Śamkara and Husserl:
Investigations on Consciousness

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A

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TO

ŚRĪ ŚRĪ THĀKŪR

I dedicate this thesis at the lotus feet of my utmost reverential *Śrī Śrī Thākūr*, who has been the source, inspiration and the unseen power behind my success.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, GUWAHATI

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STATEMENT

I hereby declare that the matter embodied in this thesis is the result of investigations carried out by me in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, India under the guidance of Dr. Archana Barua.

In keeping with the general practice of reporting observations, due acknowledgements have been made wherever the work described is based on the findings of other investigators.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Mr. Surya Kanta Maharana has been working under my supervision since July 23, 2001. I am forwarding his thesis entitled "***Śamkara and Husserl: Investigations on Consciousness***" being submitted for the award of Ph.D degree of this institute. I certify that he has fulfilled all the requirements according to the rules of this institute, and that the investigations embodied in this thesis have not been submitted elsewhere for a degree.

I. I. T. Guwahati
February, 2004.

(Dr. Archana Barua)
Supervisor

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Prima facie, failing to portray my inner obligations to my supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) Archana Barua, I owe a debt of gratitude for her persistent encouragement and humble guidance in pursuing this piece of work. I would like taking note of the way she has been nurturing me, not unlike a cow to her calf, since the time of my involvement with her till date. No part of linguistic and intellectual potency can repay anything in return to the kind of cooperation and learned suggestions that she bestowed me.

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Svasthi na indro bṛdhaśravāḥ
Svasthi naḥ pūṣā viśvavedāḥ ।

Svasthi naḥ tārkṣyaḥ aristanemiḥ
Svasthi no bṛhaspatiḥ dadhātu. ॥

Oṁ ! *Śāṁtiḥ* ! *Śāṁtiḥ* ! *Śāṁtiḥ* !

– (*Ṛg Veda Saṁhitā*)

(May *Indra* of ancient fame be auspicious to us; may the supremely rich (or all-knowing) *pūṣā* (god of the earth) be propitious to us; may *Garūḍa*, the destroyer of evil, be well disposed towards us; may *Bṛhaspati* ensure our welfare.)

(Surya Kanta Maharana)

Abstract

The philosophical exploration of consciousness has a long history in both Indian and Western thought. Some of the conceptual models and analyses that have emerged in one cultural framework may be profitably reviewed in the light of another. The present thesis is an attempt at an investigation of the very possibility of parallel notion of consciousness in the Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara and the Transcendental Phenomenology of Husserl. It is an attempt at exploration of 'I – consciousness' in these two traditions with special reference to the writings of J. N. Mohanty.

For J. N. Mohanty any attempt at understanding Indian tradition in terms of Husserlian perspective needs some clarifications. For Husserl, consciousness is always intentional and object-directed while it is illuminative and non-intentional in its Vedāntic and in Śamkarite approach. This clearly shows that Husserl's thesis of intentionality would not have been accepted by Indian philosophers as object-directedness of consciousness could not be ascribed to consciousness in its purified state. Mohanty identifies this to be the issue that needs clarification before one makes an attempt at meaningful interaction between these two philosophical traditions associated with the Transcendental Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and with the Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara.

In this background my basic objective is a search for theories of meaning that center round epistemic questions like (a) what is valid knowledge? (b) How does one differentiate between *pramā* (valid cognition) and *apramā* (non-valid cognition) etc., that will help me in bridging the gap that might exist in these two different perspectives on consciousness. Mohanty here raises a very pertinent question, ''is there anything like a

'theory of sense' in Indian epistemology?" Even though one may come across a theory of sense in some version of the *sphota* theory or in Buddhist *apoha* theory, the Vedāntic tradition by and large preferred a theory of direct reference, their theory of meaning being a referential theory. This would obviously lead to the conclusion that in Husserlian emphasis on intentionality of consciousness, 'meaning' is a theory of 'sense' while in Śamkara and in Vedāntic approaches to consciousness, there is limitation of the identity of the logical as this order has to coincide with the contingent and the causal order. I have sought to minimize the gap between these two epistemic standpoints taking help of Buddhist theory of knowledge and its impact on Vedāntic theory of knowledge keeping these two facts in mind that Śamkara's most revered *guru* Gaudapāda was well versed in Buddhist theories of logic and epistemology and his noted commentary on *Māndukya Upanisad* has much Buddhist elements in it. It is also believed that Śamkara himself was much sympathetic to the Buddhist theories of meaning as he could creatively assimilate some Buddhist ideas in a Vedāntic perspective.

In this connection, my basic objective is to search some Buddhist elements incorporated in the Vedāntic framework. Accordingly, the proposed thesis aims at examining systematically the concept of 'consciousness' in both Śamkara and in Husserl in terms of some pre-existing theories of consciousness mainly Gaudapāda's theory of consciousness and its impact on the Advaita Vedānta tradition, Franz Brentano's theory of intentionality and its impact on the Phenomenological tradition of Husserl. After an examination of four theories of consciousness an investigation has been made to understand the nature of 'Pure consciousness' in terms of meanings provided by Indian and Western epistemological traditions. It is also an enquiry into the following concepts, namely, (a) *Jivan mukti* and Life-World, (b) *Neti..neti* and *Epoché*, and (c) *Dharma-bhuta-jnāna* and Intentionality.

Gaudapāda aims at an exploration of the various states of consciousness, namely, waking, dreaming and sleeping and concludes that the self has been indicated as the "Fourth" state called "*Tūriya*", the witness consciousness, though it is not really a state. *The highest truth is non-dual Tūriya, Advaita, which leads to "Ajātivāda",* the theory that nothing is ever born as all duality is illusory. Critics acknowledge some sort of Buddhist (Mādhyamika School) influence on Śamkara through Gaudapāda. For Sankara, the all-pervading consciousness is the centre and basis of all knowledge and experience. Knowledge is the result of the association of it with the internal organ (*ahamkāra*). Highest knowledge is *Tūriya* which is also called the state of *Jivan Mūkti*. Śamkara concludes that the knowledge of the world is illusory and it is indescribable either as real or unreal. Despite some Buddhistic influences of his Grand teacher Gaudapāda, Śamkara remained a supporter of the Vedic reference-centric theories.

It is acknowledged by Husserl that he is indebted to the most crucial concept of 'intentionality' which gives an account of a peculiar kind of self-evidence of mental status, which could yield apodictic truths. For Brentano, intentionality is both object directed (transcendence centric) and relational (immanence centric). Husserl develops the relational aspect of intentionality which is act oriented rather than object directed. Influenced by Brentano, Husserl begins his phenomenology as a science of the essential structure of consciousness. The *epoché* discloses the realm of pure consciousness or the realm of transcendental ego which is the condition of all knowledge and experience. The world derives its meaning from consciousness and intentionality. As all things are constituted in consciousness by intentionality. Phenomenology's prime concern is to understand how does the pure consciousness constitute 'sense' or 'meaning' of objects, not the objects themselves.

Conclusively, it is worth mentioning that in Śamkara's theory of knowledge, it is difficult to find consciousness which is constitutive of sense or meaning in the manner of Husserl's constitutive pure consciousness. In Śamkara, *Māyā,* the *Śakti* of *Purusa* or of pure consciousness, has the power to conceal (*āvarana*) and to project (*viksepa*), which may have some resemblance to the pure subjectivity and its constitution of meaning that we find in Husserl. In Husserl, it is the transcendental ego that is constitutive while in Śamkara it is the energy of Pure Consciousness, its *Māyā,* the principle of unconsciousness, that produces the world appearance on pure consciousness, but it is not constitution proper. Śamkara takes help of the instrumentality of *Māyā* for the world appearance. Besides, the thesis investigates some other common interests between these two traditions, namely, *Jivan mukti* versus 'Life – World', *Neti…neti* versus *Epoché* and *Dharma-bhuta-jnāna* versus intentionality. Firstly, for both Śamkara and Husserl the '*Epoché*' and the '*Neti Neti'* are methodologies that would direct one to the realm of consciousness which is *Svaprakāsa* for Śamkara and the apodictic principle in Husserl. Secondly, both for Śamkara and Husserl 'Life-world' is the ordinary day to day life of experience that is the context of pragmatic and pre-logical understanding which continues to exist even after one has attained a higher realm of transcendental consciousness. Lastly, more than Śamkara, Rāmānuja, the theistic commentator of Vedānta, would come closer to Husserl in some ----------as for Rāmānuja consciousness is object-directed and intentional.

