the unification of Hinduism and the reconciliation of world religions that his hermeneutics of religious experience sought to achieve seems to jeopardise the specific and distinctive religious identities by relocating them within a putative universal scheme with a nondual Vedāntic centre. In other words, Radhakrishnan's universalist pursuit may have systematically decentralised the otherness of his religious other by absorbing and including it within his own outlook as a necessary, albeit inferior modality of his own identity. Indeed, at the end of the day, the issue seems to boil down to examining whether Radhakrishnan's Vedāntic inclusivism is or is not truly committed to religious tolerance.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ See for example the articles on the philosophy of Radhakrishnan assembled in Pappu (1995), particularly in part two "Radhakrishnan and Religious Pluralism" (Pappu 1995: 103-323).

²⁶⁰ For a pertinent reflection on inclusivism and tolerance in the encounter between India and Europe with special references to Radhakrishnan and Paul Hacker, see Halbfass (1988: 403-418).

6. Conclusion: Liberating knowledge in transformation, assessing criteria, and the future of the past

It is now time to sum up the core ideas I have been discussing throughout these pages. I propose to do this in two steps. First, I will flag up the perspective I have adopted herewith towards the criterion of assessment of modern Indian philosophy. Second, I will summarise briefly my findings as they unfolded in chapters two, three, four, and five. Having done that, I will step back from the concerns with modern Indian philosophy that occupied me in this study in order to avow a number of generic questions about the future of Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia. In doing so, I will no longer be concerned with historical issues but with raising theoretical questions about contemporary Indian philosophy as well as contemporary Hindu and Buddhist theology and their positioning in relation to the Sanskrit classical past of South Asia.

6.1 Changing perspectives: From the strictly philological to the philologically informed dialogical criterion of assessment

In this study I have chosen not to follow Paul Hacker's dismissive assessment of the cultural phenomena he termed 'Neo-Hinduism' and 'Neo-Vedānta.' Instead, I have followed the lead of Halbfass, Hatcher, as well as Bhushan & Garfield and, mindful of Franco and Preisendanz's assessment of Halbfass's Indological work and its impact on cross-cultural studies (1997), I have adopted the view that modern Indian – often Anglophone and Hindu – interpretations of the classical Sanskrit tradition should not be judged solely with a view to philological and historical accuracy. Although I do not think, nor mean to suggest in any way, that such criteria are altogether misleading or irrelevant, I have aimed to offer herewith an additional interpretive layer. That is, in this dissertation I have adopted the view that these modern Indian interpretations of the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia are *dialogically creative* and *meaningful* in that they do not seek to retrieve and interpret that past on its own terms and for its own sake but to do so hermeneutically, in relation to the Western Other, and in order to problematise and contest some aspects

of that Western alterity as well as its troublesome modernity. In the words of Franco and Preisendanz (1997: XV), they represent new forms of self-understanding in the attempt to “come to grips with the inescapable European modernity without thereby losing their cultural or religious identity.”

The immediate result of this shift in perspective is plain enough: it bears directly on our understanding and conceptualisation of modern Indian philosophy, or the philosophy that has been written, particularly in English, during the colonial period. Rather than challenging its very identity and authenticity by highlighting its undeniable Western influences and its discontinuity, under strictly philological criteria, with the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia and conceiving, therefore, Indian philosophy as a relic of the classical past, it enables us to entertain the possibility of continuity within Indian philosophy – from classical to modern – in terms other than the strictly philological. However we may conceive its long and complex history (Franco 2013), it enables us to think about Indian philosophy at large as a tradition of critical inquiry that is continuously transformed in ever-new cultural encounters. In particular, it enables us to conceive modern Indian philosophy written in English as one of its many transformations, arguably of the most profound sort, produced within the distinctive hermeneutic situation laid down by the colonial predicament and the encounter with Western modernity.

Furthermore, this shift in perspective does not render philological and historical scholarship on classical Indian philosophy in Sanskrit mute but redefines its role and function in understanding modern Indian philosophy in English as well as in modern Indian languages. To be sure, only such careful philological work on classical Indian philosophy will allow us to detect the eventual changes of paradigm and the semantic discontinuities of the foundational Sanskrit terms to be found in classical Indian philosophic literature in Sanskrit as well as in its modern English and vernacular sources. This is of tremendous importance. However, detecting and describing these transformations and discontinuities is not the same as explaining and passing judgement on them. The shift in perspective I have put into practice here allows us to assess these changes of paradigms and semantic transformations in dialogical terms and to regard them as reflecting new ways of self-understanding in their own right within an entirely new hermeneutic situation.

There is another way to put this. What I mean to signal here is that the philological study of the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia supplements in a very powerful manner – but does not reject – the study of modern Indian philosophy in English or vernaculars in its own hermeneutic relation to that past. Furthermore, I wish to draw attention to the fact that when Indological study turns its attention to modern Indian philosophy, as I have done throughout this study, it finds itself somewhere at the intersection between classical Indology, philosophy, and cross-cultural studies. That is, on the one hand it remains committed to the careful philological study of classical Indian texts

and is informed by that enquiry. On the other hand, it cannot ignore the distinctive cultural situation marked by the encounter with the modern West from which modern Indian philosophers aimed to situate themselves in relation to that past and sought to engage with it hermeneutically. My contention is that, in paying attention to both issues, Indology can shed light on modern Indian philosophy in a very unique manner. First, it can contrast modern Indian philosophic interpretations of the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia with that past as it is retrieved in strictly philological terms. Second, it can seek to explain the resulting difference in dialogical terms, i.e., understanding these modern interpretations of the Sanskrit intellectual past to reflect new ways of self-understanding precipitated to large extent by the encounter with the Western Other.

It should also be stressed here that such a concession is not to be confused with a stance that accepts the claims of these new ways of self-understanding and reinterpretations of the past at face value. That is, granting modern Indian philosophic reinterpretations of the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia their own right and legitimacy as dialogically meaningful ways of responding to the many challenges posed by the Western Other and its modernity is not the same as accepting uncritically their claims to truth. It is acknowledging, instead, that these claims to truth need to be regarded, respected, and examined as such in first place, and that doctrinal or semantic continuity with the Sanskrit intellectual 'past' or 'tradition' may not turn out to be a decisive criterion either for examining these truth claims as such or for challenging them. Finally, it is of course open to discussion whether Indological research should partake in the task of examining these claims as claims to truth at all. In this study, I have not ventured into such undertaking.

6.2 Liberating knowledge and the dynamics of transformation

The core theme of this study has been the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge or *brahmajñāna* and the distinctive ways in which three prominent Indian philosophers of the twentieth century have engaged with it. In the main, I have argued that the profound dissimilarities to be found in Śukla, Bhattacharyya, and Radhakrishnan's conceptualisations of this central Advaitic notion reflect deep differences in their doxastic attitudes toward the Sanskrit intellectual past on the one hand and the presence of the Western Other on the other. Classifying these attitudes into (a) dialogical and (b) non-dialogical in relation to the Western Other as well as into (c) exegetic and (d) hermeneutic in relation to the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia, I have aimed to show that, in comparison to the conceptual scheme that shaped the precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna*, there is a particular kind of

discontinuity and novelty in the manner in which Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan – whom I took to exemplify a dialogical and hermeneutic attitude – conceptualised the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge that is not to be found in the non-dialogical and exegetic engagement exemplified by Śukla. Moreover, my intention was to suggest that this particular sort of discontinuity and innovation, absent as it is from Śukla's engagement, reflects the far-reaching commitment of Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan to appropriate the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge and to render it meaningful in terms and parameters of intelligibility of the Western Other in order to contest what they took to be a troublesome predicament of Western modernity.

In order to build my case, I began suggesting that the notion of *brahmajñāna* is in the precolonial Sanskrit sources of Advaita Vedānta deeply embedded in the episodic paradigm of knowing as well as the intricacies of *pramāṇa* epistemology which set the key parameters of its intelligibility. Drawing upon a number of precolonial scholastic treatises in Sanskrit, I have argued that the discourse on *brahmajñāna* articulated therein handles this central notion in terms of (a) a mental event and an instance of (b) intentional awareness, (c) immediate cognition, as well as (d) veridical cognition.

All in all, I have suggested that, in these precolonial sources, *brahmajñāna* was taken to consist of a mental event (*vr̥ttirūpaṃ brahmajñānam*). Its exposition presupposed a sophisticated philosophy of mind which distinguished between pure awareness and the awareness qualified by mental events (*vr̥ttiv-īṣiṣṭa caitanya*). Cognition was explained in terms of the light of awareness and the intrinsically insentient internal organ which was believed to assume the form (*ākāra*) of the object at the time of its cognition. In this scheme of things, *brahmajñāna* was technically conceptualised as a mental event of its own kind in that it was said to be shaped after the form of the unfragmented (*akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavr̥tti*), Brahman. I have suggested that due to this remarkably episodic conception, the precolonial Advaitic discourse on *brahmajñāna* was keenly interested in addressing a number of issues that can be ultimately boiled down to questions concerning its arising (*udaya*), use or application (*prayojana*), and extinction (*nivr̥tti*).

Besides this episodic feature, I have stressed that *brahmajñāna* was conceived as an instance of intentional awareness in that it implied turning or directing the mental event towards Brahman (*tadābhimukhyam*), for which it was said to make of Brahman the object of cognition (*brahmaṇo viṣayīkaraṇam*). Furthermore, I have pointed out that precolonial advocates of Advaita professed unanimously that *brahmajñāna* consists of immediacy (*aparokṣarūpa*, *sākṣātkāra*) but they disagreed on a number of issues: (i) whether immediacy is contingent upon the quality of the instrument or the quality of the entity involved in cognition, and (ii) whether the putative immediacy of liberating knowledge is yielded by the Vedāntic sentences themselves or by the mind purified by exegetic reflection. In addition, I have shown that the precolonial Advaitic concern to defend the claim that *brahmajñāna* is

a veridical cognition meant appealing to the technical notion of *pramā* and *pramātvā* as well as to the causal and evidential aspects of the *pramāṇa* theory. My key preoccupation here was to highlight that ensuring the veracity of the event of *brahmajñāna* required stressing invariably its affiliation to the verbal means of knowing, particularly the Vedāntic sayings.

This schematic portrayal of the precolonial conceptual scheme underpinning the notion of *brahmajñāna* enabled me to examine in the following chapters the engagement with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge advocated by Śukla, Bhattacharyya, and Radhakrishnan. Of particular importance to my analysis was to investigate their attunement, or lack thereof, to this conceptual scheme. My main contention in this respect was to suggest that (i) whereas Śukla's engagement shares largely in this precolonial conceptual scheme, Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan's does not, and that (ii) this fact could be explained by the immediate context of reference in which these philosophers aimed their respective engagements to speak and be meaningful.

Moving on to Badrīnāth Śukla, I have suggested that his elucidation of the process of knowing Brahman (*brahmajñān kī prakriyā*) betrays his non-dialogical and exegetic commitments in that in the course of his elucidation of VS.28 – which addresses the process whereby the Vedāntic saying *aham brahmāsmi* arises in the mind of the entitled student – he does not intend it to mediate in any significant way the cultural encounter with the Western Other. Instead, Śukla acts as a Sanskrit-learned commentator who, accepting the parameters of intelligibility as well as the doctrinal boundaries set by Sadānanda's VS, seeks to elucidate the purport of VS.28 in Hindi in close relation and response to its two precolonial Sanskrit commentaries. In what is a strictly exegetic commitment, Śukla treats *brahmajñāna* as a mental event and takes the aforementioned Advaitic philosophy of mind for granted. Within these specific parameters of intelligibility, he stresses the continuity between the Vedāntic saying *tat tvam asi* (ChUp.6.8-16) and *aham brahmāsmi* (BrhUp.1.4.10). He highlights the requirement of the Vedāntic culture of exegesis as well as the fourfold preparatory means for triggering the liberating cognition 'I am Brahman,' and he comes to explain that the process of knowing Brahman entails five consecutive events which ought to be addressed in exposing the episode of *brahmajñāna*.

On the whole, my examination of Śukla's engagement with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge reveals that his elucidation of the topic is *beyond synthesis and negotiation* with the Western Other and that while he is able to shed understanding on several vexed issues from a new perspective that is neither to be found in the *Subodhinī* nor in the *Vidvanmanorañjanī*, he never departs from the doctrinal features that informed Sadānanda's conception of *brahmajñāna*. In other words, his innovations never seem to break with the key parameters of intelligibility that underpinned that notion in Sadānanda's *Vedāntasāra*. Arguably, I think, this is because they were not meant to do so.

This is in stark contrast with my findings concerning Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan. Both scholars seem to dispense with the framework of intelligibility defined by the aforesaid philosophy of mind and the *pramāṇa* system at least in that, although they are aware of this framework (Bhattacharyya SV.1.23; SV.1.84-126; Radhakrishnan 1923: 485-502), they don't bring it to the fore in their own reflexions on liberating knowledge. Instead, Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan engage in rethinking the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge in relation to the Western alterity and aim to make it meaningful within the parameters of intelligibility provided by the Western Other. Hence, I have argued that Bhattacharyya's conception of self-knowledge in terms of a gradual method of dissociating the subject from the object, which philosophical thinking facilitates and which culminates in a disclosure of the subject as freedom from objectivity, cannot be separated from his vindication of cultural sovereignty and epistemic empowerment of modern Indian subjects. This is well illustrated by the fact that in laying the foundations of transcendental psychology with the aim of exhibiting and legitimising the possibility of such a method of self-knowledge, Bhattacharyya is constantly contrasting his own concerns with those of Kantian transcendentalism. He differentiates the subjective attitude displayed in transcendental psychology from the objective attitude towards the Self that he himself imputes to Kant, empirical psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics. In addition to this, he reformulates the concept of philosophy by analogy with the Advaitic *manana* and in contrast with the scientific paradigm of knowledge. All these features suggest that Bhattacharyya conceives his method of self-knowledge, which is also his way of rethinking the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge, in critical confrontation with the Western alterity but, nevertheless, within the parameters of intelligibility of that Western Other.

Finally, in my chapter on Radhakrishnan, I have suggested that the hermeneutics of religious experience through which he read, among other things, the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge was a vivid response to what he saw as the shortcomings of the globalising model of Western modernity. Localising its drawbacks in the dogmatic denial of religion by science as well as the dogmatic affirmation of religious beliefs in reaction to the ever-increasing and challenging pluralistic atmosphere of the globalised world, Radhakrishnan emphasised the need for harmonising them. With this purpose in mind, he set out to profess his distinctive philosophy of religion which he conceived in contrast to speculative and dogmatic theology as scientific in that it was founded on experience. Its central features were (i) the notion that religious experience constitutes the core of religion, and (ii) the idea that, insofar as theological production and the sacred scriptures of the different religious communities entail psychological mediation and conceptual interpretation of experience, they are ultimately subordinated to the authority of religious experience itself which, though conceptually vague, is self-certifying.

These two core and closely related ideas underpinned Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience and its twofold dynamism. On the one hand, its centripetal dynamism meant reinterpreting a number of Sanskrit terms – particularly the term *anubhava* – as 'experience' and 'intuition' which Radhakrishnan took to designate a means of knowing of its own kind that is irreducible to sense experience and discursive reasoning. It also meant unifying Hinduism under the idea of experience and asserting its superiority as the "religion of experience par excellence." On the other hand, its centrifugal dynamism entailed extending the Vedāntic notion of *samanvaya* or 'harmonisation' to all religions of the world by stressing their common experiential core as well as toning down their theological discrepancies. However, despite his concern for the reconciliation of religion with science as well as for the harmonisation of different religious faiths, Radhakrishnan's hermeneutics of religious experience went hand in hand with a tendency to centralise (Advaita) Vedānta. This, he regarded, as the true unifying canon of Hinduism, as "religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance," and he privileged the 'supra-personal' or 'absolute' conception of being over the 'personal' or 'relative' one.

In sum, I have argued in this dissertation that, in their dialogical cum hermeneutic attitude towards the Western Other and the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia, Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan dispensed with the *pramāṇa* framework and the episodic paradigm of knowing that shaped the discussion on *brahmajñāna* in the precolonial Sanskrit sources of Advaita Vedānta. That is, neither of them engaged in discussing the notion of liberating knowledge in terms of (a) a mental event and an instance of (b) intentional awareness, (c) immediate cognition, and (d) veridical cognition. Instead, these two modern Indian philosophers sought to render the notion of *brahmajñāna* meaningful within the parameters of intelligibility provided by the Western Other with the purpose of contesting the troublesome prospect of Western modernity. I think it is fair to say that they were thoroughly concerned with appropriating that notion in order to foresee an alternative paradigm of modernity in which the Advaitic idea of liberating knowledge could still make sense to them. In doing so, both philosophers made important epistemological concessions to the Western Other at least in that they set out to rethink, invariably, the viability of the Advaitic ideal of liberating knowledge in reference to the Western epistemological trajectories and the paradigm of empirical science. It was in this particular context of cross-cultural encounter that the categories of 'experience' and 'intuition' emerged and played their pivotal role, enabling them to subordinate in their own distinctive ways philosophical as well as theological thinking and scriptural authority to the domain of inner experience and the faculty of intuition. In this, their far-reaching dialogical cum hermeneutic commitments were clearly at odds with those of Śūkla, who aimed to elucidate the notion of *brahmajñāna* within its own precolonial parameters of intelligibility. Nevertheless, despite sharing commitments, Bhattacharyya's and Ra-

dhakrishnan's standpoints diverged in their thoughts concerning the final recipient of the alternative modernity they were fostering. Whereas Bhattacharyya seemed to vindicate an autonomous cultural space for modern Indian subjects and thought this alternative condition of modernity for their sake alone in first place, Radhakrishnan seemed to pursue the idea of one, common-to-all, paradigm of modernity that was different from the Western in that it was informed by his putatively all-accommodating Advaita Vedānta.

Finally, I wish to submit herewith that my analysis of Śukla, Bhattacharyya, and Radhakrishnan and their distinctive ways to engage with the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge strongly suggests that modern Indian philosophy features at least two different but equally well-articulated modalities of philosophical creativity. I mean to say that Śukla does not display philosophical creativity by attempting to think about the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge outside the box (conceptual, discursive, doxastic etc.) or by moving beyond the parameters of intelligibility provided by the precolonial Advaitic discourse. He displays philosophical creativity by staying precisely within the confines of that box and accepting, mindfully, its restrictions. This, I submit, is in stark contrast to Bhattacharyya and Radhakrishnan whose philosophical creativity consists precisely in the way they come to think about this notion outside its precolonial parameters of intelligibility as well as in the choices they make in adopting and adapting a new conceptual scheme and parameters of intelligibility for its conceptualisation.

6.3 The future of the past

As stated in the introduction, the one overarching research question that shaped this study concerned the interplay between these three factors: (i) the twentieth century Indian academic discourse on Advaita Vedānta's key notion of liberating knowledge, (ii) the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia, and (iii) the troublesome presence of the Western Other. However, there is yet another, closely related, question behind this dissertation which repeatedly came back to my mind in the course of writing it and which can be succinctly put in the following manner: What is the future of the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia?

As I have treated them in this study, modern Indian philosophers of the calibre of Badrīnāth Śukla, Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan professed quite different attitudes towards the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia and engaged with at least one aspect of that past – the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge – for different reasons and with different concerns. Despite these contrasts, I think it is beyond contention that they all invariably regarded the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia as their own cultural past. Moreover, I think it is fair to say that through their charac-

teristic engagements with it, they were also showing distinct manners to conceiving its future. I assume that further research in modern Indian philosophy will reveal other varieties of engagement with the Sanskrit classical past of South Asia and yet other ways of imagining its future that remain uncharted in this study. This is because I suspect that the dialogical cum hermeneutic and the exegetic cum non-dialogical commitments explored here are far from being the only set of doxastic attitudes adopted by modern Indian philosophers towards the Western Other and the Sanskrit classical past.

Stepping back from my analysis of modern Indian philosophy and its characteristic ways of relating to the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia, I shall now turn my attention briefly to the contemporary state of affairs and ask: how is the future of that past envisioned nowadays, in a contemporary context? That is, how do contemporary authors writing Indian philosophy choose to relate to the classical Indian philosophic literature in Sanskrit? How do they negotiate the tension between (a) the prominently philological cum historical study of that past, which is often unconcerned with abstract philosophical questions and the claims to truth avowed within that past, and (b) the philosophical engagement with that past which, in its anxiety to formulate philosophical problems in terms as abstract as possible, easily loses track of the classical philosophic literature itself and the arduous philological work required to access it in its original language? The question is highly relevant and alive: how to engage philosophically with classical Indian philosophical texts (Phillips 2008; Taber 2013), and how is this philosophical engagement to relate to philology? Furthermore, how do contemporary intellectuals (Indian or otherwise) who are committed to writing Hindu or Buddhist theology position themselves and their scholarship in relation to their classical South Asian Sanskrit (or Pāli) sources? How can writing Hindu theology be conducted nowadays and what sort of commitments are indispensable to it (Ram-Prasad 2014)? Does it require a commitment to a community in faith, besides the commitment to the sacred text as the epistemic foundation for exegesis (Ram-Prasad 2014)? And with comparative concerns in mind, do these contemporary forms of relation to the Sanskrit classical past differ from those professed by modern Indian intellectuals? And if they do, in what way and why?

Yet other exciting and theory-oriented questions that writing this essay raised for me are the following: whose past is that? How do we – or should we – think about the ownership of a certain intellectual past? Is, for instance, reverence towards one particular intellectual past decisive for conceptualising it as one's own (Ganeri 2016: 12-13)? What is the purpose in engaging with the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia? How to engage with it? How do personal expectations and self-understanding inform the retrieval of that past? How do disciplinary agendas shape the why and the how for approaching that past? What parts and what aspects of it are understood to be relevant? What informs that understanding? What is left out and why? In what cultural and theoretical context is the chosen part/aspect of that past supposed to speak?

What is at stake in translating it? Who is its target audience? How do we conceptualise intellectual change within that past (Pollock 2001a; Pollock 2001b; Kaviraj 2005; Hatcher 2007; Patil 2013)? What are the perils and the ideological underpinnings of the historiography of Indian philosophy (Franco 2013a)? How do we divide Indian philosophy into periods? These last two questions become particularly relevant when we acknowledge, with Julius Lipner, that “Periodization is a form of classification, and whatever one may say about the human need to classify, one cannot escape the fact that classification is generally a mechanism of control with a particular end in view” (Lipner 2013: 145). Finally, how does Indology situate itself in relation to the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia? How do I understand myself in relation to that past?

These are, to be sure, deeply theoretical, methodological, and identity-related questions. Their utmost significance betrays perhaps the inescapable fact that, just as with the intellectual past of other cultures and languages, any approach to the Sanskrit intellectual past of South Asia is culturally, institutionally, and historically located. It is also shaped by a host of disciplinary orientations as well as personal interests, preferences, and epistemic commitments. In the face of this ‘multidimensional’ predicament, it seems that the view from nowhere is nowhere to be found. More than a motive for anguish, embarrassment, or perplexity, I personally take this predicament as a challenge and an invitation to a more reflexive and interdisciplinary Indology. I also happen to agree with Francis Clooney that those of us who have profited from the work of Wilhelm Halbfass and who wish to extend his Indological scholarship further “will do well to direct our attentions: first, toward a more ample appreciation of the texts; second, toward a retrieval of religion as a category of understanding that is not to be subsumed by philosophy; third, toward a careful and responsible inscription of the self in Indological study” (Clooney 1997: 39).

Appendix 1: Glossary with Sanskrit and Hindi terms

abādhita: not oppressed, removed, or refuted; in Advaita context, this term is often used as an adjective to denote cognitions having for object those entities that have not been yet removed, cancelled, or proved to be false; according to Dharmarāja, it is the condition of veridicality (*pramāṭva*) that defines all types of veridical cognitions, including those of remembrance (*smṛti*). See also *bādhita*, *mithyā*, and *anadhigata*.

ābhāsa: shining light; reflection, appearance, manifestation; false appearance.

ābhimukhya: direction towards anything; in the context of Advaita Vedānta, this term is sometimes used to denote the process of turning or directing the mind towards Brahman.

abhivyākti: display, instantiation; in Advaita context, it is said of the mental event *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* / “I am Brahman” which is believed to display the unfragmented awareness, Brahman.

adhiṣṭhāna: substratum, fundament, basis, abode. See also *āśraya*.

adhyāropa: adscription or superimposition of one item upon another, like the superimposition of the snake upon a piece of rope.

adhyāropāpavādanyāya: method of adscription and retraction, which the proponents of Advaita Vedānta deploy in the exegesis of the Vedāntic sentence *tat tvam asi* / “You are that.”

adhyāsa: adscription, imposition, superimposition.

advaitasiddhi: accomplishment, establishment, or attainment of nonduality.

ākāṅkṣā: syntactic expectation; one of the four causal factors required for producing verbal knowledge. See also *yogyatā*, *āsatti*, *tātparyajñāna*.

ākāra: form, shape, feature; the shape of the object that the internal organ is said to assume during the cognitive process.

akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti: that mental episode which is shaped after the form of the unfragmented; a mental event assuming the features of undivided awareness; a mental episode in the form of the Vedāntic saying *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* / “I am Brahman.”

akhaṇḍākāravṛtti: a mental event having the shape of the unfragmented; description of the mental episode that is produced by the Vedāntic saying *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* / “I am Brahman.”

akhaṇḍārtha: meaning, referent, or target in the form of what is unfragmented; undivided reality; unfragmented awareness; the meaning of the Vedāntic saying *tat tvam asi* / “You are that.”

anadhigata: unreached, unattained; in Advaita context, this term is often used as an adjective to denote cognitions having for object those entities that have not been known hitherto; according to Dharmarāja, it is the condition of veridicality that defines all types of veridical cognition except those of remembrance (*smṛti*). See also *abādhita*.

antaḥkaraṇa: an instrument or faculty that is internal; internal organ, the ‘mind,’ which in Advaita Vedānta is said to be insentient (*jaḍa*); according to the followers of the *Bhāmatī*, one of the six sense organs; according to the followers of the *Vivaraṇa*, an internal faculty that is different from the five sense organs. See also *manas*.

antaḥkaraṇavṛtti: an occurrence, episode, or event that the internal organ or the ‘mind’ undergoes in assuming the shape of the objects of cognition; a mental episode or event; a cognitive event, which may be either true or false. See also *vāiśiṣṭyajñāna*.

anubhava: first-person cognition, experience, direct acquaintance; it is sometimes defined as any episode of awareness, which may be either true or false, except that of remembrance (*smṛti*).

anubhavavākya: this term refers to the Vedāntic saying consisting of the first-person cognition *aham brahmāsmi* / “I am Brahman.” See also *upadeśavākya*.

anumāna: what comes along with thinking; process of inference; one of the six means of knowing acknowledged in Advaita Vedānta; it is often defined as the instrument (*karaṇa*) of the inferential piece of knowledge. See also *anumiti*.

anumiti: inferential piece of knowledge that is produced by the process of inference (*anumāna*); true or veridical instance of inferential knowledge.

anupalabdhī: nonattainment, inapprehension, or apprehension of absence; one of the six means of knowing acknowledged in Advaita Vedānta.

anupapatti: not arising or taking place; *terminus technicus* in the context of scholastic debate (*śāstra*) where it is commonly used to designate an inconclusive argumentation or an argument that is unwarranted or untenable.

anvayavyatirekanyāya: method of agreement and contrariety; a method or reasoning (*yukti*) that was applied in early Advaita Vedānta to interpret Vedāntic sayings such as *tat tvam asi* / “You are that.” See also *adhyāropāpavādanyāya*.

aparabrahman: that Brahman which is not supreme; inferior Brahman, or the Brahman that is qualified by the qualifying adjuncts beginning with ignorance (*avidyā*, *ajñāna*). See also *sopādhikabrahman*, *upādhiviśiṣṭabrahman*, *nirupādhikabrahman*, and *parabrahman*.

aparokṣajñāna: immediate cognition that may be either true or false; cognition of ‘what is not away from sight,’ i.e., cognition of anything that is capable of being seen. See also *parokṣajñāna*, *pratyakṣatva*, and *sākṣātkāra*

apavāda: denial, withdrawal or retraction of what has been previously superimposed or adscribed upon bare reality, Brahman, or the Self (*ātman*); the second moment of the exegetic method (*nyāya*) that the proponents of Advaita apply to such Vedāntic sayings as *tat tvam asi* / “You are that.” See also *adhyāropa* and *adhyāropāpavādanāyā*.

artha: aim, purpose, target, object, meaning.

arthāpatti: postulation; one of the six means of knowing acknowledged by Advaita Vedānta.

āsatti: proximity or close sequence of words in a sentence; one of the four causal factors required for producing verbal knowledge. See also *ākāṅkṣā*, *yogyatā*, *tātparyajñāna*.

āśraya: seat, recipient, support; the bearer of what is supported and dependent upon it; often illustrated with the example of the face reflecting in the mirror in which the mirror represents the bearer of the image of a face that is dependent upon it; in Advaita context, this analogy is often deployed in order to illustrate the relation existing between the mental event “I am Brahman” and the light of bare awareness reflecting therein. See also *adhiṣṭhāna*.

asvarūpa: what is not one’s own intrinsic form or nature; extrinsic form, nature, or qualifier of anything. See also *svarūpa* and *svabhāva*.

ātman: Self that Advaita Vedānta takes to be one with Brahman, bare awareness. See also *cidātman* and *pratyagātman*.

avacchedaka: delimiting, defining; what delimits or defines; delimiting factor.

āvaraṇa: concealing, concealment; in Advaita Vedānta, this term is often used to denote the power (*śakti*) of concealing reality.

āvaraṇaśakti: the power of concealment; together with the power of dispersion (*vikṣepaśakti*), these two powers are said in later Advaita Vedānta to constitute nescience (*avidyā*) or ignorance (*ajñāna*). See also *vikṣepaśakti*.

bādhaka: oppressing, removing, refuting; what oppresses, removes, or refutes; a removing factor.

bādhita: oppressed, removed, refuted, or annulled; what has been oppressed, removed, refuted, or annulled; in Advaita context, this term is often used as an adjective to designate a cognition the object of which has been removed or proved false. See also *abādhita* and *mithyā*.

bimbamātra: the correlate of any reflection (*pratibimba*), as the one established between the face as such and its reflection or image in the mirror; the original of a reflection; See also *pratibimba* and *bimbapratibimbavāda*.

bimbapratibimbavāda: the doctrine concerning the relation between the original and its reflection, like the reflection of the sun in water or the face in the mirror.

brahmajñān kī prakriyā: process or procedure of knowing Brahman.

bhāgalakṣaṇā: partial connotation or indication; connotation in which only one part of the primary meaning of a word is abandoned. See also *jahada-jahallakṣaṇā*.

bhāvanā: becoming, visualisation, meditation.

caitanya: consciousness or awareness which, according to Advaita proponents, is per se bare, without object, without shape, without bearer, and without beginning; when qualified by mental events, it is said to be episodic, and therefore, to have an object, to have a shape, to have a bearer, and to have beginning and end.

caitanyaḥbhāsa: shining or reflecting light of awareness; light of bare awareness reflecting in the mental event “I am Brahman.”

carācarajagad: the world of the moving and the unmoving; in Advaita Vedānta context, this term denotes the entire world, animate and inanimate, of which ignorance (*ajñāna*) or nescience (*avidyā*) is the root-cause (*mūlakāraṇa*).

cidābhāsa: light of awareness, radiance of awareness, appearance of awareness; the light of awareness, or the image of the Self consisting of pure consciousness, that reflects in the mental event “I am Brahman.” See also *akhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛtti*.

cidātman: the Self in the form of consciousness; the Self that is bare awareness, Brahman. See also *ātman* and *pratyagātman*.

dagdhendhānalanyāya: maxim or analogy of the fire and the burnt fuel; this and other analogies were often used by the proponents of Advaita to denote the self-extinguishing feature of the mental event *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* / “I am Brahman.”

dhyāna: putting and maintaining the mind on something; concentration, meditation; the practice of fixing and maintaining the mind on one and the same point. See also *nididhyāsana*.

dravya: substance; one of the seven categories of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

grantha: what is bound together; a literary composition; a book.

hetu: reason, cause.

indriya: sense organ.

jahadajahallakṣaṇā: connotation or indication in which the primary or expressed meaning of a word is partially abandoned and partially retained. See also *bhāgalakṣaṇā*.

jaḍa: insentient, devoid of consciousness; in Advaita Vedānta, this term denotes collectively all the false entities, including the ‘mind’ (*manas*).

jīva: living being; in Advaita Vedānta it is regarded to be, essentially, non-different from Brahman.

jīvanmukti: liberation or release of one who is alive; liberation during lifetime, while the vital air (*prāṇa*) remains in the body; a state of release in which all types of *karma* except the one that has already begun to give its fruits (*prārabdha*) have been destroyed. See also *videhamukti*.

jñāna: awareness, cognition, knowledge, or the means leading to it.

jñānakarmasamuccayavāda: doctrine according to which liberation (*mokṣa*) arises from a combination of knowledge and action; a doctrine upheld by Maṇḍana Miśra and others which Śaṅkara opposed.

jñeya: what is to be known; in Advaita context, this term is sometimes used to denote supreme Brahman, the one devoid of any qualifying adjuncts. See also *upāśya*.

kalpanā: fashioning, creating or arranging in the mind; imagination; conceptualisation.

karaṇa: instrument used in any given action, as an axe is used in cutting a tree; the trigger of an effect; the most effective of the causal factors producing a given result; commonly used in the standard definition of means of knowing (*pramāṇa*) as the instrument that gives rise to veridical cognitions. See also *kāraṇa*.

kāraṇa: reason, cause, or a cluster of causal factors involved in the production of a given result.

kāryabrahman: the Brahman that is to be effectuated or produced; the Brahman that is the object of any kind of action, mental, devotional, or otherwise.

lakṣaṇa: mark or characteristic sign; definition.

lakṣaṇā: connotation, indication, implication; the power of a word to connote. See also *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*.

lakṣyārtha: the meaning of a word that is arrived at through connotation; the meaning of a word to be expressed indirectly; the secondary meaning of a word. See also *vāc्यārtha*.

manana: exegetic thinking consisting of a well-disposed reflection to what is previously heard from the Vedas, particularly the Vedāntas. See also *śravaṇa* and *nididhyāsana*.

manas: 'mind' is often used a synonym for internal organ; in Advaita Vedānta perspective, the 'mind' belongs to the class of insentient entities which are devoid of consciousness, have a beginning, and consist of parts. See also *antaḥkaraṇa*.

mahāvākya: great saying, utterance or sentence; in Advaita context, these Vedāntic sayings are believed to connote either the oneness of the Self with Brahman or to point towards the essential features of reality.

mithyā: false cognition; cognition having a content that is susceptible to be removed and proved false at the moment of immediate cognition of Brahman. See also *bādhita*.

mithyāpadārtha: false entity.

mūlakāraṇa: that cause or reason which is the root; the root-cause of the entire world, animate and inanimate; said of *avidyā* and *ajñāna*.

nididhyāsana: intense concentration or meditation on the meaning of the Vedāntas which has been previously heard, brought forward, and elucidated during the process of hearing and exegetic reflection. See also: *śravaṇa* and *manana*.

nirguṇa: without qualities; what is devoid of qualities; in the context of Advaita Vedānta, this term is commonly used for referring to the Brahman that is devoid of any quality or feature; unqualified Brahman. See also *saguṇa*.

nirupādhikabrahman: the Brahman that is devoid of qualifying adjuncts, which are often said to begin with ignorance. See also *upādhiviśiṣṭabrahman*.

nirvikalpaka: without mental or conceptual elaboration; in Advaita context, it denotes that type of absorption (*samādhi*) in which the distinction between the knower, known, and the means of knowing has been effaced. See also *sa-vikalpaka*.

nivṛtti: cessation, extinction, suspension, coming to an end; end of activity.

padārtha: meaning, referent, or target of a word; category.

padārhasaṃsarga: relation between the meaning of words occurring in a sentence.

parabrahman: supreme or highest Brahman; the Brahman that is devoid of qualifying adjuncts. See also *sopādhikabrahman*, *upādhiviśiṣṭabrahman*, *nirupādhikabrahman*, and *aparabrahman*.

paramārtha: the aim, value, or reality that is the highest; the highest good; the foremost aim of life; supreme reality.

pāramārthikatattva: supreme reality, Brahman; ultimate reality that is never removed or annulled. See also *vyāvahārikatattva*.

pāramārthikatattvāvedaka: making known supreme reality; said of the veridicality of the means of knowing the object of which is never removed or annulled. See also *vyāvahārikatattvāvedaka*.

parataḥ prāmāṇyavāda: theory or doctrine according to which the verification or justification of cognition is given extrinsically by another additional cognition; theory of extrinsic validation of cognitions. See also *svataḥ prāmāṇyavāda*.

pariṇāma: transformation, real change; in Advaita Vedānta context, this term is often contrasted with *vivarta*, which denotes a change in the state of affairs that is apparent only.

parisaṃkhyāna: repetitive thinking, mental reiteration of a certain thought or notion.

parokṣajñāna: indirect cognition; cognition of ‘what is away from sight,’ i.e., cognition of anything that is not capable of being seen; cognition of a remote entity; antonym of *aparokṣajñāna*.

phalavyāpti: pervasion by/with the fruit; pervasion of Brahman by the light of awareness that is reflected in the mental event “I am Brahman;” the proponents of Advaita rejected the idea that Brahman is to be pervaded by the light of awareness reflected in the mental event *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* / “I am Brahman” during the process of *brahmajñāna*. See also *vṛttivyāpti*.

pramā: veridical cognition, knowledge-episode produced and delivered by the activity of any one of the means of knowing. See also *pramātr*, *pramāṇa*, *prameya*, *pramātva* and *prāmāṇya*.

pramāṇa: means of knowing, commonly defined as the instrument of veridical cognition; Advaita Vedānta acknowledges six means of knowing: perception, inference, analogy, verbal means, postulation, and inapprehension.

pramāṇavāda: speech or doctrine concerning the means of knowing; theory of knowledge.

pramātṛ: knower, knowing agent.

pramātva: veridicality, or the distinctive feature by virtue of which cognitions turn into episodes of knowledge.

prāmānya: veridicality, or the validity that characterises means of knowing.

prameya: knowable; the object of knowledge.

praṇidhāna: worship; devotional meditation. See also *bhakti*, *upāsana*, *dhyāna*, *saṃrādhana*.

prapañca: spreading out, diffusion; prolixity, abundance; the world as the scene of manifoldness and abundance.

prasamkhyāna: repetitive thinking, mental reiteration of a certain thought or notion.

pratibimba: reflection of the sun in water; reflecting image, as the one of the face in the mirror; the manifested or reflected item of the original. See also *bimbamātra* and *bimbapratibimbavāda*.

pratyagātman: the Self that is internal or inner; the inner Self.

pratyakṣa: being in front of, or presented to, the sense organs; perception; one of the six means of knowing acknowledged by Advaita Vedānta.

pratyakṣapramā: veridical percept; veridical instance of perception.

pratyakṣapramāṇa: means of knowing in the form of perception; perceptual means of knowing; one of the six means of knowing acknowledged by Advaita Vedānta.

pratyakṣatva: perceptuality; the distinctive feature of perception; immediacy.

pratyaya: cognition, conception, or notion.

prayojana: use, application, purpose, employment, function.

sādhana: accomplishing, establishing, bringing about; means of attainment.

sādhanacatuṣṭaya: fourfold preparatory means for the knowledge of Brahman; according to Advaita Vedānta these are: (1) discernment between the permanent and the impermanent, (2) detachment from enjoying the goods here and hereafter, (3) the six attainments such as calmness, self-control, cessation, endurance, concentration, and faith; and finally (4) seeking release.

saguṇa: what is endowed with qualities; in the context of Advaita Vedānta this term is commonly used to denote the Brahman that is endowed with qualities or attributes; qualified Brahman; in this sense it is a synonym for *īśvara*. See also *nirguṇa*.

sahakārin: what is cooperating, auxiliary, or assisting; cooperating factor; used to denote the causal factor/s that assist the instrument in bringing about its result. See also *karaṇa* and *kāraṇa*.

sākṣātkāra: immediate presence or presentation of any given entity to the cognising agent; witnessing, immediate cognition. See also *aparokṣajñāna*.

samādhi: meditative absorption. See also *savikalpaka* and *nirvikalpaka*.

samānapratyayapravāha: a stream, course, or flow (*pravāha*) of cognition (*pratyaya*) which is alike, similar or equal (*samāna*); a flow of equal cognition; for Śaṅkara, meditation (*dhyāna*) and worship (*upāsanā*) are both the instrument that brings about an equal flow of cognition (BSBh.4.1.7-8).

sāṃkhya: one of the classical systems of Indian philosophy; in the context of Advaita Vedānta, this term is sometimes used to refer to the path of study which consists of deliberation or enquiry into the meaning of the Vedāntas. See also *vedāntavicāra* and *yoga*.

samaṣṭi: totality; in Advaita Vedānta this term denotes the collective aggregate to which awareness is attached. See also *vyāṣṭi*.

saṃrādhana: act of propitiation, devotional worship; Śaṅkara defines it in the following terms: “*saṃrādhana* is the performance of *bhakti*, *dhyāna*, *praṇidhāna* and so forth” (BSBh.3.2.24). See also *bhakti*, *praṇidhāna*, *dhyāna* and *upāsanā*.

sannikarṣa: contact; this term is commonly used to denote the contact that takes place between any sense organ and the object at the moment of its cognition. In contrast with Nyāya, Advaita Vedānta does not regard contact to be the determining factor of perceptual character (*pratyakṣatva*).

saprapaṇca: with diffuseness, copiously, abundantly, in detail; explaining at length.

savikalpaka: endowed with mental elaboration or conceptualisation; a type of absorption (*samādhi*) in which the distinction between the knower, the known, and the means of knowing is said to persist. See also *nirvikalpaka*.

śābdabodha: verbal knowledge.

śāstra: instrument of instruction or discipline; what is used for teaching; scripture, treatise; scholastic literature.

śodhana: purification, refinement, clarification; in Advaita context, this term is often used to describe the exegesis of the Vedāntic saying *tat tvam asi* (ChUp.6.8-16).

sopādhikabrahman: the Brahman that is endowed with the qualifying adjuncts. See also *upādhiviśiṣṭabrahman* and *nirupādhikabrahman*.

śravaṇa: hearing and ascertaining the purport of the Vedas, particularly the Vedāntas.

śravaṇa, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*: mental action of hearing, reflecting, and intense meditation upon the words of the Vedas, particularly the Vedāntas.

śruti: what is heard; the four Vedas, including the *Samhitās*, the *Āraṇyakas*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Vedāntas*.

svabhāva: one's own nature; the intrinsic nature of anything; the essence.

svarūpa: one's own form; the intrinsic form or nature of anything; the essence.

svataḥ prāmāṇyavāda: theory or doctrine according to which validation, verification, or justification of a cognition proceeds from that same cognition; theory of intrinsic validation of cognitions. See also *parataḥ prāmāṇyavāda*.

svayaṃ prakāśa: self-revealing, self-luminous; in Advaita context, this locution is commonly used to describe Brahman.

tattva: that-ness; what there is or what is the case; reality, truth; a given element or principle of what is or exists; this term is sometimes used in Advaita Vedānta as a synonym for Brahman.

tātparya: purport of any utterance or sentence; according to Advaita Vedānta, the purport of the Vedāntas is the oneness of the Self with Brahman, which is believed to be particularly brought to the fore in the Vedāntic great sayings. See also *mahāvākya*.

tātparyajñāna: knowledge or acquaintance with the purport of any given sentence or utterance; one of the four causal factors required for producing verbal knowledge. See also *ākāṅkṣā*, *āsatti*, and *yogyatā*.

upamāna: comparison or analogy; one among the six means of knowing acknowledged by Advaita Vedānta defined as the instrument of veridical cognition of similarity.

upadeśavākya: Vedāntic saying consisting of the instruction *tat tvam asi* / “You are that.” See also *anubhavavākya*.

upādhi: qualifying adjunct; extrinsic property or qualifier; in Advaita Vedānta, the mental event “I am Brahman” is said to be the qualifying adjunct of the reflecting light of awareness.

upādhiviśiṣṭabrahman: the Brahman that is qualified (*viśiṣṭa*) by the qualifying adjuncts, which are often said to begin with ignorance. See also *nir-upādhikabrahman*.

upahita: what is put or placed close.

upāsana: worship, devotional meditation; defined by Śaṅkara as the instrument of an equal flow of cognition (BSBh.4.1.7).

upāsana: worship; devotional meditation on a deity.

upāśya: what is to be worshipped; in Advaita context, this term usually denotes the inferior Brahman that is the object of worship; that is, the Brahman qualified by the qualifying adjuncts. See also *jñeya*.

upāya: approaching; means, method.

vācyārtha: the meaning of a word to be expressed directly; expressed meaning; the primary meaning of a word. See also *lakṣyārtha*.

vaiśiṣṭyajñāna: qualificative cognition; cognition that consists in the apprehension of a relation between the qualifier and the qualified. See also *viśeṣana*, *viśeṣya* and *viśeṣanaviśeṣyasambandha*.

vākya: saying, sentence, proposition, utterance.

vedānta: the last part or layer of the Vedas, traditionally said to be the *Upaniṣads*; the teachings and doctrines contained therein.

vedāntavicāra: the path of enquiry into the meaning of the Vedāntas. See also *sāṃkhya*.

videhamukti: liberation or release without the body; liberation attained at the moment of the dissolution of the body.

vidhi: Vedic injunction.

vikalpa: mental or conceptual elaboration; thought process, thought construction.

vikṣepaśakti: dispersing power, power of dispersion; together with *āvarenaśakti*, the two powers of nescience (*avidyā*) or ignorance (*ajñāna*). See also *āvarenaśakti*.

viruddhāṃśa: opposing or exclusive portion, incongruent or incompatible aspect; in Advaita Vedānta context, this term often denotes that portion of the primary or expressed meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* contained in the Vedāntic saying *tat tvam asi* / “You are that” which is mutually exclusive or incompatible.

viśaya: object or content of cognition; intentional object.

viśayīkaraṇa: making anything the object of thought or cognition.

viśeṣaṇa: qualification or the qualifier. See also *viśeṣya* and *viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyasambandha*

viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyasambandha: connection or relation between the qualifier and the qualified. See also *viśeṣaṇa* and *viśeṣya*.

viśeṣya: what is to be qualified; the qualified. See also *viśeṣaṇa* and *viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyasambandha*.

viśvaprapañca: the diffusion of all things, expansion of the world, cosmic diffusion; the manifold world.

vivarta: apparent transformation; in Advaita Vedānta, this term is often contrasted with real or factual transformation (*pariṇāma*).

vṛtti: occurrence, event, episode; any mental event. See also *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*.

vṛttiviśiṣṭa caitanya: awareness qualified by mental events; cognitive modality of awareness that is obtained as a result of the reflection of the light of bare awareness in an insentient mental episode.

vṛttivyāpti: pervasion of Brahman by a mental event, or pervading Brahman with a mental event; according to the proponents of Advaita Vedānta, this type of pervasion is required in order to dispel the ignorance concerning Brahman. See also *phalavyāpti*.

vyāñjaka: instantiating, displaying; in Advaita context, the mental events in which the light of awareness reflects are said to display or instantiate bare awareness.

vyāpāra: occupation, exertion, function, task.

vyavahāra: conventional existence.

vyāvahārikatattva: conventional reality; the reality that is not removed or annulled during the transmigratory condition. See also *pāramārthikatattva*.

vyāvahārikatattvāvedaka: making known the conventional existence; said of the veridicality of the means of knowing the objects of which are not removed and proved false during the conventional condition. See also *pāramārthikatattvāvedaka*.

vyāṣṭi: individuality; in Advaita Vedānta this term denotes the individual or discrete aggregate to which awareness is attached. See also *samaṣṭi*.

vyutthāna: rising up, awakening; the modality of awareness in wakefulness.

yathārtha: ‘in the manner things are;’ commonly used as an adjective describing the cognitions that are true, veridical, in the sense of corresponding with the state of affairs.

yathārthānubhava: veridical cognition that is delivered by any means of knowing (*pramāṇa*).

yoga: specifically, this term refers to a particular ascetic discipline or practice, described by Patañjali in his *Yogasūtra*, the aim of which is to restrain all the functions or events of the mind (*citta*); in the context of Advaita Vedānta, this term is sometime used for referring to the path consisting of devotional concentration on unqualified Brahman which some proponents of Advaita prescribed as an alternative, but inferior, path to the one of inquiry into the meaning of the Vedāntas. See also *sāṃkhya*.

yogyatā: semantic suitability or consistency. One of the four causal factors required for generating verbal knowledge. See also *ākāṅkṣā*, *āsatti*, *tātparyajñāna*.

Appendix 2: Texts and translations

(a) Fragment 1: *Vedāntasāra* 28 of Sadānanda Sarasvatī

athādhunāhaṃ brahmāsmīty anubhavavākyārtho varṇyate / evam
ācāryeṇādhyāropāpavādapurāḥsaram tattvampadārthau śodhayitvā
vākyenākhaṇḍārthe 'vabodhite 'dhikāriṇo 'haṃ nityaśuddhabuddhamukta-
satyasvabhāvaparamānandānantādvayaṃ brahmāsmīty akhaṇḍākārākāritā cit-
tavṛttir udeṭi / sā tu citpratibimbasaḥitā satī pratyagabhinnam ajñātaṃ paraṃ
brahma viśayīkr̥tya tadgatājñānam eva bādhate tadā paṭākāraṇatantudāhe
paṭadāhavad akhilakāraṇe 'jñāne bādhite sati tatkāryasyākhilasya bādhitatvāt
tadantarbhūtākhaṇḍākārākāritā cittavṛttir api bādhitā bhavati / tatra pratibim-
bitaṃ caitanyam api yathā dīpaprabhādityaprabhāvabhāsanāsamārthyā satī
tayābhibhūtā bhavati tathā svayamprakāśamānapratyagabhinna-
brahmābhāsanānarhatayā tenābhibhūtaṃ sat svopādhibhūtākhaṇḍacitta-
vṛtter bādhitatvād darpaṇābhāve mukhapratibimbasya mukhamātratvavat
pratyagabhinna-
parabrahmamātraṃ bhavati //28//

[Translation]

Hence, I will explain now the meaning of the sentence consisting in the cognition 'I am Brahman.'²⁶¹ When, in this way, the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* has been refined by the preceptor by means of [the method of] adscription and retraction, and when the unfragmented meaning is awakened by the sentence ['You are that']²⁶², [then] in the mind of the entitled [student] arises that mental episode²⁶³ which is shaped after the form of the unfragmented: 'I am Brahman, eternal, pure, awakened, released, one whose intrinsic form is truth, supreme bliss, infinite, and nondual.' Furthermore, this [mental episode] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness.²⁶⁴ Having made the supreme, unknown, and nondifferent from the inner [Self] Brahman into the object of cognition, it only removes the ignorance that is concerned with it. Then, just as a woven cloth burns when the threads that are the [material] cause of a woven cloth burn, when the ignorance that is the [material] cause of the entire

²⁶¹ BrhUp.1.4.10.

²⁶² ChUp.6.8-16.

²⁶³ Lit.; '[then] arises that mental episode of the entitled [student].'

²⁶⁴ Also 'being connected to [or associated with] the reflecting image of awareness.'

[world] is removed, then due to the removal of the entire [world] that is an effect of that [ignorance], the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented which is contained in that [world of ignorance] is also removed. Just as the lamplight is not capable of manifesting the light of the sun, since [it] is surpassed by that [i.e. light of the sun]; similarly, since consciousness reflected there [i.e., in the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented] is surpassed by that [i.e., supreme Brahman] and is, therefore, unworthy of manifesting supreme Brahman – nondifferent from the inner [Self] and self-revealing – it becomes supreme Brahman as such – nondifferent from the inner [Self] – due to the removal of the mental episode in the form of the unfragmented which is its own qualifying adjunct; just as the reflecting image of a face becomes the face as such in the absence of mirror.

(b) Fragment 2: Badrīnāth Śukla's *Vyākhyā* on VS.28

anuvād:

upadeś vāky kā nirūpaṇ karne ke anantar ab 'ahaṃ brahmāsmi' (mairṃ brahm hūm) is anubhavavāky ke arth kā varṇan kiyā jā rahā hai. ācāry jab adhyārop aur apavād ke mādhyam se tat evaṃ tvam padārth kā śodhan kar 'tat tvam asi' vāky se akhaṇḍārth kā bodh karā dete haim tab adhikārī śiṣy ke antaḥkaraṇ meṃ 'mairṃ nity śudh budh aur satyasvabhāva, paramānand anant advitīy brahm hūm' is prakār kī akhaṇḍākārākārit cittavṛtti kā uday hotā hai. yah cittavṛtti citpratibimb ko dhāraṇ kar pratyagātmā se abhinn ajñāt parabrahm ko viṣay banākar brahmaviṣayak ajñān kā bādh kartī hai. us samay jaise paṭ ke kāraṇ tantuom ke jalne par paṭ jal jātā hai vaise hī samast kāryom ke kāraṇ ajñān kā bādh hone par uske kāry akhil jagat ke bādh ke sāth uske antargat akhaṇḍākārākārit cittavṛtti kā bhī bādh ho jātā hai. cittavṛtti meṃ pratibimbī caitany bhī jaise dīp kī prabhā sūry kī prabhā ko prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth ho ādity kī prabhā se abhibhūt ho jātī hai, vaise hī ukt cittavṛtti bhī svayamprakāś pratyagātmā se abhinn parabrahm ke avabhāsan meṃ asamarth ho us brahm prakāś se abhibhūt ho jātī hai aur vṛtti kā viṣay brahm apnī upādhi akhaṇḍākārākārit cittavṛtti kā bādh hone se darpaṇ ke mukhapratibimb ke mukhamātr ho jāne ke samān pratyagātmā se abhinn parabrahmamātr ho jātā hai.

vyākhyā:

[1] brahm ātmā hai, is rūp se hī brahm ko grahaṇ karnā āvaśyak hai kyomki vedāntavāky isī rūp meṃ brahm ko svīkār karte haim aur isī rūp meṃ uskā grahaṇ karāte haim. jaisā ki Bādarāyaṇ ne 'ātmeti tūpagacchanti grāhayanti ca' (Brahmasūtr 4.1.3)²⁶⁵ kahkar vyakt kiyā hai. guru ke upadeś se jab śiṣy ko

²⁶⁵ BS.4.1.3.