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CONTENTS

Chapter-1

The Preamble

Philosophy has often been considered to be a reflective discipline, a discipline that focuses on the basis of the universe and of human experience. From the moment man began to reflect on his own being, the very nature of his 'reflection' itself, that is, the fact of his consciousness or the cognitive relation in which he stands to the world, has drawn his persistent attention. He realized he differed in an unmistakable way from the stone, the plants and the animals, no matter how similar to these he looked in other respects. He alone, in this vast cosmos, had the privilege of full cognition and could wonder and stare at the mystery of the cosmos, himself included. The fact of his being 'conscious' was a distinction. Man had been in search of himself through the ages, and yet, he remained a mystery to himself. Among all the elements of his mystery, the most conspicuous is the phenomenon of his 'consciousness'. What is, after all, consciousness? In this immense universe of matter, which is or which appears to be unconscious, how does this consciousness emerge? Is consciousness entirely alien to matter? Are they in any way related to each other? Is that relation merely external? Or is it internal? Again, is consciousness identical with what we mean by Mind? Or, is mind itself a certain degree or kind of consciousness? Is consciousness human, or divine, finite or infinite? Philosophers, religious thinkers, scientists and psychologists, of East and West, have long tried to answer these and related questions, and today, of course, interest in the nature of consciousness is as vital as ever.

Nevertheless, as we begin to examine closely the nature of these questions, we are baffled by the interaction between body and the mind, between the 'unconscious' and

the ‘conscious’. Still further as we fathom into the possibilities of extension of consciousness, we are overwhelmed by the immensities and heights of the planes and levels of our being. We begin to ask ‘What is man’s beginning and what is his end?’ Indeed, the mystery of man seems essentially to be the mystery of consciousness. Philosophers and psychologists have attempted to pierce through this mystery, and we have before us several speculations, hypotheses, conclusions, several claims, dogmas, faiths, and several doubts, disbeliefs and denials. Increasingly sophisticated scientific instruments have provided vast quantities of new data in terms of which neurophysiologists and psychologists are “mapping” the structure of the brain. A great deal of attention is being paid to behavioral abnormalities and learning disabilities in order to discover what factors might twist or inhibit the development of socially adjusted and conventionally productive consciousness. Many behaviorally oriented philosophers have been trying to analyze states of human consciousness in terms of action, or the intentions and desires which motivate action. But other psychologists and philosophers have rejected the attempted “objectification” of consciousness, arguing instead that consciousness can neither be reduced to matter nor fully understood by observation alone.

To the seeker of knowledge, to the scientist of the unknown, to the worshipper of light, all these are of immense value as a great aid to the quest of the mystery of consciousness, and, hence, a central study of this subject is not only most fascinating, but something that is indispensable to the further immediate steps of humanity’s progress. Consciousness is here used tentatively in the sense opposite to that of unconsciousness, as implying the awareness of a situation characterized by the relationship of subject and object in an act of cognition. It also implies the consciousness of selfhood, for no one is ever empirically conscious without being implicitly conscious

also of one's own self. A reflective self-feeling sharply divides the world of consciousness from the world of unconsciousness. The 'I' as the distinguishing feature of the realm of consciousness is absent from the realm of the unconscious.

In the West, the Cartesian dualism makes a sharp and radical division between mind and body. The two are regarded as separate substances and it is thought that the interaction between them is impossible except through some inexplicable or mysterious intervention or connection. The facts of the connection between body and mind are so compelling that Descartes was obliged to assume the connection between the two through the pineal gland. But the pineal gland is, after all, physical, and thus, in effect, the original assumption of the possibility of the interaction between body and mind is contradicted. In the East, the 'Śāmkhya *Darsana'* groups together both mind and body where both are considered as the results of *Prakrti*, which is fundamentally a material principle. Both mind, (that is, *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahamkara*) and body are physical and unconscious (*jada*). The phenomenon of consciousness is explained by supposing an independent principle of '*Purusa*' whose very nature is that of conscious luminosity and inactivity. Once again, we have a trenchant opposition between consciousness and the products of the physical principles. But once again we find that the Śāmkhya assumes a connection between them which is of crucial significance. And, in spite of this connection, it still is a mystery how the unconscious principle assumes, even though apparently, that semblance of consciousness that is the distinctiveness of another realm, that of *Purusa*. The phenomenon of consciousness remains a mystery in the Śāmkhya.

In modern behaviourism, it is supposed that there is no such thing as consciousness, that all the so-called mental or conscious phenomena of perception, emotion, thought, imagination, can be explained in terms of the simple formula of SR or SCR (Stimulus

and Response (SR) or Stimulus and Conditioned Reflexes (SCR)). But when we come to examine this psychological theory, we find that it fails completely to explain the core of our conscious experience, namely the phenomenon of 'understanding'. Understanding is indeed not behaviour, and even though it can manifest through behaviour, it cannot entirely do so. Behaviour may manifest understanding but it cannot explain it. Besides, when we come to examine facts now brought forward by the psychical research, psychoanalysis and allied schools, we begin to wonder if body is not a form of consciousness, having its own dumb or unconscious will, thought, and feeling. The difference between the conscious and the unconscious seems to be simply a matter of degree. When we come to study the modern schools of psychology, their apex-ideas of 'polarities of conflicting drives', 'dream analysis', 'personality styles', 'integration', and the rest, in the light of the Indian knowledge system (especially and Yoga and Advaita Vedānta) that has been gained through the ages by direct experience and a rigorous process of research, experimentation and verification, we may feel that we are in possession of scientific data which far exceed the tentative and inadequate data of modern psychology .That these data when recognized, studied and re-established, would revolutionise our concept of consciousness and open the doors of new application of the powers of consciousness in the fields of physiology, health, medicine, cybernetics, epistemology, mental sciences, education – in the very science and technology of evolution on the earth. In this connection, the philosophical exploration of consciousness has a long history in both Indian and Western thought. Some of the conceptual models and analyses that have emerged in our cultural framework may be fruitfully reviewed in the light of another.

The present thesis is an attempt at making a comparison of the philosophies of the East and West, which have sought to explore the mystery of consciousness. Central to this is

the comparison of the Advaita notion of pure consciousness with similar notion in Husserl's phenomenology. A study of the different levels of the constitution of 'I' in the Transcendental Phenomenology of Husserl is important not only as a remarkable achievement in the context of Western thought regarding this issue but is also useful for an appreciation of the philosophical tradition, notably in Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara. The thesis to be worked out here is an attempt to understand the nature of the philosophical investigations into the question of consciousness in the Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara and the Transcendental Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. The thesis explores the phenomenological relevance of the concept of consciousness in Indian philosophy, while at the same time demonstrating that the notion of pure consciousness is essential for any sound theory of knowledge. The thesis reveals that the Advaitic pure consciousness is a major contribution to comparative philosophy and forms a vantage point for cross-cultural comparison. Phenomenology has acknowledgeably a common face both for the Indian and Western tradition.

When 'Śamkara and Husserl' is being spoken about, the "and " does not imply any relationship or influence obtaining between the two. Any such relationship is obviously out of question for classical Indian philosophy of Śamkara. Nevertheless, we can still aspire to look for some phenomenological elements in the Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara. Only when we come to speak about recent and contemporary trends in Indian philosophy does it make sense to ask if the phenomenological movement has had any impact. The present work is an exploration for the phenomenological elements in the complex world of Advaita Vedānta doctrine of consciousness. In this context, it is worthwhile to quote the observation of Professor J. N. Mohanty. He says: "It is quite natural, therefore, to expect that the great philosophies of ancient Indian should exhibit phenomenological investigations of high order. And the expectation stands fulfilled. Only,

it has been unfortunate that little notice of this aspect has so long been taken by Indian scholars in their attempts to place Indian philosophy in the perspective of the Western philosophies. As a result, the dynamics of philosophical thought has been lost sight of. And what we have been given has only been a table of parallel world-views on either side. A world-view, however, is not philosophy. Philosophy is an activity, progressively leading on to new truths. What comparative philosophy can best do is to trace parallel lines of progress, parallely-motivated dynamics of thought." [1]

It is during the last decades of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century, that serious effort has been made as Vedāntic philosophy came to be confronted with the grand systems of German idealism, and then with the idealistic positions of the British and American neo-Hegelians. Attempts were made to look back at the systems of Vedānta, for example, through the neo-Hegelian spectacles. The attempts were made by the philosophers like Kalidas Bhattacharyya and many like J. N. Mohanty, Debabrata Sinha, R. Balasubhramanian and many others that have paved way for a meaningful dialogue between the two traditions. The confrontation of the Vedānta with the Phenomenological movement is of recent origin. But such apparent correspondence may also hide radical differences and the inner tensions. I have learnt from the scholarly guidance of my predecessors to make a cautious move in this direction. Edmund Husserl, the spearhead of recent German idealism, was led to his notion of transcendental consciousness out of various philosophical motives.[2] Similar concepts are also reflected in the tradition of Indian Philosophy, specially in the 'Śāmkhya' and 'Vedānta' systems, where one can look for parallels. If anywhere, it is here that we find the Cartesian search for indubitability.[3] The *Ātman* or transcendental consciousness is supposed to provide the absolute foundation for all knowledge, and indeed for all conscious behaviour.[4] There is also in Husserl the idea of an absolute and

adequate givenness, Husserl's relentless search for the 'originary' given and to go to the 'facts themselves'. It is, however, one of the cardinal doctrines of the 'Śāmkhya' and the 'Vedānta' that consciousness alone is self-given (*svaprakāsa*), that it alone in fact is the very principle of givenness, whereas all transcendence is given in and through relatedness (real or apparent) to consciousness. Thus, consciousness becomes in both the systems, specially in the 'Advaita Vedānta' (for the Śāmkhya admits of a transcendence, an other, the *Prakrti* which is as primitive as consciousness), the phenomenologically primitive term. It is given apodictically and adequately as it alone is capable of being absolutely given. 'Advaita Vedānta', like Husserl, traces back the ego to the dimension of transcendental consciousness which is foundational and unconditional.