‘tat tvam asi’ vāky se jīv-brahm ke aiky kā bodh ho jātā hai tab use ‘aham brahmāsmi – maim brahm hūm’ is prakār apnī brahmarūpatā kā anubhav hotā hai jise vah ‘aham brahmāsmi’ is vāky se prakaṭ kartā hai. prastut granthāṁś se is anubhav vāky ke arth kā varṇan kiyā gayā hai. Amarakoś meṁ atho tathā ath ke pānc arth batāye gaye haim maṅgal, anantar, prārambh, praśn aur kārtsny (pūrṇatā). anubhavavāky meṁ upātt ath śabd kā arth hai ānantary, tadanūsār prastut granth meṁ āye ath śabd kā arth hai – tat tvam asi ke is upadeś vāky ke arth kā nirūpaṇ karne ke anantar. jiskā viśad rūp hai – ācāry dvārā aviśay, asaṅg, niṣkal tathā ānandamātr caitany meṁ śaśāṅgkalp avidyā ke kāraṇ ahaṅkāraḍi śarīraparyant honevāle mithyāpadārthajñān kā adhyārop aur apavād se nirās kar tat, tvam padārth kā saṁśodhan kar ‘tat tvam asi’ vāky se jahadaajahallakṣaṇā ke dvārā viruddhāṁś kā parityāg kar akhaṇḍārth caitany kā bodh hone ke anantar. āśay yah hai ki jab guru dvārā adhyāropāpavād nyāy se ‘tat tvam asi’ vāky ke arth kā suspaṣṭikaraṇ hone par śiṣy ko akhaṇḍārth kā bodh ho jātā hai tab vivek vairāgyādi sādhanacatuṣṭay sampann us adhikārī śiṣy ke svacch antaḥkaraṇ meṁ akhaṇḍabrahmākārā cittavṛtti kā āvirbhāv hotā hai. kintu śiṣy yadi vivek, vairāgy ādi se sampann nahīm hotā to guru kā upadeś gandharvanagar kī tarah nirarthak hotā hai.

[2] adhikārī śiṣy ke citt meṁ maim nity – anityatv rahit, śuddh – avidyādi-doṣaśūny, buddh – svaprakāśasvarūp jaḍatādidoṣarahit, mukt – sarvopādhiśūny, saty – avināśisvabhāv, paramānand – karmajany, sātiśay, kṣayaīṣṇu tathā tucch vaiśayik manuṣyānandādi caturmukh brahmānand – pariyant se vilakṣaṇ niratiśayānandasvarūp, anant – deś-kāl vastu se paricchinn ghaṭādi se vilakṣaṇ aparicchinn, advay – nānātvarahit ek akhaṇḍ brahm ke ākār ko grahaṇ karnevālī ‘maim brahm hūm’ is rūp meṁ jo antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti utpann hotī hai, vah aparokṣ brahm ko viśay karne se aparokṣ anubhav - sāksātkārarūp hotī hai, vah kisī parokṣ tattv ke ākār se ākārīt nahīm hotī.

[3] is sandarbh meṁ kisī kā yah kahnā ki parokṣajñān ko hī utpann karnā śabd pramāṇ kā svabhāv hai, ataḥ ‘tat tvam asi’ rūp śabd pramāṇ se utpann cittavṛtti aparokṣ nahīm ho saktī, ṭhīk nahīm hai, kyomki śruti kā spaṣṭ nirdeś hai ki ‘yat sāksād aparokṣād brahma, ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ’ brahm sāksāt aparokṣ hai, ātmā āntarasarvāpekṣayā sannihit hai. yah dhyān dene kī bāt hai ki kisī jñān kā parokṣ yā aparokṣ honā uske karaṇ-pramāṇ ke adhīn nahīm hai apitu arth ke adhīn hai. jaise man ek karaṇ hai vah dharm, adharm ādi ke parokṣānubhav anumiti kā hetu hone ke sāth sukhaduḥkhādi ke aparokṣ anubhav kā bhī hetu hotā hai. vaise hī śabdapramāṇ bhī parokṣ tathā aparokṣ ubhayavidh jñān kā janak hotā hai. jis śabd kā arth sannihit nahīm hotā kintu parokṣ hotā hai uskī jñān parokṣ hotā hai. ātmā se adhik nikaṭ aur kaun vastu ho saktī hai ataḥ tadviśayak śābdajñān kā aparokṣ honā hī ucit hai, Indra Varuṇādi dev parokṣ haim ataḥ tadviśayak śābdajñān kā parokṣ honā ucit hai.

[4] cittavṛtti meṁ cidātmā kā pratibimb ‘cidābhāsa’ yā ‘phala’ kahā jātā hai. cidābhās se yukt hone ke kāraṇ hī cittavṛtti ajñān kā sarvanāś karne meṁ samarth hotī hai, anyathā jaḍ hone ke kāraṇ uske dvārā aisā koī bhī kāry nahīm ho saktā hai.

[5] phalataḥ akhaṇḍākārākārit vah cittavṛtti cidātmā ke pratibimb-cidābhās se yukt ho pratyagātmā se abhinn ajñāt par brahm ko viṣay banā brahma-viṣayak ajñānamātr ko naṣṭ kartī hai. yahām ‘param’ pad se ajñānopādhik kāry brahm kā niṣedh samjhanā cāhie kyomki ajñānopādhik brahm ko apar brahm kahā jātā hai. ajñātapad se brahm ke prameyatv kā abhidhān kiyā gayā hai, kyomki jo ajñāt hotā hai, vahī pramey hotā hai, evaṃ ‘pratyagabhinnā’ pad se uske tātasthy kā niṣedh kiyā gayā hai.

[6] yah praśn ho saktā hai ki kyā antaḥkaraṇ kī akhaṇḍākārā vṛtti parabrahm ko apnā viṣay banāne meṃ samarth hai? kyā brahm antaḥkaraṇavṛtti rūp pramāṇ kā pramey banne yogy hai? brahm sabkā sāksī draṣṭā aur grahītā hai ataḥ vah viṣayī bhale hī bane kintu vah kisī pramāṇ yā kriyā kā viṣay kaise ban saktā hai. śruti spaṣṭ kahtī hai – ‘yenedaṃ sarvaṃ vijānāti taṃ kena vijānīyāt’ (Brhadā.2.4.13)²⁶⁶ ‘yan manasā na manute yenāhur mano matam / tad eva brahma tvaṃ vidhi nedam yad idam upāsate’ (Ken.1.5).²⁶⁷ ācāry Śaṅkar kā bhī kahnā hai ki – na hi śāstram idantayā viṣayabhūtaṃ brahma pratipādayaṣati, kiṃ tarhi pratyagātmavena aṣayayatayā pratipādayad avidyākālpitaṃ vedyaveditṛvedanādibhedam apanayati’ (Br.sū.Śā.bhā.1.1.4).²⁶⁸ is sthiti meṃ yah kahnā ki antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti brahm ko viṣay banātī hai, kaise saṃgat ho saktā hai? is praśn ke uttar meṃ yah kahā jā saktā hai ki ukt kathan kā tātpary yah nahīm hai ki brahm kisī pramāṇ yā vyāpār kā viṣay hai, kintu us kathan kā āśay yah hai ki brahm meṃ viṣayatā aupacārik hai, vāstavik nahīm hai, ataḥ antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti kā brahm kī or abhimukh honā batāne meṃ hī ukt vaktavy kā tātpary hai. āśay yah hai ki guru ke upadeś ke pahle jo cittavṛtti bāhy viṣayom kī or sadā abhimukh rahtī thī vah vṛtti guru ke upadeś ke bād akhaṇḍākārākārit hokar pratyagātmābhinn brahm kī or abhimukh ho jātī hai. vṛtti ke is brahmābhimukhībhāv ko hī to uske dvārā brahm ko viṣay karnā kahā jātā hai. brahm yadi vastutaḥ cittavṛtti kā viṣay bantā to vah use prakāśit karne meṃ bhī samarth hotī. kintu granthakār kā kahnā hai ki cittavṛtti keval brahmaviṣayak ajñānamātr ko hī naṣṭ kartī hai na ki brahm ko prakāśit karne meṃ bhī samarth hai. ataḥ antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti ke dvārā brahm kā viṣayīkaraṇ vāstav meṃ sambhav nahīm hai. ‘ajñānam eva bād hate’ ke ev pad se brahm kī prakāśyatā kā nirās kiyā gayā hai, kyomki brahm to sabkā prakāśak hone se antaḥkaraṇvṛtti kā bhī prakāśak hai. aisī sthiti meṃ jad antaḥkaraṇvṛtti dvārā brahm ke prakāśan kā praśn hī nirarthak hai.

[7] is viṣay meṃ kisī ṭīkākar kā yah kahnā ki – ‘sā cittavṛttir na śuddhabrahmaviṣayiṇī kintv ajñānaviśiṣṭapratyagabhinnaparabrahmaviṣayiṇī’ vah antaḥkaraṇavṛtti śuddh brahm ko apnā viṣay na banākar ajñānaviśiṣṭ pratyagātmārūp parabrahm ko apnā viṣay banātī hai, yuktivyukt nahīm pratī hotā hai kyomki śāstroṃ meṃ upādhi viśiṣṭ brahm ko apar brahm kahā gayā hai na ki parabrahm. jaise – ‘kiṃ punaḥ paraṃ brahma kim aparaṃ iti? ucyate,

²⁶⁶ BrhUp.2.4.14; Olivelle (1998)

²⁶⁷ KUp.1.6; Olivelle (1998)

²⁶⁸ BSBh.1.1.4

yatrāvidyākṛtanāmarūpādiviśeṣapratīṣedhād asthūlādiśabdair brahmo-
padiśyate tat param. tad eva yatra nāmarūpādiviśeṣeṇa kenacid viśiṣṭam
upāsanāyopadiśyate tad aparam’ (Br.sū.Śā.bhā.4.3.14).²⁶⁹

[8] is Śāṅkar bhāṣy se suspaṣṭ hai ki parabrahm ajñānaviśiṣṭ nahīm ho saktā hai. yahām yah bhī vicāraṇī hai ki upādhiviśiṣṭ brahm upāsy hotā hai, tathā nirupādhik brahm jñey hotā hai – jaise ‘evam ekam api brahmāpekṣitopādhisambandham nirastopādhisambandham copāsyatvena jñeyatvena ca vedānteṣūpadiśyate’ (Br.sū.Śā.bhā.1.1.11).²⁷⁰ is bhāṣy ke ādhār par brahm ek hone par bhī upādhisambandh kī apekṣā hone par upāsy tathā upādhisambandh ke nirast hone par jñey rūp se vedānt granthom̐ meṁ sūcit hai. yah prakaraṇ brahmajñānaparak hai na ki upāsanāparak, aisī sthiti meṁ yahām nirupādhik parabrahm hī cittavṛtti ke viṣayarūp meṁ granthakār ko abhīṣṭ hai, ajñānopādhik brahm nahīm. dhīr Rāmatīrth kā bhī yahī abhiprāy hai – ‘brahmaśabdasya kāryabrahmaviṣayatvaṁ vyāvarttayati²⁷¹ param iti’. kāryabrahm sopādhik brahm kā apar nām hai.

[9] akhaṇḍākārākārit antaḥkaraṇavṛtti ke dvārā ajñān kā nās hote hī paṭ ke kāraṇ tantuom̐ ke jal jāne par jaise paṭ jal jātā hai, vaise hī akhil jagat ke kāraṇ ajñān kā nās hote hī uske kāry akhil jagat kā aur uske antargat akha-
ṇḍabrahmākārā antaḥkaraṇ vṛtti kā bhī nās ho jātā hai. ataḥ yah kahnā ki antaḥkaraṇ kī akhaṇḍākārākāritavṛtti ke dvārā ajñān kā nās hone par bhī nikhil carācar jagat aur ukt cittavṛtti to banī hī rahegī tathā un sabkī pratīti bhī hotī hī rahegī to brahmajñān yā mokṣ hone par bhī advait kī niṣpatti sambhav nahīm hai, upayukt nahīm ho saktā kyom̐ki nikhil carācar jagat kā mūl kāraṇ avidyā yā ajñān hai ataḥ akhaṇḍākārākārit antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti dvārā jab ajñān kā nās ho jātā hai tab kāraṇ kā nās hote hī uske kāry samgr carācar jagat kā bhī nās anivāry hai, ataḥ brahmasākṣātkār hone par advait kī upapatti meṁ koī bādhā nahīm hai.

[10] yadi yah kahā jāy ki antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti to ajñān evaṁ uske kāryom̐ kī vināśak sāmagrī hai na ki apne vināś kā bhī kāraṇ hai, to yah kahnā ucit nahīm hai, kyom̐ki jis prakār āg indhan ko jalākar apne āp bhī bujh jātī hai uske bu-
jhāne ke lie kisī any kī apekṣā nahīm hotī vaise hī antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti bhī ajñān tathā uske kāry samagr jagat kā nās kar any kisī nāśak kī apekṣā na kar svayaṁ hī apne āpkā bhī nās kar letī hai, uske nās ke lie kisī kāraṇāntar kī āvaśyakatā nahīm hotī. śāstrom̐ meṁ ise hī dagdhendhanānalanyāy śabd se vyavahṛt kiyā jātā hai.

[11] jaise anant brahmāṇḍ ke prakāś sūry ko dīpak kā svalp prakāś prakāśit karne meṁ asamarth ho sūry ke samakṣ sūry ke prakāś se abhibhūt ho jātā hai uske prakāś kā patā hī nahīm caltā vaise hī antaḥkaraṇ meṁ pratibimbī ca-
itany (cidābhās) bhī svayaṁ prakāśamān pratyagātmābhinn parabrahm ko prakāśit karne meṁ asamarth hone ke kāraṇ usse abhibhūt ho jātā hai, evaṁ

²⁶⁹ BSBh.4.3.14

²⁷⁰ BSBh.1.1.11

²⁷¹ vyāvarttayati

jaise darpaṇagat mukhapratibimb darpaṇ kā nās hone se mukhamātr (bim-bamātr) ho jātā hai, vaise hī apnī upādhibhūt antaḥkaraṇ kī akhaṇḍākārā vṛtti kā vināś hone se pratyagātmābhinn parabrahmamātr ho jātā hai.

[12] yadi yah kahā jāya ki jab antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti ajñān tathā uske kāry jagatprapañc kā nās kar svayaṃ bhī naṣṭ ho jātī hai tab yah mānane meṃ kyā bādhā hai ki us meṃ pratibimbī caitany (cidābhās) jaise any padārthoṃ ko prakāśit kartā hai vaise hī brahm ko bhī prakāśit kartā hai, to yah kahnā nitānt upahsanīy hai, kyom̐ki jab ghaṭ ādi jaḍ padārthoṃ se ākārit antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti hotī hai tab uske do vyāpār hote haiṃ, ek yah ki usse uske viṣay ghaṭ ke ajñān kā nās hotā hai aur dūsrā yah ki usmeṃ sampan cidābhās se ghaṭ kā prakāśan hotā hai. is prakār ghaṭ ke pratyakṣ meṃ antaḥkaraṇ kī vṛtti aur cidābhās donoṃ kā upayog hotā hai, kintu brahmajñān kī prakriyā isse bhinn hai, jaise antaḥkaraṇ kī brahmākār vṛtti se brahmaviṣayak ajñān kā nās to hotā hī hai, kintu usmeṃ jo cidābhās hotā hai vah brahm ko prakāśit karne meṃ katham api samarth nahīṃ hai, kyom̐ki jo svayaṃ parimiti prakāśavālā hai, vah anantānant brahmāṇḍ ko prakāśit karnevale aparimit prakāśarūp brahm ko prakāśit karne meṃ kaise samarth ho saktā hai? ataḥ vastusthiti yah hai ki jaise dīpak kā parimit prakāś aparimit prakāśarūp sūry ko prakāśit nahīṃ kar saktā pratyut sūry ke prakāś se abhibhūt ho jātā hai, vaise hī brahm caitany kā pratibimb cidābhās jiskā astitv bimbabhūt brahm caitany par hī ādhārit hai vah bhī brahmcaitany ko prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth hai, kyom̐ki jab vah svayaṃ antaḥkaraṇavṛttirūp upādhi kā anugantā hai, tab spaṣṭ hai ki vah nirupādhik brahm ko katham api nahīṃ prakāśit kar saktā, hām, vah apne āpko brahma-caitany meṃ antarlīn kar saktā hai, jo hotā hī hai.

[13] yah jñātavy hai ki cidābhās kī upādhi antaḥkaraṇavṛtti jab ajñān aur uske karyasamūh kā nās kar svayaṃ bhī vinaṣṭ ho jātī hai tab usmeṃ sthit caitany kā pratibimb bhī āśray ke naṣṭ hone se pṛthak nahīṃ rah saktā, us samay keval bimb brahmcaitany hī rah jātā hai. yah ṭhik usī prakār, jis prakār darpaṇ meṃ paṇevālā mukh kā pratibimb darpaṇ ke haṭā lene par alag nahīṃ rah jātā, kintu us samay mukhamātr hī šeṣ rah jātā hai.

[14] niṣkarṣ yah hai ki upahit caitany kī upādhi kā nās hone par anupahit śuddh svarūp caitany mātr hī sthit rahtā hai, us samay dvait ke leś kī bhī sambhāvnā nahīṃ rah jātī. uparyukt se yah siddh hotā hai ki brahmajñān kī prakriyā meṃ cittavṛtti kā upayog to hotā hai, kyom̐ki vah brahmaviṣayak ajñān kā nās kartī hai, kintu vahām cidābhās kī koī āvaśyakatā nahīṃ hotī. is sandarbh meṃ yah bāt viśeṣarūp se dhyān dene yogy hai ki antaḥkaraṇavṛtti kā brahm ko viṣay banānā, brahm ke ajñān kā nās honā, ajñānanāś se viśvaprapañc ke sāth antaḥkaraṇavṛtti kā nās honā, cidābhās kā brahm ko prakāśit karne meṃ asamarth hone se brahm se abhibhūt honā aur upādhibhūt antaḥkaraṇavṛtti kā nās hone se brahmamātr kā šeṣ rah jānā yah sārī kramik prakriyā keval samajhne evaṃ samajhāne ke lie śāstroṃ meṃ varṇit hai. vastusthiti yah hai ki ukt sāre kāry yugapat hote haiṃ. unke hone meṃ ek kṣaṇ ke sahasrāṃś kā bhī vilamb nahīṃ hotā. jīv ko brahmatv prāpt hone par uske nikhil upādhiyom̐ ke bandhan tatkal hī vinaṣṭ ho jāte haiṃ. us samay ajñān,

viśvaprapaṇc, antaḥkaraṇavṛtti aur cidābhās in sabom kā patā nahīm lagtā. akhaṇḍ cidānand samudr laharāne lagtā hai. patnī, putr, pauṭrādi, sage sam-bandhī, sampatti, grh, bhūmi, deh, indriy tathā antaḥkaraṇādi kā sārā jhamelā samāpt ho jātā hai. rāg, dveṣ, spardhā, bhay, viśād, īrṣyā tathā kāmādi vividh bhayaṃkar śatru śaśāsrṅg kī tarah alīk ho jāte hairī. us sthiti kā anubhav tattvadarśī yogi ke lie bhī durlabh hai. vah sthiti antarindriy evaṃ bahirindriy se agamy hai kyomki unkā nās hone par hī vah udit hotī hai. vyutthān kāl kā anubhav to kisī prakār vāṇī kā viṣay ban²⁷² saktā hai.

[Translation]

Immediately after examining the sentence consisting in the instruction [*tat tvam asi* / ‘You are that’], now will be explained the meaning of the sentence consisting in the cognition *aham brahmāsmi* (‘I am Brahman’). When the teacher clarifies the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* by means of [the method of] ascription and retraction and makes awakening to the unfragmented meaning by the sentence *tat tvam asi*, then in the internal organ of the entitled student arises such mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented: ‘I am eternal pure awareness and true essence; the nondual, infinite, and supremely blissful Brahman.’ Bearing the reflecting light of awareness and making the unknown and supreme Brahman into the object of cognition, this mental event removes the ignorance concerning Brahman. At that moment, just like a woven piece of cloth burns when the threads that constitute a woven piece of cloth burn; similarly, when the ignorance that causes all the effects is removed then, together with the removal of its effect – the entire world – the mental event that is shaped after the form of the unfragmented and is contained in that [world caused by ignorance] is also removed. Just as the light of a lamp is incapable of revealing the light of the sun and becomes surpassed by the light of the sun; similarly, the mental episode spoken about is incapable of manifesting supreme Brahman – self-revealing and nondifferent from the inner Self – and becomes surpassed by the light of that Brahman. Moreover, since the mental episode that is shaped after the form of the unfragmented – the mental episode having Brahman for its object – is removed, consciousness reflected in that mental episode becomes supreme Brahman as such – nondifferent from the inner Self – in the same manner as the face reflected in the mirror becomes the face as such with the removal of its qualifying adjunct.

[Commentary]

²⁷² Uncertain reading.

[1] Brahman is the Self. Just as Bādarāyaṇa proclaimed²⁷³ [it] saying that *at-meti tūpagacchanti grāhayanti ca* (Brahmasūtra 4.1.3),²⁷⁴ Brahman should be apprehended in this way alone, since the sentences of the Vedānta accept Brahman in this manner and make it apprehend in this way.²⁷⁵ When from the instruction of the teacher the student awakes to the oneness of the living being with Brahman²⁷⁶ through the sentence *tat tvam asi*, then he to whom this becomes evident from the sentence *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* cognizes his own Brahmanhood in the following manner: *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* – ‘I am Brahman.’²⁷⁷ The meaning of the sentence consisting in the cognition [‘I am Brahman’] has been explained in [the following] section of the treatise under discussion. In the *Amarakośa* five meanings of [word] *atho* as well as *atha* have been explained: auspiciousness, having no interval, beginning, questioning, and entireness (fullness).²⁷⁸ In [the explanation concerning] the sentence consisting in the cognition [‘I am Brahman’], the word *atha* means absence of interval.²⁷⁹ Accordingly,²⁸⁰ in the treatise under discussion the meaning of the word *atha* indicates that there is no interval between the examination of the meaning of the sentence consisting in the instruction *tat tvam asi* [and the arising of the cognition ‘I am Brahman’]. This entails²⁸¹ [a] that the preceptor removes the cognition of false entities²⁸² – beginning with the sense of agency and ending with the [gross] body – with the [method of] ascription and retraction that, due to nescience, appear like a rabbit-horn in the blissful²⁸³ as well as contentless, part-less and relation-less awareness; [b] refining²⁸⁴ the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* by the sentence *tat tvam asi*; [c] abandoning [their mutually] opposed aspect²⁸⁵ by means of the connotation in which the primary meaning is [partially] abandoned and [partially] retained;²⁸⁶ and [d] awakening to the awareness of the unfragmented meaning.²⁸⁷ The intention is that when the

²⁷³ *vyakti karnā*: lit., ‘to make manifest, evident, or clear; to express.’

²⁷⁴ BS.4.1.3: “[The *Upaniṣads*], however, acknowledge and make apprehend [Brahman] as the Self.”

²⁷⁵ Śukla is glossing here the Sanskrit *upagacchanti* and *grāhayanti* with *svīkār karnā* and *grahṇaṃ karnā*.

²⁷⁶ *jīva-brahm ke aikya*

²⁷⁷ Lit., ‘to whom this becomes evident by the sentence ‘I am Brahman,’ to him the cognition of his own Brahmanhood in the manner of *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* – ‘I am Brahman’ takes place.”

²⁷⁸ AK.3.3.247(871): *maṅgalā* ‘*nantarārambhapraśnakārtsnyeṣu atho atha*.

²⁷⁹ *upātt ath śabd kā arth hai ānantary*: lit., ‘absence of interval is accepted as the meaning of the word *atha*.’

²⁸⁰ *tadanusār*: lit., ‘following that, according to that.’

²⁸¹ I have made a new sentence here and rendered *jiskā viśad rūp hai* [...] lit., ‘whose clear form is...’ in this manner in order to make the entire locution more idiomatic.

²⁸² *mithyāpadārthajñān*

²⁸³ *ānandamātr caitany mem*: lit., ‘in consciousness that is bliss as such.’

²⁸⁴ *saṃśodhan*: lit., ‘purifying, refining, clarifying.’

²⁸⁵ *viruddhāś*: lit., ‘that portion or aspect which is opposed; opposed aspect, or mutually exclusive aspect.’

²⁸⁶ *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*: lit., ‘connotation [partially] abandoning and [partially] not abandoning [the primary meaning].’

²⁸⁷ *akhaṇḍārth caitany kā bodh honā*

teacher elucidates the meaning of the sentence *tat tvam asi* through the method of adscription and retraction²⁸⁸ and the student awakes to the unfragmented meaning, then in the pure internal organ of the entitled student who is endowed with the fourfold means such as discernment, detachment and so on²⁸⁹ [which are previous to the desire to know Brahman] appears²⁹⁰ the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented Brahman.²⁹¹ If the student, however, is not endowed with discernment, detachment and so on, so the instruction of the teacher is useless as the city of the Gandharvas.

[2] The episode of internal organ that arises in the mind of the entitled student in the form of [the ascertainment] ‘I am Brahman’ apprehends the shape of the unfragmented Brahman, which is [a] ‘eternal’, that is, deprived of non-eternity; [b] ‘pure’, that is, devoid of the fault of ignorance and so on; [c] ‘awakened’, that is, one whose intrinsic nature is self-illuminating, deprived of the fault of insentience and so on; [d] ‘released’, that is, devoid of all qualifying adjuncts; [e] ‘true,’ that is, one whose intrinsic nature is imperishable; [f] ‘supreme bliss’, that is, one whose intrinsic nature consists of unsurpassable bliss, different from [the one] – beginning with the bliss of human beings and ending with the bliss of the four-faced Brahmā – that is related to objects, is as perishable as vain, has a superior, and is produced by *karma*; [g] ‘infinite’, that is, not delimited, different from the pot and so on that are delimited by spatio-temporal existence; and [h] ‘nondual’, that is, deprived of multiplicity, one. Since that [episode of internal organ] makes the immediate Brahman into the object [of cognition], it is an immediate cognition consisting of direct presentation;²⁹² that [episode of internal organ] is not shaped after the form of some remote entity.²⁹³

[3] In relation to this, some say that the intrinsic nature of the verbal means of knowing is to give rise to indirect cognition only. Hence, the mental episode produced by verbal means of knowing in the form of [the sentence] ‘You are that’ cannot be immediate. This is not correct; for the *śruti* clearly instructs that *yat sākṣād aparokṣād brahma, ya ātmā sarvāntara*,²⁹⁴ ‘Brahman is direct and immediate, the Self placed near in the interiority of all.’ One should pay

²⁸⁸ *adhyāropāpavād nyāy se*

²⁸⁹ The fourfold means (*sādhana catuṣṭay*) comprehend: (a) discernment between the permanent and the impermanent, (b) detachment from the fruits of action which may be attained here or hereafter, (c) the group of six perfections, and (d) desire of liberation. See VS.4.