A Brief outline of the Problem

The present thesis, a research in the field of 'Comparative Philosophy' entitled 'Śamkara and Husserl : Investigations on Consciousness', is an attempt at investigating parallel notions on consciousness in Śamkara's philosophy of Advaita Vedānta and the Husserl's philosophy of Phenomenology centering round the problem of consciousness. The original encouragement for this work came from Prof. J. N. Mohanty's brilliant exposition of certain Vedāntic notions in the line of Husserlian Phenomenology. I have started my philosophical quest in the light of what these great scholars have identified to be one basic question that needs careful scrutiny, time and again, the quest that is central to both Husserl and Śamkara, namely, "what is consciousness?" Other related questions are: What exactly Husserl means by "pure consciousness"? What exactly Śamkara means by "pure consciousness"? How far both can come closer to one another? These questions are formulated as a result of my examination of the writings of Prof. J.N.Mohanty, a pioneer in the field of Phenomenological research. Mohanty

observes that for Husserl, consciousness is intentional by definition and for Śamkara or Advaita Vedānta, consciousness is non-intentional or pure by definition. While talking about intentionality Mohanty comments: “The thesis of intentionality has itself two parts: that consciousness is always directed towards an object, and – since the intentional object may or may not exist – that every conscious state has a co-relative sense or meaning.” He continues, “As regards the theory of sense, the Indian philosophers have by and large preferred a theory of direct reference, their theory of meaning being generally speaking a *referential* theory. In such a theory, as is easy to appreciate, the mediation by sense is uncalled for. However, looking for a theory of sense, one discovers it at unsuspected corners: at those places where the concept of reference is called into question (as in Buddhist *apoha*-theory) or where belief in eternity of ‘word’ led them to posit eternal meanings (as in some versions of the *sphota* theory).”[5] Further, while talking about pure consciousness in Advaita Vedānta, he says, “But it also became increasingly questionable if the pure consciousness (called *Brahman*) of Vedānta, absolute and foundational though it is conceived to be, can be said to be constitutive of the domains of empirical realities as well as of abstract idealities. Especially in the Advaita Vedānta tradition, consciousness does nothing, it simply manifests, reveals, illuminates or evidences.”[6]

From this it follows that in Husserl, consciousness study is more ‘meaning-centric’, with its emphasis on “sense” than on “reference”. This Mohanty feels will bring Husserl closer to the Buddhist theories of ‘*Apoha*’ and ‘*Sphota*vāda’ than to a ‘reference-centric’ Vedāntic theory of Knowledge. There could be another point of difference between the two traditions as to their objectives. Husserlian study of consciousness is a purely theoretical quest for certainty in Knowledge, whereas Śamkara’s aim is theoretical as well as soteriological or *Moksa* oriented. Following Mohanty’s guidelines I have made

some changes in my approach to a comparative study of Husserl and Śamkara. I have tried to understand the impact of some schools of Buddhism like Mādhyamika on Śamkara through his Guru's Guru Gaudapāda. It is Gaudapāda who shows clear impacts of Buddhism in his theory of knowledge. It is pointed out by scholars that both Gaudapāda and Śamkara have been charged as "*Praccanna Bauddha*", a Buddha in disguise. Being a close follower of Gaudapāda, Śamkara seems to have incorporated some Buddhist elements into his thought though he remained a supporter and preserver of the 'reference-centric' Vedāntic theories of knowledge. My quest is for this dimension of sense and reference in Buddhism and in Vedānta with a search for Buddhist elements in Śamkara's theory of knowledge, if there is any, which would minimize the gap between 'meaning-centric' or 'sense-centric' and 'reference-centric' theories felicitating a parallelism between Husserl's theory of consciousness and that of Śamkara.

Accordingly, the thesis aims at examining systematically the concept of 'consciousness' in both Śamkara and Husserl. Before undergoing an examination of these philosophies, it further enquires about the pre-existing theories of consciousness by which these philosophies seem to be mostly influenced. These pre-existing theories are: Gaudapāda's theory of consciousness in the Advaita Vedānta tradition and Franz Brentano's influence in Husserl and in the Phenomenological tradition. Thus, before discussing Śamkara's theory of consciousness, the thesis examines Gaudapāda's theory, the way Franz Brentano's theory is discussed prior to Husserl's theory of consciousness. After examining these four theories of consciousness, an investigation has been made to see how far the concept of 'Pure consciousness' runs parallel in the philosophies of Śamkara and Husserl. Finally, the thesis mentions its unique contributions in the form of opening up three major concepts which are of comparable interest and seem to possess adequate resemblances for both these great philosophers.

These concepts are: (a) *Jivan mukti* and Life-World, (b) *Neti..neti* and *Epoché*, and (c) *Dharma-bhuta-jnana* and Intentionality. A brief outline of the body of the thesis is elucidated as follows.

The present chapter is the Chapter-1 which provides a general introduction to the problem and the nature of the work as a whole. Chapter-2, 'Consciousness in Gaudapāda's *Māndukya Karika',* is an attempt to outline Gaudapāda's notion of consciousness. In this chapter, it is contended that Gaudapāda exercises a very significant position in the Advaita Vedānta tradition as the grand teacher of Śamkara. Gaudapāda focuses on a religious or spiritual pursuit where philosophy is presented as a rational attempt to understand the experiential dimension. Further, Gaudapāda aims at the nature of man's experience and exploration of truth by a method called *Asparśa Yoga* using homologies based on the syllable 'OM' (*AUM*), manifested through four *pādas* or quarters as basic states of the Self (*Ātman*). The four states are: *Visva,* the waking state – where consciousness goes outward and is intentional; *Taijasa*, the dream state – where consciousness goes inward, is still intentional and *Prājna*, the deep sleep state – where mass consciousness exists, is non-intentional but has the possibility of becoming intentional. Besides these three states, the self has been indicated as the "Fourth" state called "*Turīya*", the witness consciousness, though it is not really a state. Gaudapāda uses two levels of truth, namely, *vyavahārika* and *paramārthika.* The highest truth is non-duality, *Advaita*, which leads to "Ajātivada", the theory that nothing is ever born as all duality is illusory. *Turīya* alone is the ever-present reality. Critics acknowledge some kind of Buddhist (Mādhyamika School) influence on Śamkara through Gaudapāda who was greatly revered by Śamkara as '*Guru* of the *Guru*'. However, it seems that Śamkara unlike Mādhyamika Buddhism accepts the reality of the permanent, the Self as

against the 'flux' of Buddhism. The Absolute of Gaudapāda is highly abstract, meaning-centric and negative in comparison to Śamkara.

Chapter-3, **'**Consciousness in Śamkara's Epistemology', deals with the nature of consciousness according to Śamkara's epistemology. It focuses on the fact that Śamkara acknowledges two kinds of knowledge, *Parā* (higher) and *Aparā* (lower). Higher knowledge is the state of all-pervading pure consciousness and lower knowledge is the state of subject-object relation and means of knowledge. Though these two realms are different from each other, the all-pervading consciousness continuously remains present throughout these realms. The all-pervading consciousness is the centre and basis of all knowledge and experience. Knowledge is the result of the association of it with the internal organ (*antahkarana*). Chapter-4, 'Consciousness in Śamkara's Metaphysics', outlines Śamkara's notion of consciousness from the perspective of Śamkara's metaphysics. Since Śamkara's notion of consciousness can fully be grasped if it is dealt with from both the epistemological and metaphysical perspectives. This chapter makes an observation that there is no distinction between the all-pervading consciousness and the individual self (*jiva*), it is the one and the same ultimate reality, viewed differently from the *Paramārthika* and from the *Vyavahārika* levels. Since, the all-pervading consciousness, called '*Brahman*', has no distinguishing marks, it is described through the negative approach called *neti..neti.* It is called *Turīya*, the 'Fourth' from the perspective of three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. It runs through in all states though it remains unaffected by them. It appears to be intentional through all these, but essentially it is non-intentional. When the individual self attains this state, he is called a *Jivan-mukta,* liberated in embodied state. Finally, Śamkara concludes that the knowledge of the world is illusory and it is indescribable either as real or unreal. Despite the Buddhist influences of his Grand teacher Gaudapāda, Śamkara emphasizes more

upon experience, while Gaudapāda gives more weightage on logic and to the abstract domain.