²⁹⁰ *āvirbhāv honā*: lit., ‘to be or become manifest or apparent.’

²⁹¹ *akhaṇḍabrahmākārā cittavṛtti*

²⁹² In this statement, Badrīnāth Śukla clearly equates *sākṣātkār* with *aparokṣa anubhav*. The fact that he uses here *aparokṣa* as an adjective of *anubhav* seems to suggest that for him *anubhav* and *jñān* are synonyms. This fact also seems to justify the rendering of *anubhav* as ‘cognition’ rather than as ‘experience’.

²⁹³ *parokṣa tattv*. In the original Hindi text, this entire paragraph contains only one complex sentence. In my rendering, I have simplified the syntax by splitting the relative-correlative construction into two sentences.

²⁹⁴ BṛhUp.3.4.1.

attention to the fact that²⁹⁵ the indirect and immediate feature of certain cognitions does not depend on²⁹⁶ its instrument or means of knowing, but rather on the entity [being cognized]. Just as the mind is one [and the same] instrument and along with being the cause²⁹⁷ of the inferential piece of knowledge²⁹⁸ – the indirect cognition²⁹⁹ of *dharma*, *adharma* and so on – it is also the cause of the immediate cognition³⁰⁰ of pleasure, pain and so on.³⁰¹ In the same way, even verbal means of knowing yields both types of cognition, indirect as well as immediate. Cognition of the word the target of which is not close at hand³⁰² but is remote³⁰³ is indirect. [However,] which entity can be closer than the Self?³⁰⁴ Hence, the verbal cognition having that [i.e., the Self] for content is fit to be taken as immediate. The deities beginning with Indra and Varuṇa are remote. Hence, the verbal cognition having that [i.e., those deities] as its object is fit to be taken as indirect.

[4] The reflecting image of the Self consisting of [pure] consciousness³⁰⁵ in a mental episode is called *cidābhāsa* or *phala*.³⁰⁶ Since [this] mental episode is yoked³⁰⁷ to the reflecting light of awareness, it is capable of destroying the ignorance completely.³⁰⁸ Otherwise, since [on its own] it is insentient,³⁰⁹ none such action would be possible by its means.

[5] Consequently,³¹⁰ this mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented is yoked to the reflecting light of awareness – a reflected image of the Self consisting of consciousness,³¹¹ – makes supreme Brahman – unknown and nondifferent from the inner Self – into the object [of cognition], and destroys the entire ignorance³¹² having that Brahman for content. Here, one

²⁹⁵ *yah dhyān dene kī bāt hai ki* [...] lit., ‘It is a thing or issue to pay attention to that...’

²⁹⁶ Śukla uses the term *adhīn* ‘subject to,’ ‘dependent on’ in order to express the same idea that in VMR.28 is expressed by the term *nibandhana*.

²⁹⁷ *hetu*

²⁹⁸ *anumiti*

²⁹⁹ *parokṣānubhav*

³⁰⁰ *aparokṣānubhav*

³⁰¹ Here again, Bādṛīnāth clearly uses *anubhav* in the sense of cognition, which can be either indirect (*parokṣ*) or immediate (*aparokṣ*).

³⁰² *jis śabd kā arth sannihit nahīn honā*: lit., ‘the *artha* of the word not being placed near together.’ In this context, I am rendering the word *artha* as ‘target,’ for what Śukla has in mind here is the object that the word designates or is aimed at.

³⁰³ *parokṣ*: in this context, I will render this term as ‘remote’ since Śukla clearly relates it here with that object of cognition (*artha*) which is not placed near to the cognising agent.

³⁰⁴ *ātmā se adhik nikaṭ aur honā*: lit., ‘to be more proximate than the Self.’ This is by all means a rhetorical question. The idea behind it is that there is no entity that is closer at hand than the Self.

³⁰⁵ *cidātmā*

³⁰⁶ Lit., ‘reflecting light of consciousness’ or ‘fruit.’

³⁰⁷ *yukt honā*: lit., ‘to be yoked, united, fastened, or connected to.’

³⁰⁸ Lit., ‘is capable of complete destruction of ignorance.’

³⁰⁹ Lit., ‘for the reason of being insentient or inert (*jaḍ*).’

³¹⁰ *phalataḥ*: another possibility would be ‘in result, as a result.’

³¹¹ *cidātmā ke pratibimb* [...]

³¹² *ajñānamātr*: lit., ‘ignorance as such;’ ‘whole, entire ignorance.’

should understand that the word ‘supreme’ [used by Sadānanda as an adjective qualifying the word *brahman*] excludes the Brahman that is produced [and] related to the qualifying adjunct of ignorance;³¹³ for the Brahman that is related to the qualifying adjunct of ignorance is called inferior Brahman. The word ‘unknown’ [used by Sadānanda as an adjective qualifying the word *brahman*] designated that Brahman is what has to be known;³¹⁴ for what is unknown is that which is to be known. Likewise, the locution ‘nondifferent from the inner [Self]’ [used by Sadānanda as an adjective qualifying the word *brahman*] denied its aloofness.³¹⁵

[6] The following question can be asked: is the mental episode that has assumed the shape of the unfragmented capable of making supreme Brahman its own object [of cognition]? Is Brahman suitable for becoming a knowable of the means of knowing consisting in an episode of internal organ? Brahman is the witness, the seer, and the apprehender of all.³¹⁶ Hence, it may well become related to the objects of cognition;³¹⁷ but how can it become the object of any action or means of knowing? The *śruti* clearly says: *yenedaṃ sarvaṃ vijānāti taṃ kena vijānīyāt* [‘By what means should one know that by which all this is known?’] (Bṛhadā.2.4.13)³¹⁸ [and] *yan manasā na manute yenāhur manomatam / tad eva brahma tvaṃ vidhi nedaṃ yad idam upāsate* [‘That which is not thought by the mind; by which, they say, the mind it thought of. Know that alone to be Brahman, not this that they venerate here’] (Ken.1.5).³¹⁹ Śaṅkarācārya also explained that: *na hi śāstram idantayā viṣayabhūtaṃ brahma pratipipādayiṣati, kiṃ tarhi pratyagātmatvena aviṣayatayā pratipādayad avidyākalpitaṃ vedyaveditṛvedanādibhedam apanayati* [‘The scripture does not wish to impart Brahman as what became the object by [referring to it as] ‘this’. What then? Imparting [Brahman] as what is not endowed with the property of the object – the inner Self – [the scripture] removes the distinction between what is to be known, the knower, and the act of knowing that is fancied by nescience’] (Br.sū.Śā.bhā. 1.1.4). In this case, how can saying that an episode of internal organ makes Brahman into the object [of cognition] be consistent? In reply to this question it can be said that the purport of the aforementioned statement is not [to assert] that Brahman is the object of some performance or means of knowing. On the contrary, the intention of

³¹³ *ajñānopādhik kārya brahm*: lit., ‘the Brahman that is to be done or effectuated, related to the qualifying adjunct of ignorance.’

³¹⁴ *prameyatv*: lit., ‘having the property or condition of being what is to be known; the condition of becoming the object of any valid means of knowing.’

³¹⁵ *tāsthy*

³¹⁶ Badrīnāth uses here the words *sākṣī*, *draṣṭā*, and *grahītā*, nominative singular forms of *sākṣin*, *draṣṭṛ*, and *grahītṛ*.

³¹⁷ *viṣayī*

³¹⁸ BṛhUp.2.4.14; Olivelle (1998).

³¹⁹ KUp.1.6; Olivelle (1998: 365): “Which one cannot grasp with one’s mind, by which, they say, the mind itself is grasped – Learn that that alone is *brahman*, and not what they here venerate.”

that statement is [to assert] that with regard to Brahman³²⁰ objecthood³²¹ is analogic, not factual.³²² Hence, the purport of the aforementioned sentence is only to indicate that the episode of internal organ faces towards Brahman.³²³ The intention is [to assert] that the mental episode which before the instruction of the teacher always used to face towards the external objects, that [mental] episode assumes the form of the unfragmented after the instruction of the teacher and faces towards Brahman – nondifferent from the inner Self. Only because the [mental] event faces towards Brahman,³²⁴ so it is said that by means of that Brahman is made into the object [of cognition]. If Brahman would *de facto*³²⁵ become an object [of cognition] of the mental episode, then that [mental episode] would also be capable of manifesting it. However, the author of the treatise³²⁶ says that [this] mental episode only destroys the entire ignorance having Brahman for content; not that it is also capable of manifesting Brahman.³²⁷ Hence, making Brahman into the object [of cognition] by means of the episode of internal organ is not *de facto*³²⁸ possible. The word *eva* [used by Sadānanda in the statement] *ajñānam eva bādhate* [‘removes that ignorance alone’] refuted that Brahman is what is to be revealed;³²⁹ for since Brahman is the revealer of all, it is also the revealer of the episode of internal organ. In such case, the question regarding the revelation of Brahman by means of the insentient episode of internal organ is meaningless.

[7] In this subject matter, a certain commentator³³⁰ says that: *sā cittavṛttir na śuddhabrahmaviṣayiṇī kintv ajñānaviśiṣṭapratyagabhinna-parabrahma-viṣayiṇī* [‘This mental episode does not have pure Brahman for its object [of cognition], but has for its object that Brahman – supreme and nondifferent from the inner [Self] – that is qualified by ignorance’]; That is, this episode of internal organ does not make supreme Brahman its own object [of cognition], but makes the supreme Brahman consisting of the inner Self and qualified by

³²⁰ *brahm meṁ*: ‘with regard to Brahman’ or ‘as for Brahman.’

³²¹ *viṣayatā*: lit., ‘objecthood or the property of being an object of cognition.’

³²² *aupacārik* versus *vāstavik*. Both terms are nominal derivations from *upacāra* and *vāstava*. They work here as adjectives qualifying the substantive *viṣayatā*. I will render *aupacārik* as ‘analogic’ and *vāstavik* as ‘factual.’

³²³ Lit., ‘to indicate the facing of the episode of internal organ towards Brahman.’ The locution *brahm kī or abhimukh honā* could also be rendered as ‘turning toward Brahman’ or even as ‘becoming intended upon Brahman.’

³²⁴ *vṛtti ke is brahmābhimukhībhāv*

³²⁵ *vastutah*

³²⁶ *granthakār*; that is, Sadānanda Sarasvatī.

³²⁷ Thus, by its turning or facing (*abhimukh*) toward Brahman, the mental episode is capable of removing the ignorance regarding Brahman; but it is not capable of making Brahman into the object of cognition. That is, Brahman is never a *pramey* of any *cittavṛtti*. This capability and incapability is expressed by the Sanskrit *samārthya* and *asamārthya*.

³²⁸ *vāstav meṁ*

³²⁹ *brahm kī prakāśyatā ka nirās kiya gayā hai*

³³⁰ *īṭhākār*: lit., ‘one who makes commentaries; a commentator.’ Śukla is referring here to Nṛsiṃhāśrama (1555), for the following quotation is without any doubt from Nṛsiṃhāśrama’s *Subodhinī*.

ignorance its own object [of cognition]. This is not acknowledged as a sound reasoning³³¹ because the Brahman that is qualified by the qualifying adjuncts³³² has been called in the scholastic literature³³³ inferior Brahman. Just as [for example, in Śaṅkara's critical commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*]: *kim punaḥ param brahma kim aparam iti? ucyate, yatrāvidyākṛtānāmarūpādiviśeṣapratīṣedhād asthūlādiśabdair brahmopadiśyate tat param / tad eva yatra nāmarūpādiviśeṣeṇa kenacid viśiṣṭam upāsanāyopadiśyate tad aparam* ['What is supreme Brahman and what is inferior? It is said, where Brahman is indicated by such words as 'not gross' and so on, due to the denial of such distinctions as name and form, which are made by ignorance, it is supreme [Brahman]. Where, however, it is indicated as somehow qualified with such distinctions as name and form and so on for the sake of devotional meditation, that is inferior'] (Br.sū.Śā.bhā.4.3.14).³³⁴

[8] From this critical commentary³³⁵ by Śaṅkara it is very clear that supreme Brahman cannot be qualified by ignorance. In the same context, it should also be considered that the Brahman that is qualified by the qualifying adjuncts³³⁶ is to be worshipped,³³⁷ just as the Brahman that is not endowed with the qualifying adjuncts³³⁸ is to be known.³³⁹ Just as [it has been said, for instance, by Śaṅkara:] *evam ekam api brahmāpekṣitopādhisambandhaṁ niras-topādhisambandhaṁ copāsyatvena jñeyatvena ca vedānteṣūpadiśyate* ['Brahman, although one only, in the Vedānta is referred in connection to the qualifying adjuncts as well as in connection to the removed qualifying adjuncts and indicated [respectively] as being what is to be worshiped and what is to be known'] (Br.sū.Śā.bhā.1.1.11).³⁴⁰ On the basis of this critical commentary [it becomes clear that] although Brahman is one only, in the [explanatory] treatises of Vedānta³⁴¹ it is mentioned as what has to be worshiped when related to the qualifying adjuncts; just as it is mentioned as what is to be known when removed from the relation with the qualifying adjuncts. This explanatory [treatise]³⁴² is concerning the knowledge of Brahman;³⁴³ it is not concerning the worship of Brahman.³⁴⁴ In such case, the author of this [explanatory]

³³¹ *yuktiyukt*: lit., 'yoked to reasoning; sound reasoning.'

³³² *upādhi viśiṣṭ brahm*

³³³ *śāstrom meṁ*

³³⁴ BSBh.4.3.14.

³³⁵ *bhāṣya*

³³⁶ *upādhi viśiṣṭ brahm*

³³⁷ *upāsy*

³³⁸ *nirupādhi brahm*

³³⁹ *jñey*

³⁴⁰ BSBh.1.1.11.

³⁴¹ *granthoṁ meṁ*

³⁴² *prakaraṇ* [*granth*]: an explanatory treatise where a particular topic of Advaita Vedānta is exposed. In this context, the term refers to *Vedāntasāra* as a whole.

³⁴³ *brahmajñānaparak*

³⁴⁴ *upāsanāparak*

treatise³⁴⁵ intends only the supreme Brahman that is not endowed with the qualifying adjunct to be the object [of cognition] of the mental episode [‘I am Brahman’]; not the Brahman that is endowed with the qualifying adjunct of ignorance. This indeed, is also the intention of the steadfast Rāmatīrtha [when he asserts in his commentary:] *brahmaśabdasya kāryabrahmaviśayatvaṃ vyāvarttayati param iti* [‘[With the adjective] ‘supreme’ he [viz. Sadānanda] sets aside [the notion] that the Brahman that is produced is the content of the word ‘Brahman’]. The name of the Brahman endowed with the qualifying adjuncts, the Brahman that is produced,³⁴⁶ is ‘inferior’.

[9] Just as a woven piece of cloth burns when the threads constituting [that] woven piece of cloth burn; similarly, as soon as the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] is destroyed by means of the episode of internal organ shaped after the form of the unfragmented, when the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] that is the [material] cause of the entire world is destroyed, its effect – the entire world – and the episode of internal organ shaped after the form of the unfragmented Brahman that is contained in that [i.e., world caused by ignorance] are also destroyed. Hence, saying that ‘even when ignorance is destroyed by means of the [mental] episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented, the entire animate and inanimate world³⁴⁷ and the aforementioned mental episode will certainly remain unchanged – just as the cognition of all those will also continue existing – so that even in the presence of knowledge of Brahman or liberation, the consummation of nonduality is not possible’ cannot be right; for ignorance or nescience³⁴⁸ is the root-cause of the entire animate and inanimate world. Hence, when the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] is destroyed by means of the episode of internal organ shaped after the form of the unfragmented, then only – since the cause is destroyed – the destruction of its effect – the entire animate and inanimate world³⁴⁹ – is also unavoidable. Hence, when the direct presence of Brahman³⁵⁰ takes place there is no impediment whatsoever for the attainment of nonduality.

[10] If it would be said that the episode of internal organ is the [active] ingredient³⁵¹ that destroys the ignorance as well as its products but that it is not – likewise – the cause of its own destruction, so this statement is not acceptable; for in the way the fire burns out the fuel and is itself also extinguished³⁵² without requiring anything else for its own extinction; similarly, the episode of internal organ destroys the ignorance [concerning supreme Brahman] as

³⁴⁵ *granthakār*: lit., ‘the author of the [explanatory] treatise;’ that is, Sadānanda Sarasvatī.

³⁴⁶ *kāry*: lit., ‘what is to be done or effectuated.’

³⁴⁷ *carācar jagad*: lit., ‘the world of the mobile and the immobile.’

³⁴⁸ Śukla uses the term *avidyā* and *ajñān* as synonyms here.

³⁴⁹ *sāmagr carācar jagat*

³⁵⁰ *brahmaśākṣātkār honā*

³⁵¹ *sāmagrī*: lit., ‘collection or assemblage of elements required for producing something;’ active ‘ingredient.’

³⁵² The verb is *bujhnā* (v.i.), lit., ‘to perish,’ ‘to be extinguished.’

well as its effect – the entire world – without requiring any other destroying agent, and [it] also destroys itself by itself without requiring any other cause for its destruction. This [specific issue concerning the self-extinction of the mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented Brahman] is dealt with in the scholastic literature with the locution ‘simile of the fire and the burned fuel.’³⁵³

[11] Just as the small light of a lamp is incapable of revealing the sun that is the revealer of the endless egg of Brahmā and the sun in sight is surpassed by the light of the sun and its light does not become known; similarly, consciousness reflected in the internal organ (the reflecting light of awareness) is surpassed by that [supreme Brahman], since that [consciousness reflected in the internal organ] is incapable of revealing supreme Brahman³⁵⁴ – nondifferent from the inner [Self] and self-revealing. In this way, just as with the destruction of the mirror the reflecting image of the face contained in the mirror becomes the face as such (the original entity as such),³⁵⁵ similarly, with the destruction of the episode of internal organ [shaped] after the form of the unfragmented – its own qualifying adjunct³⁵⁶ – [consciousness reflected in the internal organ] becomes supreme Brahman as such – nondifferent from the inner [Self].

[12] If it would be said that ‘When the episode of internal organ destroys the [root-] ignorance as well as its effect – the entire world – and is itself also destroyed,³⁵⁷ then the problem with this reasoning is that in it the reflected consciousness³⁵⁸ (the reflecting light of awareness) [putatively] reveals Brahman just as it reveals other entities,’ so saying this is extremely ridiculous;³⁵⁹ for when the episode of internal organ is shaped after such insentient entities as pot and so on,³⁶⁰ it has two functions:³⁶¹ one is to destroy the ignorance regarding its object [of cognition: the pot and so on], the other is to reveal³⁶² the pot, which is accomplished by the reflecting light of awareness. In this way, in the perception of a pot, both are employed, the episode of internal organ and the reflecting light of awareness. However, the process of cognizing Brahman³⁶³ is different from this one, as the ignorance having Brahman for content

³⁵³ See Jacob (1983: 37, Vol. 2). This allegory or simile is one among several others that were intended by Advaitins to describe the self-extinction of that mental episode shaped after the form of the unfragmented. Description of this and other similes can be found in VSS.28 and SLS.3.7 of Appayya Dīkṣita.

³⁵⁴ *parabrahm ko prakāśit karne meṁ asamarthy hone ke kāraṇ*

³⁵⁵ *mukhamātr and bimbamātr*

³⁵⁶ *apnī upādhibhūt*

³⁵⁷ *svayaṁ bhī naṣṭ ho jātī hai*

³⁵⁸ *pratibimbī caitany*

³⁵⁹ *nīlānt upasahanīy*

³⁶⁰ *jaḍ padārthoṁ se ākārit antaḥkāraṇ ki vṛtti*

³⁶¹ *vyāpār*: lit., ‘occupation, employment, function.’

³⁶² *prakāśan honā*

³⁶³ *brahmajñān kī prakriyā*

is destroyed by the episode of internal organ [shaped after] the form of Brahman, but the light of awareness reflecting in it is not at all capable of revealing Brahman,³⁶⁴ since what by itself is a limited revealer,³⁶⁵ how can that be capable of revealing Brahman consisting of unlimited light³⁶⁶ that reveals the entirely endless³⁶⁷ egg of Brahmā? Hence, the fact is that just as the limited light of a lamp cannot reveal the sun that consists of unlimited light but is, instead, surpassed by the sunlight; similarly, the reflecting light of awareness³⁶⁸ – the reflecting image of Brahman-consciousness – the existence³⁶⁹ of which is entirely founded on Brahman-consciousness³⁷⁰ – the original entity³⁷¹ – that [reflecting light of awareness] is also incapable of revealing Brahman-consciousness; for when that itself goes along with a qualifying adjunct consisting in the episode of internal organ,³⁷² then it is clear that it cannot in any way reveal [supreme] Brahman that is devoid of qualifying adjuncts. Certainly, what is so [attached to the qualifying adjuncts] can dissolve itself³⁷³ in Brahman-consciousness.

[13] One should know that when the episode of internal organ – the qualifying adjunct of the reflecting light of awareness³⁷⁴ – destroys the [entire] ignorance together with the collection of [its] effects and is itself also destroyed, then at that stage the reflecting image of consciousness³⁷⁵ cannot remain separately³⁷⁶ due to the destruction of [its] bearer,³⁷⁷ at that moment, only the Brahman-consciousness remains, the original entity.³⁷⁸ When the mirror is removed, the reflecting image of the face dwelling in the mirror in its corresponding form³⁷⁹ does not remain unattached³⁸⁰ [to the mirror]; at that moment, only the face as such remains.

³⁶⁴ *prakāśit karnā*

³⁶⁵ *jo svayaṃ parimit prakāśavālā*: lit., ‘what by itself, or intrinsically, is a measured or delimited revealer;’ ‘limited revealing agent.’

³⁶⁶ *aparimit prakāśarūp brahm*: ‘Brahman consisting of unlimited light.’

³⁶⁷ I take *anantānant* to be a reduplication of *anant* ‘endless, without end’ and to carry in this context the sense of intensification. Hence, I will render it as ‘entirely endless.’

³⁶⁸ *cidābhās*

³⁶⁹ *astitv*

³⁷⁰ *brahm caityany par hī ādhārit hai*

³⁷¹ *bimbabhūt*

³⁷² *yah svayaṃ antaḥkaraṇavṛttirūp upādhi kā anugantā hai*

³⁷³ *apne āpko brahmacaityany meṃ antarlīn karnā*

³⁷⁴ *cidābhās ki upādhi*

³⁷⁵ *caityany kā pratibimb*

³⁷⁶ *prthak rahnā*: lit., ‘to remain separately, singly, apart’ from the episode of internal organ ‘I am Brahman.’

³⁷⁷ *āsray*: lit., ‘recipient, resting-place, support, or bearer.’

³⁷⁸ *bimb*

³⁷⁹ *yah thik usī prakār, jis prakār [...]*: lit., ‘in that its form which is right or correct.’

³⁸⁰ *alag honā*: lit., ‘to remain unattached, independent’ from the mirror.

[14] The conclusion is that when the qualifying adjunct of the attached consciousness³⁸¹ is destroyed, then only the unattached, pure, and essential consciousness³⁸² as such remains. At that moment, even the possibility of a slight trace of duality is not left. From the abovementioned [discussion] it is established³⁸³ that in the process of cognizing Brahman³⁸⁴ a mental episode is employed, for it destroys the ignorance the content of which is Brahman; but in that process the reflecting light of awareness is not required. In relation to this, it is appropriate to pay special attention to these following issues: [a] an episode of internal organ makes Brahman the object of cognition; [b] the destruction of ignorance concerning Brahman; [c] the destruction of the episode of internal organ together with the manifold world³⁸⁵ by the destruction of ignorance; [d] the reflecting light of awareness is incapable of revealing Brahman and is surpassed by Brahman; and [e] with the destruction of the episode of internal organ – a qualifying adjunct – only Brahman as such remains. This entire successive process³⁸⁶ is described in the scholastic literature only for the sake of understanding and explaining it. The fact is that all the mentioned effects are simultaneous.³⁸⁷ They unfold instantaneously.³⁸⁸ When the Brahmanhood of the living being is attained, at that very moment the bonds of all its qualifying adjuncts are destroyed. At that moment, one does not encounter any of these:³⁸⁹ the ignorance, the diffusion of all things, the episode of internal organ, and the reflecting light of awareness. The ocean of the unfragmented bliss of consciousness begins to wave. The entire entanglement³⁹⁰ related to wife, son, grandson, and so on; relatives, prosperity, household, earth, body, sense organs as well as internal organ and so on is brought to an end.³⁹¹ Like, dislike, envy, fear, aversion, jealousy, as well as sexual desire and so on, the manifold fearsome enemy becomes false like the horn of a rabbit. The cognition that belongs to that state is difficult to attain even for the truth-seeing yogi.³⁹² That state is not accessible³⁹³ with the internal organs nor with the external organs, since it arises only when they vanish. And the cognition that

³⁸¹ *upahit caitany kī upādhi*: lit., ‘the qualifying adjunct of the attached or conditioned consciousness.’ Another less literal rendering of this locution would be ‘the qualifying adjunct placed close to consciousness.’

³⁸² *anupahit śuddh svarūp caitany*

³⁸³ *siddh honā*: also ‘to be proved or demonstrated.’

³⁸⁴ *brahmajñān kī prakriyā*: lit., ‘process of cognizing or knowing Brahman.’

³⁸⁵ *viśvaprapañc*: lit., ‘diffusion of all things,’ ‘expansion of the world,’ ‘manifold world.’

³⁸⁶ *kramik prakriyā*

³⁸⁷ *yugapad*

³⁸⁸ *unke hone meṁ ek kṣaṇ ke sahasrāṁś kā bhī vilamb nahīm hotā*: lit., ‘in their becoming there isn’t even the delay of a thousand fragments of one instant.’

³⁸⁹ *in saboṁ kā patā nahīm lagtā, patā lagnā (kā)*: ‘to trace, to discover.’

³⁹⁰ *jhamelā*: lit., ‘entanglement, mess.’

³⁹¹ *samāpt honā*: lit., ‘to be completed or concluded.’

³⁹² *tattvadarśīyogī*: ‘truth or reality-seeing yogi.’

³⁹³ *agamy*: lit., ‘what is not to be gone or reached by going.’

belongs to the time of arising [of the phenomena]³⁹⁴ can become somehow the content of speech.