Chapter-5, 'Consciousness in Franz Brentano', is a discussion of the notion of consciousness in the light of Franz Brentano's 'Descriptive Psychology'. Since Brentano is the pioneer of the movement that was known for its scientific rigour and for non-reductive approach to consciousness, his impact on Husserl is worth recording. Accordingly, I have made a similar approach of understanding Husserl through his teacher Brentano, the way Śamkara's special impact on the Vedāntic tradition was sought to be understood through Gaudapāda. This is also necessary in order to understand the impact of a movement that opted for scientific rigour with its search for the irreducible dimension of human subjectivity, a movement which started with the efforts made by Brentano. Brentano shares with Husserl the teacher-student relation the way Gaudapāda shares a special *Guru-Śisya* relation with Śamkara. Brentano aims to provide philosophical foundations to psychology and establishes psychology as an "Exact Science", a descriptive science of consciousness. Husserl shares with Brentano his idea of 'Revival of Scientific philosophy', the reformulation of Aristotelian Concept of 'Intentionality' and the idea of giving an account of a peculiar kind of self-evidence of mental states, which could yield apodictic truth. Nevertheless, Husserl differs from Brentano as the latter exposes his metaphysical interests and Aristotelianism along with his doctrine that only individual things exist while denying the existence of universals, species, etc. Brentano defines intentionality from two perspectives, as both object directed (transcendence centric) and relational (immanence centric). Husserl develops the relational aspect of intentionality which is act oriented rather than the object directed, transcendental dimension. Husserl could modify Brentano's theory in his own way in the light of a new interpretation of some terms like 'inner', 'outer', etc., thereby safeguarding

both ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ which was not properly safeguarded in Brentano’s claim that intentional object is an immanent object and is entirely mind dependent and existence independent.

The Chapter-6, ‘Consciousness in Edmund Husserl’, exposes Husserl’s understanding of consciousness from his phenomenological perspective. Brentano germinated philosophical interest in Husserl which led to the phenomenological movement and its search for subjectivity of consciousness. Phenomenology is a science of the essential structure of consciousness the nature of which is both a flux and a unity that stands still. Husserl’s problem was (1) how is meaning constituted by subjectivity or consciousness? and (2) How does the ‘I’ stand in the ‘We’? In order to solve this, he focused upon ‘objectivity’ as an achievement of intersubjective-confirmation and acceptance. This is the transcendental dimension of consciousness that constitutes the ‘Life-world’, the human environment of consciousness, where our ordinary world of experience takes place. ‘I’ as the ‘Transcendental Ego’ shares a common world with other transcendental egos. This “Life-world’ is attained through *epoché*, a suspension of all beliefs regarding the previous existing philosophical theories. With the help of the *epoché* Husserl discloses the realm of pure consciousness or transcendental ego which is the condition of all knowledge and experience. The empirical ego, the source of all previously existing beliefs, is bracketed, but the transcendental ego survives. The world derives its meaning from consciousness and intentionality. All things are constituted in consciousness by intentionality as transcendental consciousness gives both meaning and being to the world. Experience consists of the *noesis-noema* structure of consciousness, the subject – object poles of experience. Perception has its own *noema* and the ‘perceived as such’ that constitutes the perceptual meaning. Thus, phenomenology is a meaning-oriented

doctrine where pure consciousness constitutes 'sense' of objects, not the objects themselves.

Chapter-7, **'**Investigation of Parallel notions of consciousness in Śamkara and Husserl', investigates the parallel notions of Advaitic notion of consciousness with Husserl's phenomenological notion of consciousness. It is an attempt at finding out a possibility of intra-philosophical dialogue between the Indian thinking of consciousness and the Phenomenological thinking of consciousness of the West. The main concepts that have been taken for comparison are: Śamkara' s concept of pure consciousness versus Husserl's pure consciousness, consciousness and ego in Husserl versus that of Śamkara, and intentionality in Husserl versus that of Śamkara. It is found ultimately that it was confronted with some other parallel concepts, namely, *Jivan mukti* versus 'Life – World', *Neti…neti* versus *Epoché* and *Dharma-bhūta-jnāna* versus intentionality. For both Śamkara and Husserl the '*Epoché*' and the '*Neti Neti'* lead to the realm of consciousness which is *Svaprakāsa* for Śamkara and the apodictic principle in Husserl. Secondly, both for Śamkara and Husserl 'Life-world' is the ordinary day to day life of experience. It appears that in some occasions Rāmānuja, the theistic commentator of Vedānta*,* would come closer to Husserl as for Rāmānuja consciousness is given intentional as it is qualified by '*cit*' and '*acit*'.

Chapter-8 is a summation of the points of similarity and of difference both the two traditions. It is observed that in Śamkara's theory of knowledge, it is difficult to find consciousness which is constitutive of sense or meaning to the world, like Husserl's constitutive pure consciousness. In Śamkara, *Māyā* has the power to conceal (*āvarana*) and to project (*viksepa*), which may have some resemblance to the pure subjectivity in Husserl. In Husserl, it is the Transcendental ego that is constitutive while in Śamkara it is

the energy of Pure Consciousness, its *Māyā,* that produces the world appearance on Pure consciousness, *Cit* or consciousness does not constitute. Śamkara takes help of the instrumentality of *Māyā* for the constitution of the world appearance.

The present work is an exploration toward a meaningful contact between these two traditions which is a comparison with respect to the differences. My work has rather highlighted the points of differences along with the points of similarities rather than identifying some common points exclusively. I began my work with some quotations from J. N. Mohanty. I have also concluded with what Mohanty has to say for a meaningful comparison of tradition, one's own and the 'other', between the Vedāntic concept of 'consciousness' as advocated by Śamkara and the Husserlian approach to it – both leading toward an unfolding of the layers that have constituted the 'person' in man. Mohanty comments: "The identity of a person is a complex high order identity of various layers of identity; Philosophy has to unravel these, peeling off onion skins. Intentionality of Husserl is horizontal, it points to something that is outside of itself. Every experience of others is the experience of one who can say 'I', who can peel of the different layers and who can remain vigilant exploring the Self quest." [7]

I have been benefited by some of the literature on philosophy apart from some primary sources that I have used a list of which is mentioned.[8] From among the above literature, the following scholars have made some observations which are relevant to my present work. I will make a brief reference to some such scholars as – Debabrata Sinha: " With its typical subjectively-oriented outlook, Phenomenology seems, of all the Western systems, to promise the closest approach to Advaitic idealism (in its Cit-aspect) – necessary concessions being, ofcourse, made for the otherwise widely different contexts." (Preface to the original, p. xi. The Metaphysics of Experience in Advaita

Vedānta : A Phenomenological Approach). Bina Gupta: “Such a concept of phenomenological ‘on-looker’ who does not participate in the world belief perhaps comes closest to the Advaitic notion of *Sāksin* or the witness consciousness, the disinterested witness”. (Editors Introduction, p.xvi. Explorations in Philosophy, Essays by J.N. Mohanty, Vol. II) R. Balasubhramanian: “The distinction which Advaita makes between the Pure consciousness and the ego-consciousness (Mind-consciousness), which is very subtle, but profound and crucial, is comparable to the distinction between the pure or the transcendental ego and the epoch-performing ego accepted by Husserl.” (Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, p. 79). Anindita N. Balslev: “If constitutive phenomenology has for its goal a systematic exploration of consciousness giving rise to a full-fledged phenomenological egology, the same may be said of Advaita Vedānta.” (Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, p.136).

Notes and References

[1] Bilimoria, Purushottama (ed.) (1993) J.N. Mohanty Essays on Indian Philosophy: Traditional and Modern, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. 249.

[2] Kern, I. (1964) Husserl and Kant,: Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, pp. 195f.

[3] 'Since sometimes error is possible with regard to outer objects, these are merely similar to that. But there never arises doubt with regard to the subject of experience, namely whether I am the same as he or am merely like him'. *Brahmasūtra* Śamkara *Bhāsya*, 2.2.25. Also: 'Every one is aware of his own existence; no one knows "I am not." If the existence of the self were not well-known, then every one could have experience "I do not exist."' *Brahmasūtra* Śamkara *Bhāsya*, 1.1.1.

[4] 'Self is the locus, the support, of all activity including valid knowledge, and so is established prior to them. It is possible to deny such a thing. Only a contingent thing can be denied, but not the self itself. It is the essence of him who denies; the warmth of fire cannot be removed by fire itself.' *Brahmasūtra* Śamkara *Bhāsya,* 2.3.37.

[5] Mohanty, J. N. (1988) Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy: The Concept of Rationality, Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, Vol. 19, No. 3, October. p. 272. Also see, Chattopadhyaya, D.P., Embree Lester & Mohanty, J.N. (ed.) (1992) Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, Indian Council of Philosophical Research and Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi.p.11.