(c) Fragment 3: *Vidvanmanorañjanī* of Rāmatīrtha Yati on VS.28

[1] tad evaṃ ‘ātmeti tūpagacchanti grāhayanti ca’³⁹⁵ iti nyāyena jīvasya nityaśuddhabuddham uktasatyajñānānantānandaparipūrṇabrahmātmavopadeśavākyaṛtham saprapaṇcam nirūpyedānīm avagatasvarūpasyānubhavāvabhāsivākyaṛtham varṇayitum upakramate – athety ādinā / upadeśavākyaṛthanirūpañānantaryam athaśabdārthaḥ / adhikāriṇo vidhivad adhīta vedety ādikhaṇḍaloktalakṣaṇasyāsambhāvanāviparītabhāvanākhyacittadoṣarahitasādhyaṛopādīnyāyēnācāryopadeśasamanantaram eva nityaśuddhabuddhatvādiviśeṣaṇam brahmāham asmīty akhaṇḍākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛttir udeti sāksātkārarūpā na punaḥ parokṣārthākāritety arthaḥ / na ca śabdasya parokṣajñānanakatvasvābhāvān na tenāparokṣā cittavṛttir udetīti vācyam / ‘yat sāksād aparokṣād brahma ya ātmā sarvāntara’³⁹⁶ iti śruter nityāparokṣam brahmātmavārūpaṃ tasmin parokṣajñānam janayataḥ śabdasyāprāmāṇyāpatteḥ / kiñca jñānasya parokṣatvāparokṣatve na karaṇanibandhane kintv arthanibandhane ekasyaiva manasaḥ sukhādiviśaya kāparokṣajñānahetutvasyātītārthasmṛtihetutvasya ca darśanāt / tatra saha kārībhedāt tathābhāva iti cet tarhīhāpy asti saha kārībhedāḥ śabdapratipattuh śabdārthanaikaṭyalakṣaṇaḥ / nikaṭam hy atyantam ātmanaḥ svarūpaṃ brahma na tv asvarūpaṃ upādhyantarāviṣṭam indravaruṇādirūpaṃ / tasmād daśamas tvam aśītyādivākyaavat tat tvam asy ādivākyaṇām aparokṣajñānanakatvaṃ yuktaṃ iti bhāvaḥ //

[2] evaṃ utpannākhaṇḍākārā cittavṛttīḥ kiṃ karotīti tadāha – sā tv iti / vṛtter jaḍatvād ajñānabādhanaśambhavam āśaṅkya tāṃ viśiṇaṣṭi – citpratibimbasa-hitā saṭīti / pratyakcivitivyāpteti yāvat / brahmaṇo viśayīkaraṇam nāma vṛttes tadābhīmukhyam / brahmaśabdasya kāryabrahmaviśayatvaṃ vyāvartayati – param iti / tasya prameyatvaṃ āha – ajñātam iti / tasya tātasthyaṃ vārayati – pratyagabhinnam iti / ajñānam eva bādhata ity evakāreṇa brahmaṇaḥ prakāśyatvaṃ vyāvartyate / evaṃ vidhayā cittavṛtīyā saṃsāramūlājñāne bādhite saty apy asyā vṛtter bādhakābhāvān mokṣo ‘pi saprapaṇcaḥ syād ity ata āha – tadeti / vṛtter bādhakābhāve ‘pi dagdhendhanānalavat svayam eva vinaśyati tato na saprapaṇco mokṣa ity artha / tarhi vṛttipratibimbitasya pratyakcāitanyasya kā gatiḥ iti tāṃ āha – tatreti / tatra pratibimbitaṃ caitanyam apy akhaṇḍacittavṛtter bādhitatvāt pratyagabhinna parabrahmamātraṃ bhavātīty anvayaḥ / svopādhivilaye upahitasya svasvarūpamātrāvasthāne drṣṭānto darpaṇābhāva iti / upādhyānugāmino nirupādhiprakāśanāśāmarthyē drṣṭāntam

³⁹⁴ *vyutthāna kāl kā anubhav*: or ‘the experience at the time of arising [from that state],’ ‘the experience of wakefulness.’

³⁹⁵ BS.4.1.3.

³⁹⁶ BṛhUp.3.4.1.

āha — yathā dīpaprabheti / yad vā paricchinna prakāśasyāpa-
ricchinna nāvabhāsane dr̥ṣṭānto yathā dīpeti //28//

[Translation]

[1] In this way, according to such reasoning as ‘[The *Upaniṣads*], however, acknowledge and make apprehend [Brahman] as the Self,’³⁹⁷ having examined in detail³⁹⁸ the meaning of the sentence consisting of the instruction [‘You are that’]³⁹⁹ [proclaiming that] the living being is the Self in the form of Brahman — which is pure, awakened, released, true awareness, infinite, bliss, and fullness — he [i.e., Sadānanda Sarasvatī] proceeds now to explain the meaning of the sentence manifesting the cognition⁴⁰⁰ of one’s own nature [thus] conceived.⁴⁰¹ [This is what the author means] by [the words] starting with ‘hence.’ The word ‘hence’ means immediately after⁴⁰² examining⁴⁰³ the meaning of the sentence consisting of the instruction [‘You are that’]. Only after⁴⁰⁴ the preceptor has instructed [him] with the method starting with adscription,⁴⁰⁵ in the [mind of] the entitled student who is devoid of the mental faults⁴⁰⁶ called ‘incapability to conceive and inadequate conception’,⁴⁰⁷ [and] who is endowed with such characteristic marks⁴⁰⁸ proclaimed in the portions [of the scriptures:] ‘One who has studied the Vedas’ according to the established injunctions; [in that student’s mind] arises the episode of internal organ that is shaped after the form of the unfragmented: ‘I am Brahman,’ one who is endowed with such qualities as eternity, purity, awareness,⁴⁰⁹ and so on. The meaning is that [this mental event ‘I am Brahman’] consists of direct presentation,⁴¹⁰ it is not shaped after [the form of] a remote entity.⁴¹¹ And it should not be argued that since the intrinsic nature⁴¹² of words is to yield indirect cognitions,⁴¹³ words do not produce immediate mental events.⁴¹⁴ Since the *śruti* [passage:] ‘That Brahman

³⁹⁷ BS.4.1.3.

³⁹⁸ *saprapaṇca*: lit., ‘with diffuseness,’ ‘copiously,’ ‘abundantly,’ ‘in detail.’

³⁹⁹ *upadeśavākya* (KD): ‘sentence or utterance consisting of the instruction [‘You are that’].’

⁴⁰⁰ *anubhavābhāsivākya* or ‘the meaning of the sentence shining as/in cognition of [...]’

⁴⁰¹ *avagata*: from *ava*√*gam* ‘to go near’ ‘to go down,’ lit., ‘reached,’ ‘obtained,’ ‘understood.’

⁴⁰² *ānantaryam athaśabdārtha*: lit., ‘the meaning of the word *atha* is immediate succession,’ also ‘without interruption.’

⁴⁰³ *nirūpaṇa*: lit., ‘examination, investigation; description.’

⁴⁰⁴ *samanantaram eva*: lit., ‘only immediately after.’

⁴⁰⁵ *adyāropādīnāyena*; the subsequent phase of this method is *apavāda* ‘retraction.’

⁴⁰⁶ *cittadoṣarahita*

⁴⁰⁷ *asambhāvanāvīparitabhāvanākhyā*

⁴⁰⁸ *lakṣaṇa*

⁴⁰⁹ *buddhatva*

⁴¹⁰ *sākṣātkārarūpā*: also, ‘consists of witnessing.’

⁴¹¹ *parokṣārthākāritā*

⁴¹² *svārūpa*: lit., ‘own, intrinsic form or nature,’ ‘the essence.’

⁴¹³ *parokṣajñānajanakatva*

⁴¹⁴ *aparokṣā cittavṛtti*. The main syntactic structure of this sentence is the following: *na ca [...] iti vācyaṃ* / ‘And it should not be said that [...]’

which is direct and immediate, which is the Self inside of all⁴¹⁵ [proclaims that] the intrinsic nature - the Self in the form of Brahman - is always immediate,⁴¹⁶ there is no evidence that, with regard to that, words [only] yield indirect cognition. Furthermore, since it is seen that one [and the same] mind⁴¹⁷ is the cause⁴¹⁸ of remembrance of past entities and the cause of immediate cognitions the content of which is pleasure and so on, the character of indirectness and immediacy of cognition is not bound to the instrument, but bound to the entity [being cognised].⁴¹⁹ But if in that case the nature [of cognition]⁴²⁰ is due to the difference in the cooperating factor⁴²¹ [i.e. the entity being cognised], then in this case also [i.e., in the case of the cognition 'I am Brahman'] the difference is in the cooperating factor. The proximity of the referent of word defines the attainment from words⁴²² [i.e. verbal cognition].⁴²³ Brahman, the intrinsic nature, is extremely near to the Self; [it] is not what is not the intrinsic nature,⁴²⁴ having assumed the qualifying adjuncts consisting of such [deities] as Indra and Varuṇa. Therefore, it is appropriate [to think that] such sentences as 'You are that' yield immediate cognitions, just as such other sentences as 'You are the tenth' and so on do.⁴²⁵ This is the idea.

[2] What does the mental episode in the form of the unfragmented which has been produced in this way do? He explains that [saying]: 'Furthermore, this [mental event...].' Having suspected the impossibility of removing the ignorance due to the insentient character of [this mental] episode, he describes⁴²⁶ it [saying:] '[this mental event] is accompanied by the reflecting image of awareness.' To be precise:⁴²⁷ [this mental episode] is pervaded by the

⁴¹⁵ BrhUp.3.4.1.

⁴¹⁶ *nityāparokṣaṃ brahmātmavārūpaṃ*

⁴¹⁷ *ekasya eva manasaḥ*

⁴¹⁸ *hetutva*

⁴¹⁹ *parokṣatvāparokṣatve na karaṇanibandhane kintu arthanibandhane [...]*. The same analysis appears also in VP.9.14.

⁴²⁰ *tathābhāva*: lit., 'the state of being such;' what is meant here is the indirect (*parokṣa*) and immediate (*aparokṣa*) nature of cognitions.

⁴²¹ *sahakārin*: lit., 'assisting, auxiliating, cooperating; assisting, auxiliary, or cooperating factor.'

⁴²² *śabdapratipattuḥ*

⁴²³ In the context of the compound *śabdārthanaikaṭṭhalakṣaṇa* it seems quite relevant to render *artha* as 'referent' and not just as 'meaning'. Thus, when the referent of a given word is a past or a remote entity, the cognition derived from it will be indirect. When, however, the referent of a given word is an immediate or directly present entity, the cognition derived from it will bear the character of the immediate.

⁴²⁴ *asvarūpa*

⁴²⁵ This is the *Vivaraṇa* account.

⁴²⁶ *tām viśiṣṭi*: *viśiṣṭi* 'to distinguish, make distinct, specify, define, describe.'

⁴²⁷ *iti yāvat*: lit., 'just this much [is meant].' In the Sanskrit commentarial style, the phrase *iti yāvat* is used after paraphrasing the root-text (*mūla*) with the aim of expressing its content more precisely "either by substituting a more specific term for a wider one, or by reducing a picturesque expression to plain language" (Tubb & Boose 2007: 25). In the present context, the author of VMR glosses Sadānanda's *sahitā satī* with *pratyakcivitvyāpti*.

consciousness in the form of the inner [Self]. Directing the mental event toward that [Brahman] is called making of Brahman the object [of cognition].⁴²⁸ [With the word] ‘supreme’ he sets aside [the idea] that the object of the word ‘Brahman’ is the Brahman that is produced.⁴²⁹ [With the word] ‘unknown’ he means that it [i.e., Brahman] is to be known.⁴³⁰ [With the locution] ‘nondifferent from the inner [Self]’ he denies its aloofness. The word ‘alone’ [occurring in the locution] ‘removes that ignorance alone,’ excludes [the idea that] Brahman is to be revealed.⁴³¹ Thus, if the root-ignorance of transmigratory existence⁴³² is removed by such kind of mental episode, and since this [mental] event lacks a removing agent,⁴³³ release would occur accompanied by the developments [of ignorance].⁴³⁴ Hence he says ‘Then [just as a woven piece of cloth burns when the threads which are the [material] cause of a woven piece of cloth burn...].’ The meaning is that just as the fire extinguishes itself when the fuel is burnt out; similarly, since [this mental] episode lacks a removing agent,⁴³⁵ [it] extinguishes itself. Therefore, release does not take place accompanied by the developments [of ignorance]. In that case, what happens⁴³⁶ to [pure] consciousness in the form of the inner [Self] that is reflected in [that mental] event? [In order to explain] that, he says: ‘[consciousness which is reflected] there...’ Since that mental episode in the form of the unfragmented is removed, [pure] consciousness that has been reflected there becomes supreme Brahman as such – nondifferent from the inner [Self]. This is the implication.⁴³⁷ The example ‘in the absence of a mirror [...]’ [means] when what has been put close together⁴³⁸ abides in its own very nature as such,⁴³⁹ when the dissolution of its own qualifying adjunct takes place.⁴⁴⁰ He gave the example ‘just as the lamplight [...]’ [in order to proclaim] the incapability of what

⁴²⁸ *brahmaṇo viṣayīkaraṇam nāma vṛttes tadābhīmukhyam*: lit., ‘[mental] event’s facing it is called making of Brahman the object.’

⁴²⁹ *kārya*: lit., ‘what is to be done.’

⁴³⁰ *tasya prameyatvam*

⁴³¹ *brahmaṇaḥ prakāśyatvam*

⁴³² *saṃsāramūlājñāna*: or ‘the ignorance which is the root of the transmigratory existence.’

⁴³³ *bādhakābhāva*

⁴³⁴ *saprapaṇca*. This is an undesired conclusion.

⁴³⁵ *bādhaka*: this term is derived from the root $\sqrt{bād}$, ‘to oppress,’ ‘to drive away,’ ‘to repel,’ ‘to remove;’ this root is the basis for several important terms such as *bādha*, *bādhātva*, *bādhaka*, *bādhita*, *bādhitva*, *abādhita*, *abādhitva*. In this context, I will render the term *bādhaka*, lit., ‘repelling, removing, refuting’ or ‘one who repels, removes, refutes’ as ‘removing agent.’ A synonym term is *nivartaka*, derived from the root $\text{ni}\sqrt{\text{vrt}}$ ‘to turn back or away,’ ‘to be stopped,’ ‘to decline,’ ‘to cease.’ This is also the basis of such terms as *nivṛtti* or *nivārita* which are not uncommon in this context.

⁴³⁶ *gati*: ($\sqrt{\text{gam}}$) lit., ‘going,’ ‘moving,’ ‘path,’ ‘course,’ ‘condition.’ The literal rendering of this sentence would be ‘What is the course of [pure] consciousness [...]?’

⁴³⁷ *anvaya*

⁴³⁸ *upahita*: lit., ‘what has been put close.’

⁴³⁹ *svasvarūpamātrāvasthāna*

⁴⁴⁰ *svopādhivilaya*

is accompanied by a qualifying adjunct to reveal what is deprived of a qualifying adjunct; or else, the example ‘just as a lamp [...]’ is for showing that an unlimited [light] cannot be manifested⁴⁴¹ by a delimited light [of consciousness].

(d) Fragment 4: *Subodhinī* of Nṛsiṃhāśrama on VS.28

[1] akhaṇḍacaitanyapratipādakasya tat tvam asīti vākyaśya ārthaṃ saprapaṇcam abhidhāyēdānīm yajurvedānubhavavākyaṛtho varṇyata ity āha athādhuneti / gurumukhān navakṛtvas tat tvam asy ādi vākyaśravaṇād dehādyahaṅkāraṅtajaḍapadārthasakaladr̥śyavilakṣaṇapratyagātmanah śuddhena paramātmanā sahaikatvabodhānantaraṃ kaścīd adhikārī labdhāvasaraṃ sarvopādhivinirmuktaṃ saccidānandaikarasam anubhavana jījñāsur ācāryopadiṣṭam ahaṃ brahmāsmīti vākyaṛtham anusmaran svātmānandam anubhavatīty arthaḥ / tatprakāram evāha evam ityādinā / evaṃ saṃkṣepeṇa vakṣyamāṇaprakāreṇādhikāriṇaścittavṛttirudeti sambandhaḥ / kadety apekṣāyām āha ācāryeṇeti / ācāryeṇāviśaye ’saṅge niṣkalacaitanye śaśaśrṅgāyamānāvidyayāhaṅkāradī sarīraṅtamithyāpadārtham adhyāropatadapavādapuraḥsaraṃ tattvampadārthau śodhayitvā tat tvam asīti vākyaena jahadajahallakṣaṇayā viruddhāṃśaparityāgenākhaṇḍārthacaitanye jñāte satīty arthaḥ / kiṃ viśayiṇī cittavṛttir udetīty asattvaśaṅkāṃ nivārayati aham iti / ahaṃ pratyagātmā paraṃ brahmāsmīty anvayaḥ / brahmānityatvaśaṅkāṃ nirākaroti nityeti / śuddhapadenāvidyādidoṣārāhityam / budhpadena svaprakāśasvarūpatvena jāḍyādikam vyavacchidyate / muktapadena sarvopādhirāhityam / satyam ity avināśisvabhāvatvam / paramānandapadena vaiśayikamanuṣyānandādicaturmukhabrahmānandaparyantānām karmajanyatvena sātīśayatvena kṣayīṣṇutvena ca tucchatvāt tebhyo vilakṣaṇaṃ niratīśayānandasvarūpatvaṃ pratipādyate / anantapadena ghaṭādivat paricchedarāhityena deśataḥ kālato vastutaś cāparicchinnavam bodhyate / advayam iti nānātvanīśedhenaikatvaṃ bodhyata ity arthaḥ / nanu yathā dīpaprabhādityamaṇḍalaṃ na vyāpnoti na ca prayojanam asti tathā nityaśuddhasvaprakāśam ātmānaṃ jaḍā cittavṛttiḥ katham viśayīkṛtyodeti kiṃ prayojanam cety āśaṅkyāha sā tv iti / sā cittavṛttir na śuddhabrahmaviśayiṇī kintv ajñānaviśiṣṭapratyagabhinnaparabrahmaviśayiṇī / sā ca caitanyapratibimbasaṃvalitā satī caitanyagatam ajñānaṃ nivartayati / tasyāś caitanyāvarakājñānanivṛttir eva prayojanam ity arthaḥ / nanv adhikāriṇas tat tvam asy ādivākyaśravaṇotpannākhaṇḍacaitanyavṛttyā tadāśritājñāne nivārite ’pi tatkāryasya sakalacarācaraprapaṇcasya pratyakṣatayā bhāsamānatvāt katham advaitasiddhir ity āśaṅkyā kārāṇājñānanāśe tatkāryasakalaprapaṇcanāśād advaitasiddhir ity etat sadṛṣṭāntam āha tadā paṭākāraṇeti / nanv ajñānanāśena tatkāryaprapaṇcasya nāśo ’stu tathāpy akhaṇḍākāravṛtter anivṛtter advaitahānir ity āśaṅkyāha tadantarbhūtetī / akhaṇḍākāravṛtter apy

⁴⁴¹ *anavabhāśana*

ajñānatatkāryāntarbhūtatvāt tannivṛtṭyā tannivṛtter nādvaitahānir ity arthaḥ /
 nanu tathāpy akhaṇḍākāravṛttipratibimbitacaitanyābhāsaśatvāt katham
 advaitasiddhir ity āśaṅkyāha tatra pratibimbitam iti / vṛttinivṛttau tatpratibim-
 bitacaitanyasya bimbāvabhāsanāsamarthatvād vṛtṭyutpādhibādhena tatprati-
 bimbitacaitanyam api caitanyamātratayāvaśiṣyate / darpaṇopādhivigame
 tatpratibimbitamukhābhāsaśya bimbabhūtamukhamātratāvaśeṣavad ity arthaḥ
 / ayam bhāvaḥ / śodhitatattvampadārthasya adhikāriṇas tadviṣṇubhita-
 guruśāstrādibhyas tat tvam asīty upadeśenāhaṃ nityaśuddhamukta-
 satyasvabhāvaparamānandānantādvayākhaṇḍabrahmāsmīti cittavṛttir udayam
 āśādayati / tadānīm eva tasyābhivyaktākhaṇḍacaitanyabalena
 tattvapariṇīḍitājñānanāśo bhavati / tadānīm tatkāryasya sarvasya nāśād ab-
 hivyaktir api svayam eva katakarajovad dārumathanajanitāgnivad udarastha-
 duṣṭajalaśāntyarthapītataptajalavac ca naṣṭā bhavati / tadānīm tadgatābhāso
 'pi svopādhibhūtacittavṛttināśāt svaprakāśātmāvabhāsanāsamarthatayā
 darpaṇavigame tadupādhikasya svādhiṣṭhānamukhamātratvavad ad-
 hiṣṭhānamātro bhavatīti vedāntasiddhāntarahasyam iti / atra tasyānubhavaḥ /
 lokāś ca bhānti parame mayi mohajanyāḥ svapnendrajālamarunīrasamā
 vicitrāḥ / vyutthānakāla iha na syur alam viśuddhapratyak-
 sukhābdhiparamāmṛtacittavṛttau // mattaḥ paraṃ na khalu viśvam athāpi bhāti
 madhye ca pūrvam aparaṃ naraśṛṅgatulyam / māyotthaśāstragu-
 ruvākyasamutthabodhabhānuprabhāvilasite kva gataṃ na jāne // niratiśaya-
 sukhābdhisvaprakāśe pare 'smin katham idam avivekāḍ utthitaṃ srakphaṇīva
 / kva nu gataṃ adhunā taddeśiko vā śrutir vā paramavimalabodhe 'bhyutthite
 'haṃ na jāne' iti // tad etat sarvaṃ manasi nidhāyopasaṃharati pratyagabhin-
 neti //28//

[Translation]

Having explained in detail⁴⁴² the meaning of the sentence *tat tvam asī*⁴⁴³ which declares⁴⁴⁴ the unfragmented consciousness,⁴⁴⁵ now will be described the meaning of the *Yajurveda* sentence consisting in [its] cognition.⁴⁴⁶ Thus he

⁴⁴² *saprapaṇca*: lit., 'with diffuseness,' 'copiously,' 'abundantly,' 'in detail.'

⁴⁴³ ChUp.6.8-16.

⁴⁴⁴ *pratipādaka* (from *prati*√*pad*, 'to go towards', 'to approach', 'to attain', 'to understand', 'to affirm'): lit., 'granting, establishing, accomplishing, bestowing, explaining, avowing, declaring.'

⁴⁴⁵ *akhaṇḍacaitanya*

⁴⁴⁶ *yajurvedābubhavavākya*: lit., 'a *Yajurveda* sentence consisting in a cognition'. The sentence which is meant here is *ahaṃ brahmāsmi* 'I am Brahman', which occurs in BrhUp.1.4.10. Since *Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* is the concluding section of the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* of the *Suklayajurveda*, this sentence is called here a *Yajurveda* sentence.

[i.e., Sadānanda Sarasvatī] says: ‘Hence now’.⁴⁴⁷ Immediately after awakening⁴⁴⁸ to the oneness with the highest Self⁴⁴⁹ by purifying the inner Self that is distinct from all that is to be seen⁴⁵⁰ – the [range of] insentient entities beginning with the [gross] body and ending with the sense of agency – on account of hearing the sentence *tat tvam asi* that is produced anew⁴⁵¹ from the mouth of the teacher, a certain entitled student⁴⁵² who has attained the propitious opportunity⁴⁵³ of being released from all the qualifying adjuncts by cognising the one nectar of being, consciousness, and bliss;⁴⁵⁴ [that student] who aspires after knowing [Brahman] recalls⁴⁵⁵ the meaning of the sentence that has been instructed by the preceptor⁴⁵⁶ and cognizes the bliss of his own Self: ‘I am Brahman.’⁴⁵⁷ This is the meaning. [In order to proclaim that this is to be attained] in that manner alone, he says ‘in this way’ and so on. Hence, the relation is that ‘in the entitled student arises that mental episode [...]’ in the manner that is about to be described briefly.⁴⁵⁸ [To the question:] ‘When is it expected?’ He says ‘[when the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* has been refined] by the preceptor.’ When the meaning of the words *tat* and *tvam* has been refined⁴⁵⁹ by the preceptor by the adscription of false entities⁴⁶⁰ beginning with the sense of agency and ending with the [gross] body – appearing, by means of nescience, like the horn of a rabbit in the undivided, unassociated, and contentless awareness⁴⁶¹ – and by their [subsequent] retraction;⁴⁶² when the awareness of the unfragmented meaning⁴⁶³ is known through the sentence

⁴⁴⁷ *āha*: (PF) √*ah*, ‘to say’; lit., ‘he said.’ The sense may be, however, that of an action taking place in the present. It can be rendered then as ‘he says’. The third person singular refers to Sadānanda Sarasvatī who begins his VS.28 with the words *athādhunā* ‘Hence now’.

⁴⁴⁸ *bodha*: √*budh*, ‘to awake’, ‘to understand’

⁴⁴⁹ *paramātmāṇā saha*

⁴⁵⁰ *sakaladṛśyavilakṣaṇa*

⁴⁵¹ *navakṛtvas*. The ablative case of *gurumukhāt* seems to suggest that the sentence ‘You are that’ is made anew from the mouth of the teacher; that is, it is uttered by the teacher.

⁴⁵² *kaścid adkikārin*: lit., ‘a certain one who possesses the qualification or entitlement (*ad-hikāra*)’.

⁴⁵³ *labdhāvasara*

⁴⁵⁴ *saccidānandaikarasam anubhavana* could also be translated with the verb ‘to experience’ as ‘by experiencing the one nectar of being, consciousness, and bliss.’

⁴⁵⁵ *anusmaran* is a present participle derived from *anu√smṛ* ‘to remember, to recollect, to recall.’

⁴⁵⁶ The sentence that is meant here is *tat tvam asi*.

⁴⁵⁷ *svātmānandam anubhavati*: (TP) ‘He experiences the bliss of his own Self;’ or eventually (KD) ‘He experiences the bliss that is his own Self.’

⁴⁵⁸ *saṃkṣepeṇa vakṣyamāṇaprakāreṇa*

⁴⁵⁹ *śodhayitvā*: lit., ‘having purified, refined or clarified.’

⁴⁶⁰ *mithyāpadārthādhyāropa*

⁴⁶¹ *aviśaye asaṅge niṣkalacaitanye*

⁴⁶² *tadapavāda*

⁴⁶³ *akhaṇḍārthacaitanya*: I take this compound to be a TP and therefore translate it as ‘awareness of the unfragmented meaning.’ In this context, the word *artha* can denote both (a) the unfragmented meaning of the sentence *tat tvam asi* and (b) the unfragmented reality, Brahman, referred to.

tat tvam asi by abandoning the mutually exclusive portion⁴⁶⁴ by means of the indication in which the primary meaning is [partially] abandoned and [partially] retained.⁴⁶⁵ This is the meaning. [Now,] ‘What is the object of this mental event that arises?’⁴⁶⁶ He dispels the doubt concerning [its] nonexistence⁴⁶⁷ [saying:] ‘I [am Brahman...].’ The implication is [the assertion:] ‘I am the inner Self, the supreme Brahman’. With the [word] ‘eternal’ he removes the doubt concerning Brahman being non-eternal. With the word ‘pure’ he leaves aside the fault of ignorance and so on. With the word ‘awakened’, which means that the intrinsic nature is self-revealing,⁴⁶⁸ insentience and so on is excluded. With the word ‘released’ he leaves aside all the qualifying adjuncts. [With the word] ‘true’ [he proclaims] that [its] own existence is imperishable.⁴⁶⁹ By the word ‘supreme bliss’ is meant the intrinsic nature consisting in unsurpassable bliss,⁴⁷⁰ which has a different character from those – beginning with human bliss and ending with the bliss of the four-faced Brahmā – which are related to objects. Since they are perishable, have a superior, and are produced from action (*karma*), they are vain.⁴⁷¹ By the word ‘infinite’ lack of delimitation by space, time, and concrete existence⁴⁷² should be understood; since it is deprived of such delimitations⁴⁷³ as pot-ness and so on. [By the word] ‘nondual’ oneness should be understood; since it denies multiplicity.⁴⁷⁴ This is the meaning. [First objection:] Now, just as the light of a lamp does not pervade the disc of the sun and is not employed⁴⁷⁵ [in order to reveal it]; similarly, how can an insentient mental event⁴⁷⁶ arise making the Self that is eternal, pure, and self-revealing [its] object? What is the use? Having wondered⁴⁷⁷ in this way, he says: ‘that [mental episode...].’ That mental event does not have pure Brahman for [its] object; rather, it has for [its] object the su-

⁴⁶⁴ *viruddhāśāparityagena*

⁴⁶⁵ *jahadajahallakṣaṇāparityagena*

⁴⁶⁶ *kiṃ viṣayiṇī cittavṛttir udeṭi*: lit., ‘Having what as [its] object does this mental event arise?’