[6] Chattopadhyaya, D.P., Embree, Lester & Mohanty, J.N. (ed.) (1992) Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, Indian Council of Philosophical Research and Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. p.12. Also see Mohanty, J. N. Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy: The Concept of Rationality, Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, Vol. 19, No. 3, October 1988.pp. 273-274.

[7] Mohanty, J. N. (2000) Self and its other, Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 82.

[8] a) Sinha, Debabrata. (1983) The Metaphysics of Experience in Advaita Vedānta: A Phenomenological Approach, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

b) Balasubhramanian, R. (1992) Advaita Vedānta on the Problem of Enworlded Subjectivity, in Chattopadhyaya, D.P., Embree Lester & Mohanty, J.N. (ed.) Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, Indian Council of Philosophical Research and Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

c) Balslev, Anindita Niyogi. (1992) Analysis of I-consciousness in the Transcendental Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy in Chattopadhyaya, D.P., Embree Lester & Mohanty, J.N. (ed.) Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, Indian Council of Philosophical Research and Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi.

d) Bagchi, K. K. (1992) An Indian Interaction with Phenomenology: Perspectives on the Philosophy of K.C.Bhattacharyya, in Chattopadhyaya, D.P., Embree Lester & Mohanty, J.N. (ed.) Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, Indian Council of Philosophical Research and Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

e) Indich, William M. (1980) Consciousness in Advaita Vedānta, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

f) Gupta, Bina. (2002) (ed.) Explorations in Philosophy : Essays by J.N. Mohanty, Oxford University Press, Delhi, Vol. II, Preface.

g) Puligandla, R.K. (1999) The Message of Mandukya Upanisad: A Phenomenological Analysis of Mind and Consciousness, The Indian Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XXVI, No.2, April.

h) Nayak, G.C. (2002) Concept of *Saksi Caitanya* in Advaita Vedānta with special reference to the *Upanisads*, in The Philosophical Quarterly, Amalner, Vol. VI, No. 1-2, January-April.

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Chapter-2

Consciousness in Gauapāda's *Māndukya Kārikā*

Introduction

The celebrated work of Gaudapāda, the *Māndukya Kārikā* is a commentary on the *Māndukya Upanisad.* Gaudapāda's name appears among the lineage of teachers called the *daśanāmi paramparā* throughout the Indian subcontinent. The *daśanāmi paramparā* can be viewed from the following verse quotation below.

> "I repeatedly bow down to *Nārāyana*, to the one born from a lotus (Brahmā), to Vasistha, Śakti, and his son Parāśara, to Vyāsa, Śuka, to the great Gaudapāda, to Govinda the best of *yogi*s, then to his student Śamkarācārya, and to his students Padmapāda and Hastāmalaka, Trotaka and the *Vārttikakāra* (Sureśvara), and others (up to and including my own teacher."[1]

Śamkara himself most respectfully salutes Gaudapāda as his 'grand-teacher who is the respected teacher of his respected teacher (i.e., *Paramaguru*).[2] Śamkara's disciple Sureśvara also refers to him as the 'Revered Gauda'.[3] However, this philosophical heritage comes from the teachings transmitted through a succession of *gurus*. The tradition maintains that this lineage has been continuously upheld in some form since the time of the compilation of the Advaitic spiritual truths and insights into the Upanisadic literature. The above verse quotation is a type of succession list of early Advaita is given in the traditional salutation daily repeated by the followers of Śamkara. The order of *guru-parampara* does not spell out what kind of relationship existed between most of

these figures, such as between Śuka and Gaudapāda or between Gaudapāda and Govinda, whereas it does mention a teacher-student relationship between some names, such as between Govinda and Śamkara. In the best known of the traditional accounts of Śamkara's life, Mādhava's '*Śamkaradigvijaya*', the relationships are spelled out more closely and it is said that Vyasa was the son of Parāśara and Śuka was the son of Vyasa and that Gaudapāda was the student of Śuka and the teacher of Govinda.[4] In this list of ten *gurus*, the first preceptor is Lord *Nārāyana* himself and the line of succession up to Śuka is from father to son (*pitr-putra* or *vamśarsi-parampara*). These figures are probably legendary mythical personages though from Śuka onwards there is the teacher-disciple succession (*guru-śisya* or *śisya-parampara*). With Gaudapāda commences the '*mānava-sampradāya*', the traditional handing down of instruction by historical figures. Gaudapāda is the first 'non-mythical' (historical) preceptor accorded the highest respect in the tradition. He is the first teacher or preceptor whose historicity is assured and it is from him onwards that tradition is visible historically. Whether or not in fact Gaudapāda was the first preceptor of Advaita Vedānta and that the whole tradition began with him or that he merely represents the first visible manifestation of a concrete tradition remains a conjecture. All that needs be pointed out here is that Gaudapāda is accorded a unique position within the historical tradition in Advaita Vedānta on the basis of his '*Māndukya Kārikā*' and the '*Kārikās*' or verses are the earliest systematic Advaita treatise we possess.[5]

Guadapāda's Work: *Māndukya Kārikā*

Gaudapāda's work is popularly known as the '*Māndukya Kārikā*' (or *Kārikās*). The *Kārikās* or verses are composed by the preceptor Gaudapāda and seems to represent his own exposition upon ideas suggested by the *Māndukya Upanisad*. Śamkara himself, in his introduction to the Upanisadic commentary, has said that the *Māndukya Upanisad*

with the *Kārikā* embodies in itself the quintessence of the substance of the entire philosophy of the Vedānta. The text consists of four chapters or *prakaranas* called *Āgama-prakarana*, (the treatise concerning the scriptural text), *Vaitathya-prakarana* (the treatise concerning unreality), *Advaita-prakarana* (the treatise concerning non-duality), and *Ālatasanti prakarana* (the treatise concerning quenching the fire-brand) successively. The entire text consists of 215 metrical verses and each chapter contains 29,38,48 and 100 verses respectively. It is only the first chapter, the '*Āgama-prakarana*', 'the treatise concerning the scriptural text', where the verses of the *Māndukya Upanisad* are expressly delineated. The remaining chapters deal with subjects related to the *Upanisad* but follow independent directions. As such, Gaudapāda's *Kārikā* is not a commentary on the *Māndukya Upanisad* in the usual sense of the term.

The Scope of The *Māndukya Kārikā*

As it is stated, the *Āgama-prakarana* uses the *Māndukya Upanisad* as its basic scriptural text (*śruti*) and begins with a summary of its teachings. It focuses on the analysis of the three states of experience (*avasthā*) in order to show that the Self which is referred to as the '*Turīya*', the fourth, underlies and transcends the changing states of experience. The second chapter of the *Kārikā*, the *Vaitathya-prakarana*, deals with the idea of illusoriness or falseness of the world of plurality. This Gaudapāda seeks to establish and explain on the basis of various illustrations, the analogy of dreams, and through a criticism of creation theories. The *Advaita-prakarana*, the third chapter, seeks to show the non-illusoriness of non-duality through citations from scripture and reasoning, the details of the arguments for the truth of *advaita* (non-dualism). It is in this chapter that the major discussion of the path to the realization of non-duality called *Asparśa-yoga* is given. The last chapter, called the *Ālatasanti-prakarana*, repeats some of the arguments of the earlier *prakaranas*. It shows the unintelligibility of the concept of causality through the

use of dialectical reasoning, which points out the mutual contradictions of the opposing or different schools of thought prominent at his time, explains and argues the illusoriness of the phenomenal world, and establishes the truth of non-duality which, Gaudapāda proclaims, is eternally "unborn" or "unoriginated" (ajativada). I will begin with a brief explanation of the *Māndukya Upanisad*, so that we can better understand Gaudapāda's first chapter which takes this *Upanisad* as its source text.

Introduction to *Māndukya Upanisad*

The *Māndukya Upanisad* constitutes the short but important *Upanisad* among the principal *Upanisad*s. Although it consists of only twelve prose verses it is unique in its summation of *Upanisadic* thought. The *Māndukya Upanisad*, like other *Upanisad*s, discusses the problem of Ultimate Reality, in terms of one single Absolute Reality which underlies the entire cosmos, which is inherently acosmic, constitutes the essential "core", or "Self", of all beings. The *Upanisad* calls this Reality by the name *Brahman* and it explicitly says that *Brahman* is identical to the Self [6]. The *Upanisad* proceeds to reveal the true nature of the Self, as *Brahman*, by means of an investigation of the three states of ordinary human consciousness: waking, dream and dreamless sleep. The sacred *Vedic* syllable *OM (AUM)* is then used to provide a focus for contemplative insight into this teaching. Let us see how it describes the nature of the states of consciousness.

Consciousness in *Māndukya Upanisad*

Māndukya Upanisad begins by asserting that the essence of whatever exists can be defined in terms of '*AUM*'. This '*AUM*' is equivalent to '*Brahman*' and '*Brahman*' is further equivalent to '*Ātman*', the Self. The Self is said to have four "quarters" within it. And it is the four quarters which describe the nature consciousness in *Māndukya Upanisad*. The four quarters of the Self can be elucidated as follows.

"Jagarita sthano bahis prajnah saptanga ekonavimsati

mukhah sthula bhugavaisvanarah prathamah padah".[7]

The above verse seeks to explain that out of the four quarters of the Self, the first quarter is called *Vaisvanara* (meaning the '*nara*', the being, who lives in the '*Visva*', the world). It has the *jagarita*, the waking state, as its *sthana*, the centre place. It has its *prajna*, awareness or consciousness, *bahih*, directed towards things outside other than itself. Thus, consciousness in the waking state appears as related to outer objects**.** Further, *Vaisvanara* is '*saptangah*', the seven limbed and '*ekonavimsati mukhah*', the nineteen mouthed and the *sthula bhugah*, the enjoyer of gross objects. This can be represented as follows with reference to *Chāndogya Upanisad*[8].

Seven limbs → Head, eye, mouth, vital-energy, body, bladder and feet.

Nineteen Mouths →

- Five Sense Organs – sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.
- Five Motor Organs – speech, hands, legs, excretion and genitals.
- Five Vital –Energies- respiration, evacuation, circulation, regurgitation and digestion
- Four Internal Mental Aspects- mind, intellect, memory and ego.

Thus, the first quarter of the Self is associated with the waking state. But it does not comprise the waker alone, it also comprises the waking world as well. To be sure, such a description of the self as *Vaisvanara* can also be found in *Chāndogya Upanisad* and

perhaps with special reference to *Chāndogya Upanisad*, it has been described like this here. The gross macrocosmic aspect of the Universal Soul is called '*Virāt*' and its counterpart microcosmic aspect is known as *Vaisvanara*. The *Upanisad* describes here only the *Visva* or the *Vaisvanara*, and not the '*Virāt*'. Thereby it clearly pertains to the fact that the same *Ātman* who is viewed from the individual standpoint as the individual soul, is also the Universal Soul. However, the above verse gives a complete picture of the individual self, called *Vaisvanara*, whose consciousness is always object directed. In other words, object directedness is the fundamental characteristic of *Vaisvanara***.**

Consciousness is also talked about in the following manner in a verse of the *Upanisad*. It is said:

"Svapna sthano antah prajnah saptanga ekonavimsati

mukhah pravivikta bhuk taijaso dvitiyah padah".[9]

It means that the second quarter of the Self is called *Taijasa* (meaning the shining or luminous one). It has the *svapna*, the dreaming state, as its *sthana*, the centre place. It has its *prajna*, awareness or consciousness, *antah*, directed towards things inward. Thus, consciousness in the dreaming state appears as related to inner objects**.** Further, *Taijasa* is *saptangah*, the seven limbed and *ekonavimsati mukhah*, the nineteen mouthed but is *pravivikta bhuk*, the enjoyer of subtle objects. The limbs and mouths remain the same as in the case of *Vaisvanara*. However, unlike the waking state, in which the enjoyment is of gross objects only, the dreaming state comprises of the subtle objects which are the impressions of the waking life, upon the mind stored up in

memory, appear as objects in the dream consciousness.* The *Māndukya Upanisad* outlines the nature of consciousness in the following verse.

"Yatra supto na kanchana kamam kamayate na kanchana
svapnam pasyati tat susuptam. Susupta sthanam
ekibhutah prajnanaghana eva anandamayo hrananda
bhuk cheto mukhah prajnas tritiyah padah."[10]

The verse means that the third quarter of the Self is called *Prajna* (meaning awareness or consciousness). It asserts that *yatra*, where, *supto*, the sleeper, *na kanchana svapnam pasyati*, does not see any dream, *na kaMāyāte kancana kaman*, nor does desire any desirable object, *tat susuptam*, that state is known as deep sleep. This is how 'deep sleep' (*susuptam*) has been defined here. However, *Prajna* has this *susuptam*, deep sleep as its *sthanah*, centre place. The state of deep sleep is *ekibhutah prajnana-ghana eva*, a unified consciousness mass or mob only**,** which is *anandaMāyāh*, pleasurable or joyful and hence is the *ananda-bhuk,* the pleasure enjoyer. Further, deep sleep has been defined as *ceto-mukha,* the door to other states of consciousness (viz., waking and dream state)**.** And lastly, it is called *Prajna*•**,** the consciousness *per se***,** which constitutes the third quarter of the Self. Thus**,** in the state of deep sleep, consciousness *per se* exists without any object at its disposal while possessing the potentiality to transform itself with the states of consciousness with objects, internal or external. However, this state of deep sleep with a mass of objectless consciousness has been further described in the following verse.

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* The macrocosmic aspect of *Atman* in the subtle or mental state is called *Hiranyagarbha*, the universal mind. Like *Virat*, *Hiranyagarbha* is here represented as the counterpart of the microcosmic *Taijasa* or the individual's dream consciousness.

• The macrocosmic aspect of *prajna* is called *Isvara* , the first cause or God.

"Esa sarvesvara esa sarvajna esa antaryami esa yonih

sarvasya prabhava apyayau hi bhutanam." [11]

The meaning of it is as follows. *Esa,* this state of deep sleep called *Prajna*, is *sarvesvara*, the God of all, is *sarvajna*, the knower of all or omniscient, is *antaryami*, the inner controller of all, and is *yonih sarvasya*, the birth giver of all. Finally, it is *hi*, surely, *prabhava*, the source of manifestation and *apyayau*, the source of destruction, *bhutanam*, of all beings. Thus, this verse asserts that the deep sleep, possessing only a mass of consciousness, called *Prajna*, is the God itself as the macrocosm that includes the deep sleeper. So far the *Upanisad* has spoken of the *Ātman,* the absolute self, associated with three conditions, that of the waker, dreamer and sleeper. The absolute Self, in association with these three conditions, is what is known as an individual soul, and the individual soul is related to a corresponding macrocosmic world, viz., the waker is included in the God as the total manifest physical world, the dreamer is included in the God as the total subtle world and the unmanifest condition of sleep is included in the causal nature of the God itself. The *Upanisad* then presents its principal verse, which consists in negating all of the above, that is, the state of waking together with the waking world, the state of dream together with the dream world, and the state of deep sleep and the causal world. Thus even the causality of God gets negated in the final revelation of the absolute who is the invariable Self unrelated to any state. The following verse outlines this fact.

"Nantah prajnam na bahis prajnam na ubhayatah prajnam

na prajnanaghanam na prajnam naprajnam.

Adrstam avyavaharyam agrahyam alaksanam

acintyam avyapadesyam ekatma pratyaya saram

prapanca upasamam santam sivam advaitam

caturtham manyante sa atma sa vijneyah." [12]

The verse means that *caturtham*, the fourth quarter of the self, as has been considered by the *vijneyah,* the wise, is as follows. To the wise, the fourth is that which is *na antah prajna*, not conscious of the internal world, *na bahis prajna*, not conscious of the external world, and it is *na ubhayatah prajna*, nor both. Further, it is *na prajnana ghanam*, not consciousness mass*, na prajna na aprajnam,* neither conscious nor unconscious. It is *adrstam*, invisible, *avyavaharyam*, beyond empirical transition, *agrahyam*, beyond the grasp of senses, *alaksanam*, without any symptoms, *acintyam*, unthinkable and *avyapadesyam*, cannot be imparted. Moreover, it is *ekatma pratyaya saram*, constituting the essence of the one Self, that is, "I", it is *prapanca upasamam,* where the phenomena cease. Further, it is *santam*, peaceful, *sivam*, the auspicious and *advaitam*, the non-dual. Finally, it is *caturtham*, the fourth, the *Ātman,* and the self. Thus the above verse describes the nature of the 'Self' by negating all that is stated previously. According to it, the Self is that which cannot be described and conceived by ordinary language. While relinquishing the previously used language, it asserts that the self is that which is not 'conscious of the internal world', nor 'conscious of the external world', nor 'conscious of both' and not even a 'mass of consciousness'. Further, it holds that the self is that which is neither conscious nor unconscious. It is non-dual and called the Fourth with reference to the earlier three states. Thus, the nature of consciousness and its relation to the Self seems to be not clear. However the *Upanisad* concludes by saying that the '*AUM*' which is the 'Self' is really partless, that is, it is free from the earlier three states of consciousness. *AUM* is the non-dual self in which the whole of phenomena disappears.