⁴⁶⁷ *asattvaśaṅkāṃ nivārayati*: *ni√vr* (caus.) lit., ‘to hold back, to stop, to withhold;’ lit., ‘He withholds the doubt about [its] nonexistence.’

⁴⁶⁸ *svaprakāśasvarūpatva*

⁴⁶⁹ *avināśīsvabhāvatva*

⁴⁷⁰ *niratiśayānandasvarūpatvaṃ*

⁴⁷¹ *tucchatvāt*

⁴⁷² *vastutaḥ*

⁴⁷³ *pariccheda*

⁴⁷⁴ *nānātvaniṣedhena*

⁴⁷⁵ *prayojana*

⁴⁷⁶ *jadā cittavṛtti*

⁴⁷⁷ The root *√śaṅk* ‘to doubt, to hesitate, to ponder over’ denotes a mental state of uncertainty. I will render it here as ‘to wonder’ since the mental uncertainty is expressed here through a question.

preme Brahman that is nondifferent from the inner Self and qualified by ignorance.⁴⁷⁸ Furthermore, that [mental episode] is mixed with⁴⁷⁹ the reflecting image of consciousness⁴⁸⁰ and causes the ignorance concerning [unfragmented] consciousness to cease.⁴⁸¹ Its use⁴⁸² is to bring the ignorance that conceals the [unfragmented] consciousness⁴⁸³ to an end.⁴⁸⁴ This is the meaning. [Second objection:] However, even when the ignorance regarding that [Brahman]⁴⁸⁵ has been restrained⁴⁸⁶ by that [mental] episode in the form of unfragmented consciousness which has been produced for the entitled student from hearing such sentence as *tat tvam asi* and so on, how is the accomplishment of nonduality possible,⁴⁸⁷ given that the entire world of animate as well as inanimate beings – an effect of that [ignorance]⁴⁸⁸ – is being manifested through perception?⁴⁸⁹ Having wondered in this way, he explains with an example ‘[just as a woven piece of cloth burns when the threads that are] the [material] cause [of a woven piece of cloth burn]’ that when the ignorance that is the [material] cause⁴⁹⁰ [of the entire world] perishes, nonduality is accomplished due to the destruction of the entire world – an effect of that [ignorance]. [Third objection:] Now, [just as] with the destruction of ignorance [the entire] world – an effect of that [ignorance] – would perish; similarly, nonduality would be harmed⁴⁹¹ if [that mental] episode that is shaped after the form of the unfragmented would not cease.⁴⁹² Having raised this doubt, he says: ‘[that mental episode which is] contained in that⁴⁹³ [world of ignorance]’. Since the mental event that is shaped after the form of the unfragmented is also contained in the [world of] ignorance and its effect,⁴⁹⁴ that [mental event] ceases with the ces-

⁴⁷⁸ *sā cittavṛttir na śuddhabrahmaviśayiṇī kintv ajñānaviśiṣṭapratyagabhinna-parabrahma-viśayiṇī.*

⁴⁷⁹ *saṃvalitā: sam√val*, ‘to be attached to, to be mixed, connected, or associated with.’

⁴⁸⁰ *caitanya-pratibimbasaṃvalitā*

⁴⁸¹ *caitanyagatam ajñānam nivartayati; ni√vrt* (caus.), ‘to cause or make to cease, to bring to an end.’

⁴⁸² *prayojana (pra√yuj)*, lit., ‘use, application, purpose, employment, function.’

⁴⁸³ *caitanyāvarakāñjāna: caitanya-āvaraka-āñjāna:* lit., ‘ignorance concealing [pure] consciousness.’ The term *āvaraka* ‘concealing’ or ‘one who conceals’ is etymologically related to the term *āvaraṇa* ‘concealing,’ which is a major term in later Advaita account of nescience (*avidyā*). Both terms are derived from the root *ā√vr* ‘to hide,’ ‘to conceal,’ ‘to cover.’

⁴⁸⁴ *nivṛtti*

⁴⁸⁵ *tadāśritāñjāna:* lit., ‘ignorance which is connected (or related) to that [Brahman].’

⁴⁸⁶ *nivārita*

⁴⁸⁷ *katham advaitasiddhi:* ‘How is nonduality accomplished [...]?’

⁴⁸⁸ *tatkāryasya sakalacarācaraprapaṇcasya*

⁴⁸⁹ *pratyakṣatayā bhāsamānatvāt*

⁴⁹⁰ *kāraṇāñjāna* (KD): lit., ‘ignorance in the form of a cause,’ ‘ignorance which is a cause’ of the entire world conceived as its effect or product (*tatkārya*).

⁴⁹¹ *advaitahāni* (TP): lit., ‘loss or privation of nonduality’; from the root *√han*, ‘to strike, hit, or wound.’

⁴⁹² *anivṛtti*

⁴⁹³ *tadantarbhūta*

⁴⁹⁴ *ajñānatatkārya:* lit., ‘ignorance and the effect or product of that’ ignorance (*ajñāna*).

sation of that [ignorance]. Thus, nonduality is not harmed. This is the meaning. [Fourth objection:] But even so, since the reflecting light of awareness⁴⁹⁵ that is reflected in that [mental] episode which is shaped after the form of the unfragmented is endowed with the property of existence,⁴⁹⁶ how can nonduality be accomplished? Having raised this doubt he says: '[consciousness which is] reflected there'. The underlying idea is that since both occurrence and cessation⁴⁹⁷ of consciousness that is reflected there [i.e., in the mental event shaped after the unfragmented] are incapable of manifesting the original entity,⁴⁹⁸ by negating [its] qualifying adjunct in the form of a [mental] episode,⁴⁹⁹ that very consciousness which was reflected in that [mental event] is left as consciousness as such; just as when the qualifying adjunct in the form of the mirror⁵⁰⁰ ceases to exist, the image of the face⁵⁰¹ reflected in that [mirror] is left as the face as such, the original entity.⁵⁰² Since the refined meaning of the word *tat* and *tvam* has been unfolded by the teacher, scripture and so on⁵⁰³ by means of the instruction *tat tvam asi*, the mental event 'I am Brahman, eternal, pure, awakened, released, one whose own existence is true, supreme bliss, infinite, and nondual' commences to arise⁵⁰⁴ in the entitled student. Then only, in virtue of the unfragmented consciousness that has been displayed,⁵⁰⁵ the ignorance that has covered reality⁵⁰⁶ is destroyed. Then, due to the destruction of the entire world – an effect of that [root-ignorance] – that display⁵⁰⁷ itself also perishes; just like the powder of the clearing nut,⁵⁰⁸ the fire produced by

⁴⁹⁵ *caitanyaābhāsa*

⁴⁹⁶ *satva* (*sat-tva*): lit., 'having the property of being', 'existence.'

⁴⁹⁷ *vyrttinivṛttau*

⁴⁹⁸ *bimbābhāsanāsamarthatvāt*

⁴⁹⁹ *vyṛtyupādhi*: (KD), lit., 'a qualifying adjunct in the form of (or that consists of) a [mental] episode.'

⁵⁰⁰ *darpaṇopādhi*

⁵⁰¹ *mukhābhāsa*

⁵⁰² *bimbabhūta*: 'original item, original entity.'

⁵⁰³ *tadvijṛmbhitaguruśāstrādi*: *vi\jṛmbh*, 'to yawn, unfold,' 'to become displayed.'

⁵⁰⁴ *cittavyṛttir udayam āśādayati*: *ā\śad*, 'to sit down or near', 'to meet', 'to approach', 'to commence', 'to undertake'; lit., 'the mental episode meets the arising.'

⁵⁰⁵ *abhivyaktākhaṇḍacaitanyabalena*. In this context, I am rendering the term *abhivyakta* as 'displayed.' See below.

⁵⁰⁶ *tattvapariṇīṭāñjāna* (*tattva-pariṇīṭa-ajñāna*): *pari\pīḍ*, 'to press', 'to squeeze', 'to cover up'. This description must be referring to the root-ignorance (*mūlāvidyā*) and its *āvaraṇaśakti*.

⁵⁰⁷ *abhivyakti*: This noun is derived from *abhi-vy\añj* 'to manifest, to reveal.' It is generally well translated as 'manifestation, revelation.' In the present context, it denotes the mental event 'I am Brahman' which is believed to *display* the unfragmented consciousness or reality. In this context, I will avoid rendering this term as 'manifestation' or 'revelation,' which I will reserve for either *avabhāsa* or *prakāśa*. The reason behind this practice is straightforward: as it becomes clear in the following lines, the author holds that it is impossible to reveal or manifest (*avabhāsa*) the self-revealing Self (*svaprakāśātman*), but it is possible to display it. In other words, what is self-revealing (Brahman, the Self) cannot become the direct object of the action denoted by the verb *pra\kās* or *ava\bhās*, but it can be the direct object of the verb *abhi-vy\añj*. Hence, rendering *abhivyakti* as 'manifestation' would be misleading in this context, not to say contradictory, if *avabhāsa* is rendered as 'manifestation.'

⁵⁰⁸ For an explanation of this analogy, see Jacob (1983: 29; II vol.), under *jalakatakareṇunyāya*.

the rubbing of wood, or the hot water that is drunk with the purpose of extinguishing the evil liquids abiding in the belly.⁵⁰⁹ Then, since that mental event – its qualifying adjunct⁵¹⁰ – vanishes, [and] since manifesting the self-revealing Self is impossible,⁵¹¹ the reflecting light [of awareness] contained in that [mental episode] becomes the abode⁵¹² as such; just as [the reflecting image of a face] put close to [the mirror]⁵¹³ becomes the face as such, its own abode, when that mirror is gone. This is the secret of the accomplishment of Vedānta.⁵¹⁴ Here is its cognition:⁵¹⁵ “The wonderfully diverse worlds, born from delusion, consisting of the dream-like net of Indra extending like a dry desert, appear in me, the supreme [Self]. They cannot occur here, at the time of awakening, in the presence of the mental event consisting of the supreme nectar of immortality – the ocean of bliss of the pure inner Self. Truly, everything is not distinct from me. Thus, in the beginning, middle, and end, it appears like a horn of a man [i.e., as my own delusion]. Where is [everything] when the light of the sun of awakening arisen by the teacher’s and scripture’s sayings produced by *māyā* shines forth: ‘I am not born’? How does [all] this arise, from non-discernment, on the supreme, self-luminous ocean of unsurpassed bliss like a serpent on a garland of flowers? Still, where are the scriptures or the one that is familiar with them when the supreme and stainless awakening arises: ‘I am not born’? Having fixed that in his mind, he concludes: ‘All this [world] is nondifferent from the inner Self.’”

⁵⁰⁹ For a presentation of different analogies and extended discussion on the self-destructibility of this *cittavṛtti* see Appayya’s SLS.3.7.

⁵¹⁰ *svopādhibhūta*. The mental event meant here is, of course, the cognition ‘I am Brahman.’ The author asserts that this cognition is the qualifying adjunct (*upādhi*) of pure awareness (*caitanya*).

⁵¹¹ *svaprakāśātmānavabhāsanāsamarthatayā*: lit., ‘due to the incapability of manifesting, illuminating, or revealing the self-revealing Self.’

⁵¹² *adhiṣṭhāna*

⁵¹³ *tadupādhi*

⁵¹⁴ *vedāntasiddhāntarahasya*: also ‘the secret of the attainment of Vedānta.’

⁵¹⁵ *anubhava*: also ‘first-person cognition,’ ‘experience.’

Appendix 3: Glossary with Sanskrit and English terms in the writings of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

(a) Sanskrit terms

aparā vidyā: “empirical truth” which “is not absolutely untrue. It is truth seen from the standpoint of the empirical consciousness” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 519);

aparokṣa: “non-sensuous immediate knowledge” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 138); “Sense knowledge is not the only kind of immediate knowledge. As distinct from sense knowledge or *pratyakṣa* (literally presented to a sense), the Hindu thinkers use the term *aparokṣa* for the non-sensuous immediate knowledge” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 138);

anekārthatām: “suggestive of many interpretations” as describing a character of religious experiences (Radhakrishnan 1927: 17);

anubhava: “integral experience” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 510); “intuitional consciousness” where “the distinctions of subject and object are superseded and the truth of the supreme self realised,” which is “the ineffable experience beyond thought and speech,” which “transforms our whole life and yields the certainty of a divine presence” and is regarded as “the state of consciousness which is induced when the individual strips himself of all finite conditions, including intelligence” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 510-511); “direct experience” and “innermost experience” on which “whatever we know and believe of the supersensual world depends” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 512); “intuition” as contrasted with *adhyāsa* or intellect: “Anubhava and *adhyāsa*, intuition and intellect, point to a fissure between the infinite reality and the finite mind” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 513); “intuition” and “intuitional experience” as contrasted with intellect (*tarka*) and scripture (*śruti*), (Radhakrishnan 1923: 514); “vital spiritual experience” which can be “communicated only through the language of imagination, and *śruti* is the written code embodying it” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 517); “experience of reality” as core defining feature of religion (Radhakrishnan 1927: 15); “interior awareness” as mental capability to experience reality in which the sphere of logical thought is exceeded (Radhakrishnan 1960: 108); “integral experience as the highest kind of apprehension” as a position held by Śaṅkara: “Śaṅkara, for example, regards *anubhava* or integral experience as the highest kind of apprehension. While it may not be clear and

distinct, it is sure and vivid” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 128); “The *anubhava* is beyond all manifestation and is complete in itself” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 103); and *perception*: “Psychologically it is of the nature of perception, since it is direct awareness of reality; only the latter is not of the nature of an existent in space and time. Anubhava is not consciousness of this or that thing, but it is to know and see in oneself the being of all beings, the Ground and the Abyss. As direct experience or anubhava, in the Nyāya sense of the word, is the sole means of knowledge of the external world, anubhava of non-dual existence is the innermost experience on which whatever we know and believe of the supersensual world depends” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 511-512); and *immediacy*: “Anubhava is not the immediacy of an uninterpreted sensation, where the existence and the content of what is apprehended are not separated. It has kinship with artistic insight rather than animal perception. It is immediacy which is higher and not lower than mediate reflective knowledge” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 513);

anumāna: “inference” as allegedly equated by Śaṅkara with *smṛti* (Radhakrishnan 1932: 90);

ātma-darśana: “self-knowledge” as “the supreme end to which *śraddha* or faith, *upāsana* or worship, and practices of yoga are treated as means” and “which is at once a union with the one transcendental Being beyond all the worlds and a union with all being in the world” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 132); “vision of the Self” arrived at by means of contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) preceded by reflection (*manana*) and hearing (*śravaṇa*) (Radhakrishnan 1960: 116);

ātma-jñāna: “self-knowledge” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 73);

avidyā: “nescience” as an explanation advanced by some in order to explain the appearance of the multiple universe (Radhakrishnan 1932: 119); “the fall or the original sin” as the assertion that the Self is something other than the true reality of God” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 111);

bodhi: “enlightenment” as emphasized by Buddha (Radhakrishnan 1932: 128);

brahmānubhava: as a cognitive “state” which “enlarge our knowledge of reality, as the gift of sight would enlarge that of a race of blind men” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 504);

brahma-jijñāsā: as a kind of “philosophy;” “Philosophy as *brahma-jijñāsā* is a constant effort of reflection” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 117);

brahma-sākṣātkāra: “God-vision” as having three preparatory stages: hearing, reflection, and contemplation (Radhakrishnan 1953: 133);

brahma-svarūpa-sākṣātkāra: “the realization of the Supreme [which] is the goal of human existence” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 108) conceptualized as “a change of being, a rebornness,” in which “the sphere of logical thought is exceeded by that of the mind’s possible experience of reality, *anubhava* or interior awareness. It is an experience which is a blend of wonder, ecstasy and

awe at what is too great to be realised by intellect. It is none of these but something beyond them all and has an element of quite inexpressible strangeness” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 108);

darśana: “insight into the nature of reality” as defining religion (Radhakrishnan 1927: 15); “For the Hindus a system of philosophy is an insight, a darśana. It is the vision of truth and not a matter of logical argument and proof. They believe that the mind can be freed by gradual training from the influences of speculative intellect as well as past impressions, and that it can unite itself with the object whose nature is then fully manifested” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 127-128);

dr̥ṣṭi: “spiritual intuition [...] or vision” as the source of the truth of the *ṛṣis* which are recorded in the Vedas (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89).

jñāna: as an unfortunate term for designating absolute knowledge due to its “empirical associations.” “Thought expires in experience. Knowledge is lifted up into wisdom when it knows itself as identical with the known, where only the Ātman as eternal knowledge (*nityajñāna*) shines. This absolute knowledge is at the same time knowledge of the absolute. The word ‘jñāna’ is rather unfortunate on account of its empirical associations. Integral experience or *anubhava*, brings out the sense better” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 510)

manas: “sense-mind” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 95);

nirākāra: “without form” as Śaṅkara’s attempt “to express the nature of the ultimate being in negative terms” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 101);

nirguṇa: “without qualities” as Śaṅkara’s attempt “to express the nature of the ultimate being in negative terms” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 101);

nirupādhika: “without limitations” as Śaṅkara’s attempt “to express the nature of the ultimate being in negative terms” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 101);

nirviśeṣa: “without particularity” as Śaṅkara’s attempt “to express the nature of the ultimate being in negative terms” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 101);

nityajñāna: “eternal knowledge” as shining of the self (*ātman*) when knowledge knows itself as identical with the known; or “absolute knowledge” which is at the same time knowledge of the absolute (Radhakrishnan 1923: 510);

parā vidyā: “absolute truth” the content of which is “the oneness of Ātman and the sole reality thereof” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 518);

prajñā, *pratibhā*, *ārśajñāna*, *siddhadarśana*, *yogipratyakṣa*: “Different names are given to this apprehension which is not due to the senses or inference” as an insight in which “the mind can unite itself with the object whose nature is then fully manifested” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 128);

prajñā: “intuitive insight” considered in Early Buddhism as the highest activity of the human mind “In early Buddhism, *prajñā* or intuitive insight represents the highest activity of the human mind” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 128-129);

prāmāṇyaṃ nīrapekṣam: “requiring no support from elsewhere” as an epistemological quality of the *śruti* or the Vedas: “The authoritativeness of the

śruti is derived from the fact that it is but the expression of experience, and since experience is of a self-certifying character, the Vedas are said to be their own proof, requiring no support from elsewhere” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 518); lack of “need of proof” as a character of intuitive knowledge (Radhakrishnan 1932: 145);

pratibhā, āṛṣa-jñāna, parā-saṃvid: terms designating “intuitive consciousness” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 106)

pratyakṣa: “sense knowledge,” “literally presented to a sense” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 138); “intuition” as allegedly equated by Śaṅkara with *śruti* (Radhakrishnan 1932: 90);

ṛṣi(s): “The truths of the ṛṣis are not evolved as the result of logical reasoning or systematic philosophy but they are the products of spiritual intuition, *drṣṭi* or vision. The ṛṣis are not so much the authors of the truths recorded in the Vedas as the seers who were able to discern the eternal truths by raising their life-spirit to the plane of the universal spirit. They are the pioneer researchers in the realm of spirit who saw more in the world than their fellows. Their utterances are based not on transitory vision but on a continuous experience of resident life and power” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89-90); “those who have attained wisdom” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 111);

sākṣātkāra: “direct perception” as defining *anubhava*, “which is manifested when the *avidyā* is destroyed and the individual knows that *Ātman* and *jīva* are one. It is also called *saṃyagjñāna* (perfect knowledge) or *saṃyagdarśana* (perfect intuition)” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 511);

saṃyagdarśana: “perfect intuition” as contrasted with “perfect knowledge” or *saṃyagjñāna* (Radhakrishnan 1923: 511); “integral insight” which “brings out how far away it [intuition] is from occult visions, trance and ecstasy” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 487);

saṃyagjñāna: “perfect knowledge” as designating intuition which “lies beyond intellect” but is not “contrary to it” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 147); “perfect knowledge” as contrasted with *saṃyagdarśana* or perfect intuition: “While *saṃyagjñāna* insists on the reflective preparation necessary for it [i.e., knowledge that the *ātman* and *jīva* are one] *saṃyagdarśana* points to the immediacy of intuition, where the ultimate reality is the object of direct apprehension (*īkṣaṇa*) as well as meditation (*dhyāna*)” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 511);

sarvāgamaprāmāṇya: attitude of “accepting the significance of the different intuitions of reality and the different scriptures of the peoples living in India” as an epistemology of tolerance characterizing Hinduism (Radhakrishnan 1927: 20)

sat, cit and ānanda: “perfect being, perfect consciousness and perfect freedom [...] Being, truth and freedom” as distinguished but not divided in the divine status of reality (Radhakrishnan 1932: 102);

smṛti: “what is remembered” as compared to the “authority of interpretation” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 90);

śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana: “tradition, logic and life” as means of dialectics of religious advance (Radhakrishnan 1927:21); “[...] hearing, [...] reflection, and [...] contemplation” as three preparatory stages to God-vision (Radhakrishnan 1953: 133);

śruti: “what is heard” as compared to the “authority of fact” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 90)

svasaṃvedya: “self-evidencing” as a quality of religious experience (Radhakrishnan 1932: 92);

svataḥprāmāṇya: “intrinsic validity” as a quality of religious experience (Radhakrishnan 1932: 94);

svataḥ-siddha: “self-valid certainty” as an epistemic quality of “wisdom” which is “one with the Supreme Self, which is self-evident and needs no proof” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 103);

svataḥ-siddha: “self-certifying” carrying “its own credentials” as a quality of religious experience (Radhakrishnan 1927: 15); “self-established” as a quality of religious experience” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 92);

svayam-prakāśa: “self-luminous” as an epistemic quality of religious experience (Radhakrishnan 1932: 92);

tapas: “What is called tapas is a persistent endeavour to dwell in the divine and develop a transfigured life. It is the gathering up of all dispersed energies, the intellectual powers, the heart’s emotions, the vital desires, nay the very physical being itself, and concentrating them all on the supreme goal. The rapidity of the process depends on the intensity of the aspiration, the zeal of the mind for God” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 113);

tarka: “intellect” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 514); “reasoning” which according to Śaṅkara “works as an auxiliary of intuition (anubhava)” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 517);

uttamapurusa: “perfect personality” of God (Radhakrishnan 1927: 27);

veda: “The Veda, the wisdom, is the accepted name for the highest spiritual truth of which the human mind is capable. It is the work of the ṛṣis or the seers” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89);

vidyā: “theological knowledge” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 103); “eternal wisdom” when it is conceived as “*jñāna* which is of the essential nature of the Divine Reality” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 103); “spiritual wisdom” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 126); and *avidyā*: “*Vidyā* is mokṣa: *avidyā* is saṃsāra. Intuitive realization is the means to salvation. He who knows is saved directly and immediately, and by means of that knowledge. Intuitive insight is identical with freedom” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 128); *vidyā*, *avidyā* and *anubhava*: “*Vidyā* and *avidyā* are two ways of apprehending reality. Both are forms of relative knowledge and belong to the manifested universe. Knowledge formulated logically is not equivalent to a direct and immediate apprehension of the Real. Whatever words we use, whatever concepts we employ, fall short of reality. The *anubhava* is beyond all manifestation and is complete in itself. *Vidyā* stresses the harmony and the interconnections of elements which make up the

world; *avidyā* the separateness, mutual independence and strife. *Vidyā* helps us to appreciate intellectually the intelligible ideas about the nature of the Divine ground and the nature of the direct experience of it in relation to other experiences. It indicates the means by which we can attain *Brahman* [...] The theological knowledge or *vidyā* is different from the experience or *anubhava* of it. The experience is recorded as a pure and direct intellectual intuition in *śruti*. When we reflect on the experiences or their records and reduce them to a rational order we have *smṛti*. While the first is the domain of metaphysical principles, the second applies these principles to individual and social conduct. *Vidyā* is nearer the truth than *avidyā*. But *vidyā* is also understood as *jñāna* which is of the essential nature of the Divine Reality. It is then eternal wisdom which is not the knowledge possessed by any individual. It is the wisdom hidden beneath the sheaths of ignorance. It is one with the Supreme Self, which is self-evident and needs no proof, *svataḥ-siddha*, self-valid certainty” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 102-103);

viśvatomukham: “many-sided” as describing a character of the records of religious experiences (Radhakrishnan 1927: 17)

(b) English terms

Absolute and God: in Greek thought, Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism: “In Greek thought, Plato and Aristotle conceived the Divine being as self-sufficient in His own perfection and undisturbed by any changes of the world. Plato sets up a hierarchy of Ideas with the idea of Good at its apex. For Aristotle, God is the unmoved mover, a thought thinking itself, self-enclosed, operative only by the appeal of its own perfection. The God of the Hebrew is of a different type. He is personal and active in history and interested in the changes and chances of this developing world. He is a being who holds communication with us. Christianity represents a blend of the Hebrew and Greek traditions, though it has not yet succeeded in reconciling them. The Hindu is aware of this fundamental problem and as early as the period of the Upaniṣads we find attempts to reconcile the doctrine of the changeless perfection of the Absolute with the conviction that God is also responsible for this changing world” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 497-498); *Radhakrishnan’s conception of their relation*: “The way in which the relation between the absolute and God is here indicated is not the same as that either of Śaṅkara or of Bradley, though it has apparent similarities to their doctrines. While the Absolute is the transcendent divine, God is the cosmic divine. While the Absolute is the total reality, God is the Absolute from the cosmic end, the consciousness that informs and sustains the world. God is, so to say, the genius of this world, its ground, which as a thought or a possibility of the Absolute lies beyond the world in the universal consciousness of the Absolute. The possibilities or the ideal forms are the mind of the absolute or the thoughts of the Absolute. One of the infinite possibilities is being translated into the world of space and time. Even

as the world is a definite manifestation of one specific possibility of the Absolute, God with whom the worshipper stands in personal relation is the very Absolute in the world context and is not a mere appearance of the Absolute” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 498);

Asceticism: “Asceticism is an excess indulged in by those who exaggerate the transcendent aspect of reality. If the real is yonder, in another sphere, and this world is only appearance, then the real can be found only by those who turn away from the temporal and the finite” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 115);