Consciousness in *Māndukya Kārikā* of Gaudapāda

Advaita Vedānta purports to be an experientially based philosophical system. Its main concern is to analyse and understand the complete nature of man. Gaudapāda's *Māndukya Kārikā* reflects this central concern in Advaita Vedānta basing its thesis on experience. It analyses and explores the inquiry into the nature of experience. The rational method of the analysis of all the states of man's experience is for the first time systematically pursued in Vedānta by Gaudapāda in his *Kārikā*. This consists of an analysis of the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep and the co-ordination of the experiences of these states. The method purports to be a comprehensive view of the dimensions of human experience as it attempts to analyse all possible states rather than being based on the waking state alone. It is an evaluation of the basic features of each state and a re-estimation of what is fundamental to each. Also, on the basis of this evaluation, there is to be a new assimilation of knowledge and experience, for the highest truth must be known directly. The analysis thus provides both a theoretical understanding and a method for experiencing the spiritual center of man.

Gaudapāda bases his analysis of experience directly on the *Māndukya Upanisad*. The *Māndukya Upanisad* itself is concerned with the inquiry into the true nature of the self (*Ātman*). As we saw, the analysis of the states of experience is employed with the aim of showing the non-duality of the self which is found to be *Brahman* or *Turīya*. Gaudapāda follows the structure and the conclusion of this analysis in his exposition within the first *prakarana* of the *Māndukya Kārikā*. Gaudapāda, however, takes essentially the total realm of human experience for his examination. He points the factors of experience, the states of experience, and analyses each according to the nature of the experiencer, the field of activity and the things enjoyed therein. The factors of experience, he says, are

the experience (*jnāna*), the experienced (*jneyam*) and the experiencing itself (*vijneyam*).[13] Empirical experience is based on the relationship between the subject and its object. For all empirical dealings this triad of knowledge is fundamental. All phenomenal experience is thus of a dualistic structure, be it of an object experienced by a subject, or the opposition of two terms set apart and related each to the other.

Let's see how it describes the nature of human experience and the role of consciousness in it, since here the sole purpose is to study the nature of consciousness in *Māndukya Kārikā*. To begin with, the first chapter (*Āgama prakarana*) starts with the verse:

"*Bahis-prajno vibhur-visvo hyantahprajnastu-Taijasah*

Ghana prajnastatha prajna eka eva trdha smrtah".[14]

The verse asserts that *Visva*, the waking state is *vibhuh*, all pervading, and *bahisprajno*, whose consciousness is outward. *Hi*, surely *Taijasah*, the dreaming state, is *antahprajna*, that is, whose consciousness is inward. *Tatha*, similarly, *prajnah*, the dreamless sleep state is *ghanaprajnah*, a mass of consciousness. *Ekah eva*, the same is there in *trdha smrtah*, these three different states. As we saw, in the verses 3, 4 and 5 of the *Māndukya Upanisad*, that there is a description of the three states of consciousness, namely, waking (*Vaisvanara*), dream (*Taijasa*) and deep sleep (*susupti*). Gaudapāda presents almost the same in the above verse. Gaudapāda has brought a change in the name *Vaisvanara*, which occurs in the verse three of the *Māndukya Upanisad*, into *Visva*. Although the name has been changed, the sense and its reference being the "waking state" remain the same in *Māndukya Upanisad* as well as in *Māndukya Kārikā* of Gaudapāda. Gaudapāda asserts that the 'one' all pervasive reality called *vibhu*, is

considered to exist in a three-fold manner. It exists as the waker (*Visva*) who is characterized as having consciousness directed outward (*bahisprajna*), as the dreamer (*Taijasa*) whose consciousness is directed inward (*antahprajna*) and as the sleeper (*prajna*) whose consciousness is massed together without any differentiation (*ghanaprajna*).

Gaudapāda, however, presents then three locations in the body where the self, as conditioned by the three states, is situated. The following verse makes it clear.

"*Daksinaksimukhe visvo manasyantastu Taijasah*
Akase ca hrdi prajnas trdha dehe vyavasthitah".[15]

It means *Visva*, the waking state, is present at *daksinaksi mukhe*, in the right eye. *Taijasa* is present at *manasya antah*, inside the mind. *Prajna* is present at *akase ca hrdi*, the space inside the heart. *Tridha*, in three ways, *dehe*, in the body, *vyavasthitah*, he is present. Thus, a single all pervasive entity which acquires three different names as a result of being associated with three different states, can be imagined as having three different locations in the body. It further is presented as having three different types of experience. Gaudapāda opines that there are three types of experience which relate to the self as it exists in three ways. The following verse makes it clear.

" *Visvo hi sthula bhunnityam Taijasah praviviktabhuk*
Ananda bhuk tatha prajnas trdha bhogam nibodhata".[16]

Visva hi, Visva is, the *sthula bhuk*, enjoyer of gross objects, *nityam*, always. *Taijasah*, the *Taijasa* is *pravivikta bhuk*, the enjoyer of the subtle objects. And *tatha*, similarly,

prajnas, the *prajna* is *ananda bhuk*, the enjoyer of bliss or peace. Thus, *bhogam*, enjoyment is *trdha*, of three types, which is *nibodhata*, to be realized.

In a nut shell, what Gaudapāda says is that one and the same Self becomes associated with three different conditions: as the waker it experiences physical objects, as the dreamer it experiences mental objects, and as the sleeper it experiences blissful sleep. Each of these states has a subject and an object, but this relation is restricted to a particular state. There is a subject-object relation between the waker and the waking world so long as one is awake. There is a subject-object relation between the dreamer and the dream world, so long as there is a dream. And there is a subtle experience of bliss in sleep. There are thus three different states of experience, each having its own subject-object relation. Such a relation holds good from its own standpoint, but not from the standpoint of the other states, because each state is negated when the other state is present. Waking experience is negated by dream, and dream by waking, and both are negated when there is the absence of specific cognition during deep sleep.

These are the three basic realms of human experience. Following the above analysis, they are:

1. The outward or objective (empirical) consciousness which appears only in the waking state,
2. The inward or subjective sphere of consciousness of dream and the like states of consciousness.
3. The un-consciousness (or non-consciousness) of the deep sleep-like states.

After the above categorization of consciousness, Gaudapāda doesn't stop here. Following the *Māndukya Upanisad*, he further adds to it what he calls "the fourth". But

before he takes recourse into "the fourth", he presents the notion "rays of consciousness" while dealing with the theories of creation. He mentions 'rays of consciousness" in the following verse:

"*Prabhavah sarva bhavanam satam iti viniscayah*

Sarvam janayati pranas cetamsun purusah prthak."[17]

The *prabhava*, origin of *sarva-bhavanam*, all objects *satam iti*, that exist is *viniscayah*, certain. *Sarvam*, all is *janayati*, produced by *pranah*, the self in the causal state which is the source of all unconscious objects, contrasted to the subjects. *Cetamsun*, the rays of consciousness, is produced by *Purusa*, the subject who is by nature consciousness, *prthak*, differently.[18]

Thus Gaudapāda asserts that the rays of consciousness issue out from *Purusa* like the rays from the sun, that are the modes of intelligence of *Purusa* who is by nature consciousness. The rays are further comparable to the reflections of the sun on water and that appear divergently as *Visva, Taijasa* and *prajna* in the different bodies of gods, animals, and others. However, *Purusa* creates all these rays of consciousness that possess the characteristics of living beings, which are different from what has assumed the appearance of objects. This is what Gaudapāda understands by rays of consciousness. Now let us see what he says about "the fourth", the *Turīya*. To quote him,

"*Nivrtteh sarva duhkhanam isanah prabhur avyayah*

Advaitah sarvabhavanam devas turyo vibhuh smrtah".[19]

What it means is *nivrtteh*, freedom from *sarvadukhanam*, all sorrows, is possible by the *isanah*, the chief who is *prabhuh avyayah*, the Lord, being unchangeable. He is further *Advaitah*, the non-dual of *sarvabhavanam*, all things and *Devah turyah*, the God who is called the "fourth". He is *vibhuh*, omnipresent or all pervasive, and he is *smrtah*, thus remembered. Further he describes the "fourth", the '*Turīya*' thus :

" *Karya karana badhau tavisyete Visva Taijasah*

Prajnah karana badhastu dvau tau turye na sidhyatah".[20]

Visva taijasha, *Visva* (the waker) and *Taijasa* (the dreamer) are *tavisyete*, to be held*, karya karana badhau*, to be conditioned by effect and cause. *Prajna karana badhastu*, *prajna* is conditioned by cause. *Tau dvau*, these two, *na sidhyatah*, don't exist, in *Turīya*, the fourth. He continues by saying:

"*na ātmanam na param ca eva na satyam na api ca anrtam*

prajnah kincana samvetti turyam tat sarva drk sada".[21]

It means *na Ātmanam*, neither the self, *na param ca eva*, nor even others, and *na satyam*, neither truth *na api ca anrtam*, nor even untruth, is *samvetti* known, *kincana*, anything by *pranja*, the deep sleeper. But *tat turyam*, that *turya* is *sarva drk sada*, the all-seer, the witness, always**.**[22]

Thus, it is obvious from Gaudapāda's above description that he introduces the words "cause" (*karana*) and "effect" (*karya*), but he does not yet tell us what he means by these terms. In *Kārikā* twelve, he points out the difference between the sleeper and the *Turīya*: the sleeper does not know anything whereas the *Turīya* is all-seeing. By "all-seeing"

Gaudapāda perhaps understands that *Turīya* reveals the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. In the *Kārikā* thirteen, he says:

"*Dvaitasya agrahanam tulyam ubhayoh prajna turyayoh*

Bijanidra yutah prajnah sa ca turye na vidyate".[23]

What it means is – *prajna-turyayoh ubhayoh*, the turya and *prajna* both, are *tulyam* alike, in the sense that both of them, *dvaitasya-agrahanam*, don't accept or perceive duality. *Prajna*, the deep sleeper, who is *yutah*, endowed with, *bijanidra*, the sleep that itself has the seed to give rise to other states; *sa ca*, that seed, *turye na vidyate*, does not exist in *Turīya*.