Cognitive experience, variety of: “While all varieties of cognitive experience result in a knowledge of the real, it is produced in three ways which are sense experience, discursive reasoning and intuitive apprehension” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 134);

Direct knowledge: “Direct knowledge is incapable of growth, for it is individual and therefore incommunicable. We cannot verify it and therefore cannot dispute it. It transcends the partial truths of the divided mind, the intellectual or the sensuous” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 144);

Divine consciousness: “The consciousness to which all experience is present in its own immediacy, revealedness and freedom from anything which is not itself is the divine consciousness, that which is our ideal” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 102);

Divine status: “In the divine status reality is its own immediate witness, its own self-awareness, its own freedom of complete being. There is nothing which is not gathered up in its being, nothing which is not revealed in it, and there is utter absence of all discord. It is perfect being, perfect consciousness and perfect freedom, sat, cit and ānanda. Being, truth and freedom are distinguished in the divine but not divided. The true and ultimate condition of the human being is the divine status” (Radhakrishnan 1932:102);

Empirical knowledge: “Empirical knowledge reveals in the distinctions of knower, knowledge and known, while the real is free from all these distinctions. If the real excludes relations, then relational thought is imperfect. It is avidyā, since it does not yield the true nature of things (vastusvarūpam)” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 502);

Faith, reason, and intuition: “If we take faith in the proper sense of trust or spiritual conviction, religion is faith or intuition. We call it faith simply because spiritual perception, like other kinds of perception, is liable to error and requires the testing process of logical thought. But, like all perception, religious intuition is that which thought has to start from and to which it has to return. In order to be able to say that religious experience reveals reality, in order to be able to transform religious certitude into logical certainty, we are obliged to give an intellectual account of the experienced. Hindu thought has no mistrust of reason. There can be no final breach between the two powers of human mind, reason and intuition” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 16-17);

Hinduism, distinctive character of: “The Hindu Religion, for example, is characterized by its adherence to fact. In its pure form, at any rate, it never

leaned as heavily as other religions do on authority. It is not a 'founded' religion; nor does it centre round any historical events. Its distinctive characteristic has been its insistence on the inward life of spirit. To know, possess and be the spirit in this physical frame, to convert an obscure plodding mentality into clear spiritual illumination, to build peace and self-existent freedom in the stress of emotional satisfaction and suffering, to discover and realise the life divine in a body subject to sickness and death has been the constant aim of the Hindu religious endeavour" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89); "While the experiential character of religion is emphasised in the Hindu faith, every religion at its best falls back on it" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 90); *and the hospitality of the Hindu mind*: "The Hindu thinkers admit the ineffability of the experience but permit themselves a gradual scale of interpretations from the most 'impersonal' to the most 'personal.' The freedom of interpretation is responsible for what may be called the hospitality of the Hindu mind. The Hindu tradition by its very breath seems to be capable of accommodating varied religious conceptions. Hinduism admits that the unquestionable content of the experience is a *that* about which nothing more can be said. The deeper and more intimate a spiritual experience, the more readily does it dispense with signs and symbols. Deep intuition is utterly silent. Through silence we 'confess without confession' that the glory of spiritual life is inexplicable and beyond the reach of speech and mind. It is the great unfathomable mystery and words are treacherous." (Radhakrishnan 1932: 100); *and the Vedānta as its absolute standard*: "The three prasthānas of the Vedānta, the Upaniṣads, the *Brahma Sūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, answer roughly to the three stages of faith, knowledge and discipline. The Upaniṣads embody the experiences of the sages. Logic and discipline are present in them, though they are not the chief characteristics of those texts. The *Brahma Sūtra* attempts to interpret in logical terms the chief conclusions of the Upaniṣads. The *Bhagavadgītā* is primarily a yoga śāstra giving us the chief means by which we can attain the truly religious life. They form together the absolute standard for the Hindu religion. It is said that other scriptures sink into silence when Vedānta appears, even as foxes do not raise their voices in the forest when the lion appears. All sects of Hinduism attempt to interpret the Vedānta texts in accordance with their own religious views. The Vedānta is not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance. Thus the different sects of Hinduism are reconciled with a common standard and are sometimes regarded as the distorted expressions of the one true canon." (Radhakrishnan 1927: 22-23); *and its attitude towards the Veda*: "The Hindu attitude toward the Vedas is one of trust tempered by criticism, trust because the beliefs and forms which helped our fathers are likely to be of use to us also; criticism because, however valuable the testimony of the past ages may be, it cannot deprive the present age of its right to inquire and sift the evidence. Precious are the echoes of God's voice in the souls of men of long ago, our regard for them must be tempered by the recognition of the truth that God has never finished the revelation of His wisdom

and love. Besides, our interpretation of religious experience must be in conformity with the findings of science. As knowledge grows, our theology develops. Only those parts of the tradition which are logically coherent are to be accepted as superior to the evidence of the senses and not the whole tradition.” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 18-19); *and its internal pluralism*: “By accepting the significance of the different intuitions of reality and different scriptures of the peoples living in India (*sarvāgamaprāmāṇya*), Hinduism has come to be a tapestry of the most variegated tissues and almost endless diversity of hues [...] Hinduism is therefore not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realisation. Its tradition of the Godward endeavour of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through ages.” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 20-21); *and its distinctive attitude towards religion*: “The Hindu attitude to religion is interesting. While fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself no such limits. Intellect is subordinated to intuition, dogma to experience, outer expression to inward realisation. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstractions or the celebration of ceremonies, but a kind of life or experience. It is insight into the nature of reality (*darśana*), or experience of reality (*anubhava*). This experience is not an emotional thrill, or a subjective fancy, but is the response of the whole personality, the integrated self to the central reality” (1927: 15);

Idealist tradition and the spirit in man: “The idealist tradition both in the East and the West has asserted the supremacy of spirit in man. Mere physical desire and passion, impulse and instinct, even intellect and will do not exhaust his nature. The spiritual status is the essential dignity of man and the origin of his freedom. It is the state anterior to the divisions between intellect, feeling and will, where consciousness forms a unity which cannot be analysed. It is the presupposition, the limit and the goal of our divided consciousness. When the spirit, which is the mind in its integrity, is at work, man has the immediate intuition of his unity with the eternal, though, in the derived intellectual consciousness, he remains apart and works in the grounds of his own being and discerns his relation to and dependence upon the presence behind the trembling veil of phenomena” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 484);

Immediacy: “What is regarded as immediately given may be the product of inference. Immediacy does not mean absence of psychological mediation but only non-mediation by conscious thought. Ideas which seem to come to us with compelling force, without any mediate intellectual process of which we are aware, are generally the results of previous training in traditions imparted to us in our early years. Our past experience supplies the materials to which the new insight adds fresh meanings. When we are told that the souls have felt in their lives the redeeming power of Kṛṣṇa or Buddha, Jesus or Mohammad, we must distinguish the immediate experience or intuition which might conceivably be infallible and the interpretation which is mixed up with it” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 98-99); *as contrasted with pure experience*: “Again, there

is no such thing as pure experience, raw and undigested. It is always mixed up with layers of interpretation. The alleged immediate datum is psychologically mediated. The scriptural statements give us knowledge, or interpreted experience, a that-what. The 'that' is merely the affirmation of a fact, of a self-existent spiritual experience in which all distinctions are blurred and the individual seems to overflow into the whole and belong to it. The experience is real though inarticulate" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 99); *at the sub-intellectual and supra-intellectual level*: "While Bradley is right in his contention that genuine immediacy gives truth and reality, we have to distinguish between the immediacy which appears at the sub-intellectual level before practical necessities and intellectual analysis break up the unity and the immediacy which appears at the supra-intellectual level, at the end and to some extent as the result of discursive thinking. The former or the primitive immediacy remains with us through the process, though at the second stage it is purified of its primitivity and seizes the real in a direct act. The immediacy of intuition as distinct from that of feeling is of the latter kind." (Radhakrishnan 1932: 149); *and anubhava*: "Anubhava is not the immediacy of an uninterpreted sensation, where the existence and the content of what is apprehended are not separated. It has kinship with artistic insight rather than animal perception. It is immediacy which is higher and not lower than mediate reflective knowledge." (Radhakrishnan 1923: 513);

Integral experience, wisdom, and absolute knowledge: "Thought expires in experience. Knowledge is lifted up into wisdom when it knows itself as identical with the known, where only the Ātman as eternal knowledge (nityajñāna) shines. This absolute knowledge is at the same time knowledge of the absolute. The word 'jñāna' is rather unfortunate on account of its empirical associations. Integral experience or anubhava, brings out the sense better." (Radhakrishnan 1923: 510);

Integral intuitions as authority for religion: "The spiritual sense, the instinct for the real, is not satisfied with anything less than the absolute and the eternal. It shows an incurable dissatisfaction with the finiteness of the finite, the transiency of the transient. Such integral intuitions are our authority for religion. They reveal a Being who makes himself known to us through them and produces revolt and discontent with anything short of the eternal" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89);

Integral knowledge: "Integral knowledge possesses its object truly and securely. Nothing is external to it. Nothing is other than itself. Nothing is divided or in conflict within its all-comprehensive self-awareness. It is the means of knowledge and knowledge itself" (Radhakrishnan 1953: 95-96);

Intellectual and intuitive knowledge, justification of: "Both intellectual and intuitive kinds of knowledge are justified and have their own right. Each is useful for its own specific purposes. Logical knowledge enables us to know the conditions of the world in which we live and to control them for our ends. We cannot act successfully without knowing properly. But if we want to know

thing in their uniqueness, in their indefeasible reality, we must transcend discursive thinking. Direct perception and simple and steady looking upon an object is intuition. It is not a mystic process, but the most direct and penetrating examination possible to the human mind. Intuition stands to intellect in somehow the same relation as intellect stands to sense. Though intuition lies beyond intellect, it is not contrary to it. It is called *saṃyagjñāna*, or perfect knowledge. Reflective knowledge is a preparation for this integral experience” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 146-147); *contrasted to each other*: “Intellect moves from object to object. Unable to comprehend them all it retains their multiplicity. Intellectual knowledge is a scattered, broken movement of the one undivided infinite life which is all-possessing and ever satisfied. Intuitive knowing is unimprisoned by the divisions of space, successions of time or sequence of cause and effect. Our intellectual picture is a shadow cast by the integral knowledge which possesses the object truly and securely” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 98-99);

Intuition: “Spiritual apprehension or the kind of awareness of real values which are neither objects in space and time nor universals of thought is called intuition. There is the controlling power of reality in intuitive apprehension quite as much as in perceptual acts or reflective thought. The objects of intuition are recognised and not created by us. They are not produced by the act of apprehension itself” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 485); *and sensual perception*: “Intuition is the extension of perception to regions beyond sense” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 143); *as compared to thought or reason*: “Thought is useful but not true, but intuition is true though not useful” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 144); “Intuition is not a-logical but supra-logical. It is the wisdom gained by the whole spirit which is above any mere fragment thereof, be it feeling or intellect. The whole life of mind is more concrete than that of any specialised mode of it. It follows that the great intuitions bear the stamp of personality” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 147); “Intuition gives as the idea of the whole and intellect analysis of parts. The union of apparent opposites which intellect effects is itself inspired by the drive of intuition. Intuition gives us the object in itself, while intellect details its relations. The former gives us the unique in the object, the latter tells us of the qualities which it has in common with others. Every intuition has an intellectual content, and by making it more intellectual we deepen the content” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 153); *and continuity with intellect or reason*: “It is unfortunate that insistence on intuition is often confused with anti-intellectualism. Intuition which ignores intellect is useless. The two are not only not incompatible but virtually united [...] Intuition is beyond reason, though not against reason. As it is the response of the whole man to reality, it involves the activity of reason also. The truths of intuition are led up to by the work of the understanding and can be translated into the language of understanding, though they are clearly intelligible only to those who already in some measure have immediate apprehension of them. Intuition is not independent but emphatically dependent upon thought and is immanent in the very

nature of our thinking. It is dynamically continuous with thought and pierces through the conceptual context of knowledge to the living reality under it. It is the result of a long and arduous process of study and analysis and is therefore higher than the discursive process from which it issues and on which it supervenes” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 486); “It [intuition] stands to intellect as a whole to a part, as the creative source of thought to the created categories which work more or less automatically. Logical reflection is a special function within the concrete life of mind and is necessarily a fraction of the larger experience. If it sets itself up as constitutive of the whole life of mind, it becomes, in Kant’s words, a ‘faculty of illusion.’ The different energies of the human soul are not cut off from one another by any impassable barriers. They flow into each other, modify, support and control each other. The Sanskrit expression ‘samyagdarśana’ or integral insight brings out how far away it is from occult visions, trance and ecstasy” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 487); *and its object*: “The object of intuition is not a private fancy or a subjective abstraction in the mind of the knower. It is a *real object*, which is unaffected by our apprehension or non-apprehension of it, though its reality is of a higher kind than that of particular objects of space and time which are involved in a perpetual flux and cannot therefore be regarded strictly as real” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 512); “The process of apprehending reality may be private or singular, but not the object apprehended. The real cannot be real now and then, here and there, but always and everywhere” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 512); *and truth, subjective certitude, and logical certainty*: “Simply because the deliverances of intuition appear incontestable to the seer or happen to be shared by many, it does not follow that they are true. Subjective certitude, whose validity consists in mere inability to doubt, is different from logical certainty. The sense of assurance is present, even when the object is imaginary and even such objects, so long as they are believed to be actual, evoke feelings and attitudes quite as intense and effective as those excited by real ones. While religion may be satisfied with the sense of convincedness, which is enough to foster spiritual life, philosophy is interested in finding out whether the object believed is well grounded or not” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 487); *and cultivation*: “Intuition requires cultivation quite as much as the powers of observation and thought. We can realise the potentialities of spirit only by a process of moral ascesis which gradually shapes the soul into harmony with the invisible realities [...] Indian thought requires us to abstract from sense life and discursive thinking in order to surrender from to the deepest self where we get into immediate contact with reality. To know better, we must become different, our thoughts and feelings must be deeply harmonised. Intuition is not only perfect knowledge but also perfect living. The consecration of the self and the knowledge of reality grow together. The fully real can be known only by one who is himself fully real” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 487);

Intuition experience and certitude: “While intuition experience carries with it the highest degree of certitude, it has only a low degree of conceptual

clearness. This is why interpretation is necessary, and these interpretations are fallible and so require endless revision” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 514);

Intuitive character of knowledge and certainty: “If all our knowledge were of an intuitive character, if reality bore immediate witness to itself, there would be no need for logical tests. The unity between the knower and the known would be perfect and our knowledge complete. In it there is no reference to external objects, no correspondence of an idea with an other than itself. Knowledge and being, the idea and the reality, the reference and the identification, are both there. It does not stand in need of proof (*prāmāṇyam nīrapekṣam*). It is existence aware of itself. It is knowledge which is neither superficial, nor symbolic, nor second-hand” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 145);

Intuitive consciousness: “Intuitive consciousness is called *pratibhā* or *ārṣa-jñāna* or *parā-saṃvid*, and has the characteristics of immediacy and clarity. It is independent of perception and inference. It is synoptic not analytic, noetic not discursive. It is inarticulate and cannot be readily translated into conceptual terms, though it can become articulate. The two types of knowledge are not incompatible though distinguishable. The seers are those who have seen, heard and handled the word of life. While divine wisdom is eternal and is always possessed by God, intuitive consciousness is brought into existence by mental process [...] When the mind by gradual training is freed from the influences of the concepts and memory images of the past (*vikalpas*) it merges itself in the object (*dhyeya*) and is absorbed and pervaded by it. The nature of the object is then fully revealed. When we develop *yogic* intuition we have direct knowledge of objects, past and future. I have called it intuition or integral insight. It is different from sense-observation, mathematical and logical reasoning. It comes in a flash as distinct from patient observation or logical analysis. We cannot foresee it or consciously prepare for it. It is creativity. It reveals the central feature of the intuited object. The subject and the object in intuition tend to coalesce. We thus gain an unmediated immediate knowledge and not the mediated, inadequate and always uncertain cognition or idea derived from the sense-perception or logical reasoning. It deals with the reality and not the appearance of the object. It lies at the basis of sense and logical knowledge [...] Reason and all other forms of awareness depend on it” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 107);

Intuitive experience, transitory character of: “Since the intuitive experiences are not always given but occur only at rare intervals, they possess the character of revelation. We cannot command or continue them at our will. We do not know how or why they occur. They sometimes occur even against our will” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 93-94); “So long as the experience lasts, the individual remains rapt in contemplation, but no man can rest in that state for all time” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 94);

Intuitive insight, as species of knowledge: “If the term ‘knowledge’ is restricted to what is communicable, what can be expressed in formulas and propositions, then intuitive insight as ineffable and non-propositional is not

knowledge. But certainty and non-communicability are the true test of knowledge, and intuitive experience has this sense of assurance or certainty, and therefore is a species of knowledge” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 145);

Intuitive knowledge: “There is a knowledge which is different from the conceptual, a knowledge by which we see things as they are, as unique individuals and not as members of a class or units in a crowd. It is non-sensuous, immediate knowledge. As distinct from sense knowledge or *pratyakṣa* (literally presented to a sense), the Hindu thinkers use the term *aparokṣa* for the non-sensuous immediate knowledge. This intuitive knowledge arises from an intimate fusion of mind with reality. It is knowledge by being and not by senses or by symbols. It is awareness of the truth of things by identity. We become one with the truth, one with the object of knowledge. The object known is seen not as an object outside the self, but as part of the self. What intuition reveals is not so much a doctrine as a consciousness; it is a state of mind and not a definition of the object. Logic and language are a lower form, a diminution of this kind of knowledge. Thought is a means of partially manifesting and presenting what is concealed in this greater self-existent knowledge. Knowledge is an intense and close communion between the knower and the known. In knowing the knower is establishing an identity with the known.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 138); “Intuitive knowing is immediate as distinct from discursive and mediate knowledge. It is more immediate than sensory intuition, for it overcomes the distinction between the knower and the known which subsists in sense-intuition. It is the perfect knowledge, while all other knowledge is incomplete and imperfect in so far as it does not bring about an identification between subject and object. All other knowledge is indirect and has only symbolic or representative value. The only generally effective knowledge is that which penetrates into the very nature of things. But in lower forms of knowledge this penetration of the subject into the object is limited and partial. Scientific understanding assumes that an object can be known only if it is broken up into its simpler constituents. If anything organic is handled in this manner, its significance is lost. By employing intuitive consciousness we know the object with less distortion and more actuality. We get closer to perceiving the thing as it is” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 96); “[Intuitive] Knowledge presupposes unity or oneness of thought and being, a unity that transcends the differentiation of subject and object. Such knowledge is revealed in man’s very existence. It is unveiled rather than acquired. Knowledge is concealed in ignorance and when the latter is removed the former manifests itself. What we are, that we behold, and what we behold, that we are. Our thought, our life and our being are uplifted in simplicity and we are made one with truth. Though we cannot understand or describe, we can taste and we possess. We become new. When the beatific vision of the Absolute Being has once dawned on the dazzled beholder, the savour of the phenomenal is gone for it is seen to be steeped in the noumenal” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 96-97); “In intuitive knowledge, man ceases to be an impartial spectator. His whole being is at work, not merely the

powers of observation and inference. It is knowledge by coincidence. Being and knowing are different aspects of one experience. Intuitive knowledge is a self-subsistent mode of consciousness different from the intellectual or the perceptual. Whereas perception gives us the outward properties of an object, and intellect discerns the law of which the object is an instance, intuition gives depth, meaning, character to the object (Radhakrishnan 1952b: 792-793); *as absolute knowledge*: “Intuitive knowledge is proved on our pulses. It is the only kind of absolute knowledge. It is possible only when the individual is fully alive and balanced. We can see truly only when our inner being is harmonized. Intuition is the ultimate vision of our profoundest being” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 144); *and knowledge of self*: “The great illustration of intuitive knowledge given by Hindu thinkers is the knowledge of self. We become aware of our own self, as we become aware of love or anger, directly by a sort of identity with it. Self-knowledge is inseparable from self-existence. It seems to be the only true and direct knowledge we have: all else is inferential” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 139); *as distinguished from imagination*: “The reality of the object is what distinguishes intuitive knowledge from mere imagination. Just as in the common perception of finite things we become directly and inevitably aware of something which has its own definite nature which we cannot alter by our desires or imagination, even so intuitive consciousness apprehends real things which are not open to the senses. Even as there is something which is not imagined by us in our simplest perceptions and yet makes our knowledge possible, even so we have in our intuitions a real which controls our apprehension. It is not fancy or make-believe, but a *bona fide* discovery of reality” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 143); *and its means of expression and transmission*: “It [intuitive knowledge] is expressed and transmitted not by means of precise scientific statements, but by myth and image, literature and art. Ideas expressive of intuitions are vital in character since they are expressive of life and not mere logical analysis. They are free, flexible and fluid, and bear on their faces the breath of spirit” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 145); *and rationality*: “Intuitive knowledge is not non-rational; it is only non-conceptual. It is rational intuition in which both immediacy and mediacy are comprehended. As a matter of fact, we have throughout life the intuitive and the intellectual sides at work” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 153);

Intuitive truth, doubt and certainty: “Intuitive truths as simple acts of mental vision are free from doubt. They do not carry conviction on the ground of their logical validity. We cannot help assenting to them as soon as we intuit them. Doubts occur when reflection supervenes. Strictly speaking, logical knowledge is non-knowledge, *avidyā*, valid only till intuition arises” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 146); “Even if intuitive truths cannot be *proved* to reason, they can be shown to be not contrary to reason, but consistent with it. Intuition is neither abstract thought and analysis nor formless darkness and primitive sentience. It is wisdom [...]” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 153);

Intuitive wisdom: “Though intuitive wisdom is different from knowledge of the senses or anything we can achieve by logical reflection, it is not to be confused with occultism, obscurantism, or extravagant emotion. It is not magical insight or heavenly vision, or special revelation obtained through supernatural powers. What we attain by vision, empirical or trans-empirical, belongs to the objective world. It is a distinction within the objective world, between the physical and the super-physical, between what we reach by the five senses and a sixth sense. Wisdom is pure reason, capacity for fundamental truth. It is the possession of the soul or it is the soul that penetrates into its own ground and depth and becomes essential being. It springs from it of necessity when it meditates on itself. This wisdom is eternal, universal and necessary for Śaṃkara. It cannot be destroyed though it may be obscured” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 103-104);

Judgments of fact and judgments of value: “In the sphere of values we depend a good deal on this kind of [intuitive] knowledge. Both the recognition and creation of values are due to intuitive thinking. Judgments of fact require dispassionateness; judgments of value depend on vital experience. Whether a plan of action is right or wrong, whether an object presented is beautiful or ugly can be decided only by men whose conscience is educated and whose sensibility is trained. Judgments of fact can be easily verified while value-judgments cannot. Sensitiveness to quality is a function of life, and is not achieved by mere learning. It is dependent on the degree of development of the self” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 142);

Knowledge, means of knowledge, and the inadequacy to grasp the real: “All thought struggles to know the real, to seek the truth, but, unfortunately, it can attempt to know the real only as relating the real to something other than itself. The real is neither true nor false. It simply is. But in our knowledge we refer this or that characteristic to it. All knowledge, whether perceptual or conceptual, attempts to reveal reality or the ultimate spirit [...] So far as inadequacy to the grasp of the real is concerned, all means of knowledge are on the same level. All judgments are false in the sense that no predicate which we can attribute to the subject is adequate to it. We have either to say Reality is Reality, or say that Reality is X, Y or Z. The former is useless for thought, but the latter is what thought actually does. It equates the real with something else, *i.e.* the non-real. To attribute to the real what is different from it is what Śaṃkara calls *adhyāsa*, or attributing to one thing what is different from it. *Adhyāsa* is defined as the appearance of a thing where it is not” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 505); “But all knowledge, whether of God or man, involves the subject-object relation, and cannot therefore be regarded as the highest. All determinate knowledge is a self-abnegation, involving, as it does, a modalisation of the ultimate consciousness into the subject, mode and object. Except in ecstatic intuition, there is the given element distinct from the cognising subject reaching to it through a mode. Thinking and logic belong to the level of

finite life, while ultimate reality transcends thought. The real is present to itself and has therefore no need to think itself” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 509);

Knowledge, types of: “There are different types of knowledge: perceptual, conceptual, and intuitive and they are suited to different kinds of objects” (Radhakrishnan 1952a: 60); *and the real:* “The man with five senses knows more than the blind man. May not the real exceed the empirical conception of it, even as the world known to sight exceeds that known to touch? May not a state like that of brahmānubhava, or what Tennyson has called a ‘last and largest sense,’ enlarge our own knowledge of reality, as the gift of sight would enlarge that of a race of blind man? This view does not involve any scepticism with regard to the world of science and common sense. So long as we do not reach a higher plane attainable only by higher intelligences, our conclusions are quite valid, except that they remain on the same plane as their premises” (Radhakrishnan 1923: 504);

Logical or conceptual knowledge: “Logical reasoning is obtained by the processes of analysis and synthesis. The data supplied to us by perception are analysed and the results of the analysis yield a more systematic knowledge of the object perceived. This logical or conceptual knowledge is indirect and symbolic in its character. It helps us to handle and control the object and its workings. Conceptual explanations alter with the growth of experience and analysis. They are dependent on our perceptions, our interests, and our capacities” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 134); *and duality:* “In logical knowledge there is always the duality, the distinction between the knowledge of a thing and its being. Thought is able to reveal reality, because they are one in essence; but they are different in existence at the empirical level. Knowing a thing and being it are different. So thought needs verification” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 138);

Logical reasoning: “Logical reasoning is incapable of comprehending the living unity of God and man, the absolute and the relative. Logical incapacity is not evidence of actual impossibility. Reality unites what discursive reason is incapable of holding together” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 97);

Meditation: “Meditation is the way to self-discovery. By it we turn our mind homeward and establish contact with the creative centre. To know the truth we have to deepen ourselves and not merely widen the surface. Silence and quiet are necessary for the profound alteration of our being and they are not easy in our age” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 113);

Modes of consciousness: “Three modes of consciousness are recognized by the *Upaniṣads*, sense perception, logical understanding and intuitive insight” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 105); “There is a mode of consciousness which is distinct from the perceptual, imaginative or intellectual, and this carries with it self-evidence and completeness. Religious men of all ages have won their certainty of God through this direct way of approach to the apprehension of reality” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 125);

Mysticism: “Sometimes the word mysticism is used to define spiritual apprehension. It is derived from the Greek word ‘I close’ and suggests the shutting of the ears, eyes and lips. This shutting of the senses is the prerequisite of spiritual perception. In order to see in the world of spiritual reality, we must close our eyes to the world in which we ordinarily live. To hear the melodies of the spiritual world we must close our ears to the noise of the world” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 109-110); *two strands of*: “We should recognize that there are two strands in mysticism, though some view these as two different types of mysticism. For the *Upaniṣads* they are only two sides. We have the strictly solitary who seeks to liberate his consciousness from the whole burden of materiality, who leads it through zealous purification and inner elevation to beatific reunion with the One Eternal. When once we discover the oneness of our deepest self with the Supreme, we realise our oneness with the universe, *sarvam khalu idam brahma* [...] While these two phases are organically bound up with each other, in the East as well in the West, they were sometimes treated as exclusive to each other” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 110); *and the religion of the Spirit as the religion of the future*: “I am not a trained theologian and can only speak from the point of view of a student of philosophy who has endeavoured to keep abreast with modern investigations into the origins and growth of the chief religions of the world, and it seems to me that in the mystic traditions of the different religions we have a remarkable unity of spirit. Whatever religions they may profess, the mystics are spiritual kinsmen. While the different religions in their historical forms bind us to limited groups and militate against the developments of loyalty to the world community, the mystics have always stood for the fellowship of humanity. They transcend the tyranny of names and the rivalry of creeds as well as the conflict of races and the strife of nations. As the religion of spirit, mysticism avoids the two extremes of dogmatic affirmation and dogmatic denial. All signs indicate that it is likely to be the religion of the future” (Radhakrishnan 1939: viii-ix);

Philosophy of religion: “Philosophy of religion is religion come to an understanding of itself. It attempts a reasoned solution of a problem which exists directly only for the religious man who has the spiritual intuition of experience and indirectly for all those who, while they have no personal share in the experience, yet have sufficient belief that the experience does occur and is not illusory. The direct apprehension of God seems to be as real to some men as the consciousness of personality or the perception of the external world is to others. The sense of communion with the divine, the awe and worship which it evokes, which to us are only moments of vision or insight, seems to be normal and all-pervading with the saints. If philosophy of religion is to become scientific, it must become empirical and found itself on religious experience. Before thinking can start there must be something thought about. Thinking does not produce its object but has it offered to it as a datum. If thought cuts itself away from the compulsion of fact, to that extent it ceases to be thought

and becomes imagination. Just as there can be no geometry without the perception of space, even so there cannot be philosophy of religion without the facts of religion.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 84); “It is the function of philosophy [of religion] to provide us with a spiritual rallying centre, a synoptic vision, as Plato loved to call it, a *samanvaya*, as the Hindu thinkers put it, a philosophy which will serve as a spiritual concordat, which will free the spirit of religion from the disintegrations of doubt and make the warfare of creeds and sects a thing of the past” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 83); *and the testimony of religious experience*: “Any philosophic account of the universe must consider all known data, our hopes and fears, our efforts and endeavours. While philosophy cannot take anything for granted, it cannot ignore the testimony of religious experience to the nature of ultimate reality which it also seeks to apprehend. If art initiates us into truth, if the object of poetry is ‘truth which is its own testimony’ (Wordsworth), it may well be that even religious experience makes a real contribution to the understanding of the world, and possesses a profound metaphysical significance. It is our duty as seekers of truth to listen with reverence to the judgments of those seers who have cultivated the religious sense and are specially endowed with a fine discrimination in matters of spirit” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 492-493); *and warrant*: “It is for philosophy of religion to find out whether the convictions of religious seers fit in with the tested laws and principles of the universe” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 85); *its theory and method compared to the theory and method of natural sciences*: “Just as we attempt to formulate in precise terms our sense experience in the natural sciences, even so philosophy of religion attempts to define the world to which our religious experience refer. There is no reason why the intuitions of the human soul with regard to the ultimate reality should be studied in any other spirit or by any other method than those which are adopted with such great success in the region of positive science. When we speak of matter, life or mind, we refer to a certain type of experiences. Matter means a set of experiences with a certain definite character and we account for it by the hypothesis of electric energy or other kind of resistance. The same is true of life and mind. Religious experiences possess their own distinctive character and we seem to be in touch with reality other than that of matter, life or mind. We cannot say that we know matter, life and mind and not God or ultimate spirit [...] The creeds of religion correspond to theories of science. The physicist attempts to account for physical phenomena by the hypothesis of the electron and feels that his mental picture of it is like the real thing. However, we are realising that it is simply impossible to form any picture at all of the ultimate nature of the physical world. The theories are symbolic and are accepted because they work. Similarly, we have certain experiences which we try to account for by the assumption of God. The God of our imagination may be as real as the electron but is not necessarily the reality which we immediately apprehend. The idea of God is an interpretation of experience.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 85-86); *as contrasted with dogmatic and speculative theology*: “Philosophy of

religion as distinct from dogmatic theology refuses to accept any restricted basis but takes its stands on experience as wide as human nature itself. It rejects the high *a priori* read of speculative theology and the apologetic method of dogmatic theology and adopts a scientific view of religious experience and examines with detachment and impartiality the spiritual inheritance of men of all creeds and of none. Such an examination of the claims and contents of religious consciousness, which has for its background the whole spiritual history of man, has in it the promise of a spiritual idealism which is opposed to the disintegrating forces of scientific naturalism on the one hand and religious dogmatism on the other" (Radhakrishnan 1932: 87); *Hindu philosophy of religion contrasted with the non-Hindu*: "The Hindu philosophy of religion starts from and returns to an experimental basis. Only this basis is as wide as human nature itself. Other religious systems start with this or that particular experimental datum. Christian theology, for example, takes its stand on the immediate certitude of Jesus as one whose absolute authority over conscience is self-certifying and whose ability and willingness to save the soul it is impossible not to trust. Christian theology becomes relevant only for those who share or accept a particular kind of spiritual experience, and these are tempted to dismiss other experiences as illusory and other scriptures as imperfect. Hinduism was not betrayed into this situation on account of its adherence to fact. The Hindu thinker readily admits other points of view than his own and considers them to be just as worthy of attention [...] When the Hindu found that different people aimed at and achieved God-realization in different ways, he generously recognized them all and justified their place in the course of history." (Radhakrishnan 1927: 19-20);

Religion, essence of: "Religion is, in essence, experience of or living contact with ultimate reality. It is not a subjective phenomenon, not mere cultivation of the inner life but the apprehension of something that stands over against the individual. The real is known not as the conclusion of an argument but with the certainty of a thing experienced. We cannot prove the reality of God in the same way in which we prove the existence of a chair or a table. For God is not an object like other objects in nature. God is spirit which is distinct from the knowing subject or the known object. All proofs for the existence of God fail because they conceive of God as an objective reality. Spirit is life, not thing, energy not immobility, something real in itself and by itself, and cannot be compared to any substance subjective or objective. The divine is manifested in spiritual life or experience. It is given to us in life and not established by ratiocination" (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 492); *and the feeling element*: "Schleiermacher is not wrong in saying that there is a predominant feeling element in the religious consciousness. Religious feeling, however, is quite distinct from any other kind of feeling. Nor is it to be identified with a sense of creaturely dependence [...] If we assimilate religious experience to the moral consciousness, as Kant is inclined to do, we overlook the distinctive character of the two activities. Religion is not mere consciousness of value.

There is in it a mystical element, as apprehension of the real and an enjoyment of it for its own sake which is absent in the moral consciousness. Religion is not a form of knowledge as Hegel sometimes urged. While religion implies a metaphysical view of the universe, it is not to be confused with philosophy” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 88); *and rationality*: “Again, we cannot eliminate the element of mystery in religion and attempt to measure the transcendent and the eternal by finite and temporal standards. Any effort to make religion absolutely rational would be to misconceive its essential character” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 494); *as not reducible to social phenomena*: “When professor Whitehead defines religion as ‘what the individual does with his own solitariness’ he is urging that it is not a mere social phenomenon. It is not an apologetic for the existing social order; nor is it a mere instrument for social salvation. It is an attempt to discover the ideal possibilities of human life, a quest for emancipation from the immediate compulsions of vain and petty moods. It is not true religion unless it ceases to be a traditional view and becomes personal experience. It is an independent functioning of the human mind, something unique, possessing an autonomous character. It is something inward and personal which unifies all values and organises all experiences. It is the reaction of the whole man to the whole reality. We seek the religious object by the totality of our faculties and energies. Such functioning of the whole man may be called spiritual life, as distinct from a merely intellectual or moral or aesthetic activity or a combination of them” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 88-89);

Religions and the project of harmonization (samanvaya): Today the *samanvaya* or harmonisation has to be extended to the living faiths of mankind. Religion concerns man as man and not man as Jew or Christian, Hindu or Buddhist, Sikh or Muslim. As the author of the B.S. tried to reconcile the different doctrines prevalent in his time, we have to take into account the present state of our knowledge and evolve a coherent picture. Beliefs retain their vigour for a long time after their roots have withered or their sources have silted up. We must express our beliefs in the context and shape of the real questions and search of modern men. The way in which faith has hitherto expressed itself, the categories which it has evolved, the very nature of the world and the hope towards which faith directs its attention have lost their meaning and reality for the modern world. Our society is shaken to its foundations. The conventional call on the part of religions to believe in God, work for his glory and purpose has become open to questions. Philosophy is not a mere intellectual pursuit labelling and classifying the contents of thought but the creation of a new awareness of oneself and the world. *Samanvaya* or reconciliation is the need of our age. The global, all-comprehensive changes which are taking place represent something new in the structure of human society, though they are not deviations from the normal course of history. The world community which we envisage can be sustained only by a community of ideals. We have to look beyond the political and economic arrangements to ultimate spiritual issues. We have to fashion a new type of man who uses the instruments he has

devised with a renewed awareness that he is capable of greater things than mastery of nature. Unfortunately, rivalries among religions are retarding the growth of an international community, the fellowship of man. If we accept the view that the Scriptures of the world are the records of the experiences of the great seers who have expressed their sense of the inner meaning of the world through their intense insight and deep imagination, we will not adopt an attitude of a dogmatic exclusiveness.” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 249-250);

Religious experience, actuality of: “However much we may quarrel about the implications of this kind of experience, we cannot question the actuality of the experience itself” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 93);

Religious experience, as a unique and autonomous modality of experience: “Though religious experience is analogous in some respect to the other manifestations of spiritual activity, as scientific genius, artistic creation or moral heroism, it cannot be identified with any of them. It is unique and autonomous. The spirit is at home with itself in religion and its life satisfies every side of our being. The peace which we obtain through it is not mere emotional satisfaction. In it the mind becomes irradiated with the divine light and obstinate questions of reason find an answer. The will loses its irresoluteness as it becomes one with the divine will. Spiritual geniuses possess the highest that man can possess, constant contact with the creative principle of which life is the manifestation, coincidence with the divine will, serene calm, inward peace which no passion can disturb, no persecution can dismay” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 492); *description of:* “It is a type of experience which is not clearly differentiated into subject-object state, an integral, undivided consciousness in which not merely this or that side of man’s nature but his whole being seems to find itself. It is a condition of consciousness in which feelings are fused, ideas are melted into one another, boundaries broken and ordinary distinctions transcended. Past and present fade away in a sense of timeless being. Consciousness and being are not there different from each other. All being is consciousness and all consciousness is being. Thought and reality coalesce and a creative merging of subject and object results. In this fullness of felt life and freedom, the distinction of the knower and the known disappears. The privacy of the individual self is broken into and invaded by a universal self which the individual feels as his own” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 91-92); “The experience is felt as profoundly satisfying, where darkness is turned into light, sadness into joy, despair into assurance. The continuance of such an experience constitutes dwelling in heaven which is not a place where God lives, but a mode of being which is fully and completely real” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 93); *its two aspects and the need for their reconciliation in philosophy of religion:* “There are aspects in religious experience, such as the sense of rest and fulfilment, of eternity and completeness, which require the conception of a being whose nature is not exhausted by the cosmic process, which possesses an all-fulness of reality which our world faintly shadows. This side of religious experience de-

mands the conception of the supreme as self-existence, infinity, freedom, absolute light and absolute beatitude. On the other hand there are features of our religious experience which require us to look upon God as a self-determining principle manifested in a temporal development, with wisdom, love and goodness as his attributes. From this point of view God is a personal being with whom we can enter into personal relationship. Practical religion presupposes a God who looks into our hearts, knows our tribulations and helps us in our need. The reality of prayer and sacrifice is affirmed by the religious life of mankind. It assumes the reality of a concrete being who influences our life. To leave the Absolute in abstract isolation dwelling in Epicurean felicity is to reduce it to an ornamental figurehead who lends an atmosphere to an essentially agnostic view of the cosmic process. The permanent reality beyond the transient world of struggle and discord is also here and in everything. In religious experience itself there is no conflict. The supreme satisfies both sets of needs. But for philosophy of religion, the central problem is to reconcile the apparently conflicting views of the supreme as eternally complete and of the supreme as the self-determining principle manifesting in the temporal process" (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 497); *its conception and dismissal*: "The sceptics dismiss the experience of saints and mystics as due to unsoundness of mind or psychological tricks. They are perhaps justified by the history of religious experience where it has often been confused with emotional thrills and edifying feelings. This fact only reminds us of the need for careful scrutiny and examination of what claims to be religious experience. Simply because the religious has often been mistaken for what it is not and got mixed up with fantastic notions and wanton cruelties, we cannot disregard the entire field of religious experience as baseless. We are not willing to dismiss sense perception as illusory simply because we have dreams and hallucinations. Our experiences are liable to misinterpretation and our judgments are not infallible. We are nowadays reverent even to the experience of ghosts: we need not be rude to the experience of God. If we adopt a narrowly rationalist view, not merely religion but all the higher activities of mind become unmeaning and pathological. Such a view narrows the range of vision of the human mind" (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 493); *its final affirmations*: "We may now bring together the several affirmations of religious experience. [a] There is a mode of consciousness which is distinct from the perceptual, imaginative or intellectual, and this carries with it self-evidence and completeness. Religious men of all ages have won their certainty of God through this direct way of approach to the apprehension of reality. [b] The larger environment is of the nature of one's own self, with which the individual occasionally comes into contact. There are differences regarding the interpretation of the nature of this spiritual environment, while this at any rate is true, that it offers the only justification for a life of truth seeking a good realizing. [c] The intuition of the all-pervading unity of the self and the universe is emphasized sometimes to the extent of rejecting a God who can reciprocate our love or as a self which has real independence.

[d] Those who have this consciousness are the saintly souls whose lives are characterized by an unshakable faith in the supremacy of spirit, invincible optimism, ethical universalism and religious toleration. [e] The attainment of steady spiritual insight is the aim of religious endeavour and the means to it are an ethical life and the art of meditation.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 125-126);

Religious experience, expression and interpretation: “During the vision, its influence was so potent and overwhelming that he had neither the power nor the desire to analyse it. Now that the vision is no more, he strives to recapture it and retain in memory what cannot be realised in fact. The process of reflection starts. He cannot forget the blessed moments which have a weight for the rest of his life and give to his beliefs a power and a vividness that nothing can shake. The individual adopts an attitude of faith which is urged by its own needs to posit the transcendental reality” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 94-95); *and imagination, symbols and myths*: “Though the tools of sense and understanding cannot describe [religious experience] adequately, creative imagination with its symbols and suggestion may be of assistance. The profoundest wisdom of the past is transmitted to us in the form of myths and metaphors which do not have any fixed meaning and therefore can be interpreted as life requires. The seers who were at least as wise and as subtle as ourselves, by letting their imagination work on the experience, devised symbolic conceptions such as crossing the ocean of saṃsāra, ascending into heaven, meeting God face to face [...] If we insist on interpreting these symbols literally, difficulties arise. But if we go behind the words to the moods they symbolise, agreement is possible. The symbols and suggestions employed are derived from the local and historical traditions [...] The myths require to be changed as they lose their meaning with the lapse of time, but they are in no case to be accepted as literal truths. They require to be interpreted [...]” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 97); *and the need to distinguish between simple facts from accounts*: “We must distinguish the simple facts of religion from the accounts which reach us through the depth of theological preconceptions. That the soul is in contact with a mighty spiritual power other than its normal self and yet within and that its contact means the beginning of the creation of a new self is the fact, while the identification of this power with the historic figures of Buddha or Christ, the confusion of the simple realization of the universal self in us with a catastrophic revelation from without, is an interpretation, a personal confession and not necessarily an objective truth. Something is directly experienced, but it is unconsciously interpreted in the terms of the tradition in which the individual is trained. The frame of reference which each individual adopts is determined by heredity and culture” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 99); *diversity of expression and the kinship of the spirit*: “Though religious experience has developed into varied doctrines and expressed itself in different intellectual notations, there is a certain kinship of the spirit among the religious geniuses who have made their mark on history, who join hands across the centuries and bid us enter into the kingdom of the spirit. They affirm

that the self perceives directly the ultimate reality which is there, existing in its own right, untouched by the imperfections of the world. It is intimately present to and in ourselves. Truth, beauty and goodness are not subjective fancies but objective facts. They are sometimes brought out by calling them attributes of God. We have a consciousness that we belong to that which is ultimately real” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 493-494);

Religious experience, feeling of certitude in: “Religious experience is of self-certifying character. It is *svatassidha*. It carries its own credentials. But the religious seer is compelled to justify his inmost convictions in a way that satisfies the thought of the age. If there is not this intellectual confirmation, the seer’s attitude is one of trust. Religion rests on faith in this sense of the term. The mechanical faith which depends on authority and wishes to enjoy the consolation of religion without the labour of being religious is quite different from the religious faith which has its roots in experience” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 15-16); “The experience itself is felt to be sufficient and complete. It does not come in a fragmentary or truncated form demanding completion by something else. It does not look beyond itself for meaning and validity. It does not appeal to external standards of logic or metaphysics. It is sovereign in its own rights and carries its own credentials. It is self-established (*svatasiddha*), self-evidencing (*svasamvedya*), self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*). It does not argue or explain but it knows and is. It is beyond the bounds of proof and so touches completeness. It comes with a constraint that brooks no denial. It is pure comprehension, entire significance, complete validity. Patañjali, the author of the *Yoga Sūtra*, tells us that the insight is truth-filled, or truth-bearing” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 92-93); *as contrasted with common experience:* “If all our experience were possessed of intrinsic validity (*svataḥprāmāṇya*) there would be no question of truth and falsehood. There would be nothing with which our experience will have to cohere or to correspond. There would not arise any need or desire to test its value. All our experience will be self-valid, i.e. all reality will be present in its own immediate validity. But even the noblest human minds have had only glimpses of self-valid experience. The moments of vision are transitory and intermittent. We therefore do not attain an insight, permanent and uninterrupted, where reality is present in its own immediate witness. But we are convinced that such an ideal is not an impossible one” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 94); “The experience is felt as of the nature of a discovery or a revelation, not a mere conjuncture or a creation. The real was there actually confronting us, it was not conjured out of the resources of our mind. He claims for his knowledge of reality an immediate and intuitive certainty, transcending any which mere reason can reach. No further experience or rational criticism can disturb his sense of certainty. Doubt and disbelief are no more possible. He speaks without hesitation and with the calm accent of finality. Such strange simplicity and authoritativeness do we find in the utterances of the seers [...]” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 95); *and the need for proof:* “While those who share the experience do not seek for proofs for the

existence of spirit, but feel immediately certain of what is experienced, proofs have to be offered for those who do not share the experience. The rationality of the faith requires to be demonstrated” (Radhakrishnan 1952d: 494);

Religious experience, grades of intensity of: “While the profound intuitions do not normally occur, milder forms are in the experience of all who feel an answering presence in deep devotion or share the spell which great works of art cast on us. When we experience the illumination of new knowledge, the ecstasy of poetry or the subordination of the self to something greater, family or nation, the self-abandonment of falling in love, we have faint glimpses of mystic moods” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 93);

Religious experience, sense of the ineffability of: “In addition to the feeling of certitude is found the sense of the ineffability of the experience. It transcends expression even while it provokes it. It is just what it is and not like anything else. There is no experience by which we can limit it, no conception by which we can define it;” “The unquestionable content of experience is that about which nothing more can be said;” “Conceptual substitutes for ineffable experiences are not adequate. They are products of rational thinking. All forms, according to Śaṅkara, contain an element of untruth and the real is beyond all forms. Any attempt to describe the experience falsifies it to an extent. In the experience itself the self is wholly integrated and is therefore both the knower and the known, but it is not so in any intellectual description of the experience. The profoundest being of man cannot be brought out by mental pictures or logical counters. God is too great for words to explain. He is like light, making things luminous but himself invisible” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 95-97);

Religious experience, test the claim to truth of: “The only way to impart our experiences to others and elucidate their implications for the rest of our life and defend their validity against hostile criticism is by means of logic. When we test the claim of the experience to truth, we are really discussing the claims of the forms or propositions in which the nature of the experience is unfolded” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 98);

Scripture: “Every revealed Scripture is at once both divine self-manifestation and the way in which human beings have received it. There is a reciprocity of inward and outward. Revelation and its reception are inseparably united. We are the receptacles of the revelation. Our own form of reception cannot be confused with ‘an assumedly undiluted and untransformed revelation’ in Professor Paul Tillich’s words. ‘Wherever the divine is manifest in flesh, it is in a concrete physical and historical reality’” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 113); “The records of the experiences of the great seers who have expressed their sense of the inner meaning of the world through their intense insight and deep imagination are the Scriptures” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 113);

Seers: “Those who have attained wisdom are called *ṛsis* or seers, the Budhas or the awakened ones, the enlightened. While they identify the ultimate with the ground of all being, their faith is not irrational. Some of the greatest

seers of Asia and Europe have also been some of the greatest philosophers. They were outstanding in their clarity, consistency and comprehension” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 111); “A seer is one who wraps himself in the mantle of seclusion, closes the avenues of communication with the outside world, not to renounce his powers of insight, hearing and speech but to open the inner eye to spiritual realities, capture the sounds that come from the world above the ordinary one and sing in silence the hymn of praise to the Supreme Being” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 110); “The seer is the one ‘who, having looked upon the sun, henceforward sees the sun in all things’” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 110);

Self-knowledge: “When we cast the self free from all outward events, there arises from the inward depths an experience, secret and wonderful, strange and great. It is the miracle of self-knowledge, *ātma-jñāna*” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 73);

Sense experience: “Sense experience helps us to know the outer characters of the external world. By means of it we obtain an acquaintance with the sensible qualities of the objects. Its data are the subject-matter of natural science which builds up a conceptual structure to describe them” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 134);

Sense knowledge and logical knowledge, inadequate character of: “Both sense knowledge and logical knowledge are the means by which we acquire for practical purposes a control over our environment. Both these kinds of knowledge are recognised as inadequate to the real which they attempt to apprehend” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 134);

Spiritual experience, report and replication: “The report which the mind and the senses give, so long as they are unenlightened by the spirit in us, is a misleading report. Yet that report is the basis from which we have to proceed [...] The abstractions of the intellect require to be converted into the actuality of spiritual experience and the concrete vision of the soul” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 97);

Spiritual facts and their interpretations: “If the experience is the soul of religion, expression is the body through which it fulfils its destiny. We have the spiritual facts and their interpretations by which they are communicated to others, *śruti* or what is heard, and *smṛti* or what is remembered. Śaṅkara equates them with *pratyakṣa* or intuition and *anumāna* or inference. It is the distinction between immediacy and thought. Intuitions abide, while interpretations change. *Śruti* and *smṛti* differ as the authority of fact and the authority of interpretation. Theory, speculation, dogma, change from time to time as the facts become better understood. Their value is acquired from their adequacy to experience. When forms dissolve and their interpretations are doubted, it is a call to get back to the experience itself and reformulate its content in more suitable terms. While the experiential character of religion is emphasized in the Hindu faith, every religion at its best falls back on it.” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 90);

Spiritual wisdom, its fundamental conviction: “The consubstantiality of the spirit in man and God is the conviction fundamental to all spiritual wisdom. It is not a matter of inference only. In the spiritual experience itself, the barriers between the self and the ultimate reality drop away. In the moment of its highest insight the self becomes aware not only of its own existence but the existence of an omnipresent spirit of which it is, as it were, a focusing. We belong to the real and the real is mirrored in us. The great text of the Upaniṣad affirms it – Tat tvam asi (That art thou). It is a simple statement of an experienced fact” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 104);

Theology, dogmatic: “In dogmatic theology, on the other hand, the theologian regards himself as an expositor of traditional doctrine accepted as revealed and his task is limited to the elimination of contradictions in it. He takes his stand on one set of facts and ignores elements of reality that his shame does not recognise. Within limits the theologian is allowed freedom to interpret doctrines and elucidate their implications, but his investigations should always confirm the dogmas. While the methods are optional, the conclusions are obligatory” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 87); *speculative:* “Purely speculative theology which cuts itself off from religious tradition and experience and works from premises which are held to be universally valid cannot serve as an adequate philosophy of religion. The proofs of God’s existence from premises of a general character yield not the God of religion but a supreme first cause of being who can be construed into the objects of religious experience only if we start with the latter. A category of thought with no basis in fact is not an experienced certainty. No stable conviction can be built on mere dialectic. Speculative theology can conceive God as a possibility; it is religion that affirms God as a fact” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 88-89);

True knowledge: “True knowledge is an integral creative activity of the spirit which does not know anything external at all. For it everything is its own life. Here there is identity, possession, absorption of the object at the deepest level. Truth in spiritual life is neither the reflection nor the expression of any other reality. It is reality itself. Those who know the truth become the truth. *brahma-vid brahmaiva bhavati*. It is not a question of having an idea or a perception of the real. It is just the revelation of the real. It is the illumination of being and life itself. It is *satyam, jñānam*. Knowledge and being are the same thing, inseparable aspects of a single reality, being no longer even distinguishable in that sphere where all is without duality” (Radhakrishnan 1953: 98);

Veda, authority of: “The acceptance of the authority of the Vedas by the different systems of Hindu thought is an admission that intuitive insight is a greater light in the abstruse problems of philosophy than logical understanding” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 128); “The Vedas are received by men. They speak to men in their concrete situations” (Radhakrishnan 1960: 113); “The Veda, the wisdom, is the accepted name for the highest spiritual truth of which human mind is capable. It is the work of the ṛṣis or the seers. The truths of the

ṛṣis are not evolved as the results of logical reasoning or systematic philosophy but they are the products of spiritual intuition, *dr̥ṣṭi* or vision. The *ṛṣis* are not so much the authors of the truths recorded in the Vedas as the seers who were able to discern the eternal truths by raising their life/spirit to the plane of the universal spirit. They are the pioneer researchers in the realm of spirit who saw more in the world than their fellows. Their utterances are based not on transitory vision but on a continuous experience of resident life and power. When the Vedas are regarded as the highest authority, all that is meant is that the most exacting of all authorities is the authority of facts” (Radhakrishnan 1932: 89-90); “The chief sacred scriptures of the Hindus, the Vedas, register the intuitions of the perfected souls. They are not so much dogmatic dicta as transcripts from life. They record the spiritual experiences of souls strongly endowed with the sense of reality. They are held to be authoritative on the ground that they express the experiences of the experts in the field of religion. If the utterances of the Vedas were uninformed by spiritual insight, they would have no claim to our belief. The truths revealed in the Vedas are capable of being re-experienced on compliance with ascertained conditions. We can discriminate between the genuine and the spurious in religious experience, not only by means of logic but also through life. By experimenting with different religious conceptions and relating them with the rest of our life, we can know the sound from the unsound. The Vedas bring together the different ways in which the religious-minded of that age experienced reality and describe the general principles of religious knowledge and growth. As the experiences themselves are of a varied character, so their records are many-sided (*viśva-tomukham*) which Jayatīrtha in his *Nyāyasudhā* interprets as “suggestive of many interpretations” (*anekārthatām*)” (Radhakrishnan 1927: 17).

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