In the first line of the above verse, Gaudapāda indicates the common feature between the sleeper and the *Turīya* and in the second line he again makes a distinction between them. The similarity between the sleeper and the *Turīya* is that the sleeper does not apprehend duality, and neither is there duality for the *Turīya*. The difference between them is that the sleeper is associated with "sleep that is the seed" (*bijanidra*), whereas the *Turīya* has no such intrinsic association. In *Kārikā* fourteen he says,

> "The waker and the dreamer are associated with 'dream' (*svapna*) and 'sleep' (*nidra*), whereas the sleeper is associated with "sleep" but not with dream. Those who know, see neither "sleep" nor "dream" in *Turīya*".[24]

In *Kārikā* fourteen, Gaudapāda is repeating the same idea as in *Kārikā* eleven, only instead of using the words "cause" and "effect" he sets up a new set of terms, "sleep" (*nidra*) and "dream" (*svapna*). However, it seems as if the words "cause" (*karana*) and

"effect" (*karya*) of *Kārikā* eleven are equivalent in meaning to the words "sleep" (*nidra*) and "dream" (*svapna*) of *Kārikā* fourteen. Further it seems the words "sleep" and "dream" do not refer to the states of sleep and dream, what they refer to is some condition that is associated with three states. It seems he clarifies what that condition is in *Kārikā* fifteen:

> "Dream (*svapna*) belongs to the one who misapprehends reality.
> "Sleep" (*nidra*) belongs to one who does not know reality.
> When both of those errors are removed, one attains the *Turīya*."[25]

The first line of *Kārikā* fifteen explains what is meant by the two terms "sleep" and "dream". The word "sleep" (*nidra*) is being used in a special sense to mean the "ignorance of reality" (*tattva-ajnana*). "Dream" has the meaning of "misapprehension of reality" (*anyathagrahana*). Therefore, we can understand that the words "*karana*" and "*nidra*" are used synonymously to refer to the basic ignorance of reality, while "*karya*" and "*svapna*" are likewise used as synonyms to refer to the misapprehension of reality that is the outcome of that ignorance. Thus we have:

"Cause" (*karana*) = "Sleep" (*nidra*)" = "Ignorance of reality"
"Effect" (*karya*) = "Dream" (*svapna*) = "Misapprehension of reality"

Thus, for Gaudapāda, the waker, the dreamer and the sleeper are each associated with the condition of ignorance of reality. The waker and dreamer are further associated with the condition of positively misapprehending reality. The sleeper is just ignorant of reality, the non-dual *Turīya*, whereas the waker and the dreamer are not only ignorant, but also misapprehend reality in that they see duality where there is really no duality. Ignorance of a thing is the precondition for the subsequent misapprehension of that thing.

Ignorance is also called “sleep” (*nidra*) because it is a condition of not knowing, like sleep. When it is said that the sleeper is associated with “sleep that is the seed” the word “seed” (*bija*) indicates that this “sleep” is the potential cause for the subsequent misapprehension. Misapprehension is called the “effect” (*karya*) because misapprehension is the outcome of ignorance. It is also called as “dream” (*svapna*) because it is a condition where things are taken wrongly; for duality, though not real, appears to be real, like it does in dream.[26] Gaudapāda repeatedly makes the point, in *Kārikā* eleven, thirteen and fourteen, that neither of these two factors, ignorance and misapprehension, intrinsically exist in the *Turīya*, the unchanging witness (*sarvadrk sada*) of the three states. Gaudapāda sums up his discussion on *Turīya* with the following verse.

> “When the individual self (*jiva*), asleep due to beginningless *māyā*, awakens, it knows the (*Turīya*) which is unborn, in which there is neither “sleep” nor “dream”, and which is non-dual.”[27]

In this *Kārikā* Gaudapāda refers to the *Turīya* as “unborn” (*aja*). If *Turīya* is unborn then it cannot become the waker and the waking world, or the dreamer and the dream world, or even the sleeper. For if there is any change on the part of the “unborn”, in so far as it becomes the waker and the waking world, etc., then it would no longer be unborn, because by undergoing the change involved in “becoming” it would be taking birth. Further, it seems from his expression ‘in which there is neither ‘sleep’ nor ‘dream’ (*anidra asvapna*), he perhaps wants to say that *Turīya* is simply distinct from the states of sleep and dream. However, even in the later *Kārikā*s Gaudapāda draws out the implication that the world cannot logically originate, and even though the world does appear in all its

rich variety and complexity, it nevertheless cannot have truly come into being given that the ultimate reality is the unborn *Brahman*.

To conclude, we have seen that the *Turīya* is neither the waker, nor the dreamer, nor the sleeper, but is the invariable and ever present witness (*sarvadrk sada*) in which the waker together with the waking world, the dreamer along with the dream world, and the unknowing of the deep sleeper, all stand revealed. The *Turīya* does not awake, does not dream, and does not sleep. It remains untouched by the presence or absence of the three states. It is the ground of "the cessation of the phenomenal world" (*prapanca upasama*) and non-dual (*Advaita*). The world is like a wondrous magical appearance, a *Māyā*. This is, however, a description of *Turīya* indicated by the language of negation or contrast to the other three states of consciousness. It is described as essentially a negation of sense perception and other limited forms of consciousness. It is the negation of the objects (internal and external) of experience as well as their fields. Thus, the text indicates that the "fourth" or the self is not an "object", nor an "entity", nor an idea or concept, nor even a "state", but rather the ever present "subject", "observer", "witness", or "substratum" which allows for "sentience", "intelligence", "vitality", and "experience". It is called "Fourth", from the perspective of the analysis of the three states of consciousness. *Turīya* is thus the Self, the non-dual *Brahman* which on account of *Māyā* appears as the experiencer in various states of experience. Although the experiences of the three states radically differ from one another, there is the knowledge that it is the same "I" or experiencer which was asleep and dreamt and is now awake. These states alternate, change and pass away while the *Turīya* remains ever constant through the varying states of mind. It is the changeless in the midst of change, the still point in the turning world. It is not caught in the triple stream of experience, though it is their

underlying substrate or locus. *Turīya* is the witnessing self, which is disclosed in the highest form or quality of human experience.[28]

Consciousness and Mind

Gaudapāda defines consciousness as that which is real, that which has no beginning nor end. It is that which is the substratum of all knowledge.[29] While discussing the nature of the self, he seems to suggest two meanings for the term '*manas*'. The first meaning seems to be the "empirical mind". The other meaning is that of "Mind" or "Consciousness" which is the higher self (*Ātman*). It is worthy to note that Gaudapāda seems to use the terms, such as, '*manas*', '*citta*' and '*vijnana*' synonymously for mind and consciousness. Let's investigate how he distinguishes between the "empirical mind" and "Mind" or "Consciousness".

***Manas* or Mind as Empirical Mind or Empirical Consciousness**

By '*manas*' or the empirical mind, Gaudapāda understands an organ which is of subtle matter and of limited size. It functions as an internal sense organ and is that which governs the other outer sense organs. The sense organs are dependent on *manas* for their functioning and through the co-ordination of *manas*, the individual has perceptual knowledge. Thus, *manas* is said to be only an instrument of knowledge for the experiencing self (*Ātman*). As the '*ahankara*' of the internal organ functions, *manas* becomes the individual "self" or "ego", known as *jiva*. The *jiva* is responsible for the empirical knowledge which arises when the mind and the external sense organs function.[30] This is so through the relation of "mind" and "consciousness".[31] The mind has no connotations without the subject-object relationship. The '*ahankara*' or 'empirical self' or 'ego' is said to assume the center point of experience erroneously and through this

false identification it becomes thoroughly enmeshed in objective and subjective experience wherein it is bound and suffers.[32]

As in Vedānta, in Gaudapāda the self becomes limited by adjuncts. It is known as the individual *Ātman*, the *jiva*, which is the knower and to whom knowledge is supplied by means of the organs of knowledge and sensations. Nevertheless, it is strongly maintained that the distinction between the knower, known and the process of knowledge doesn't exist for the higher self.[33] The self is of the nature of non-dual consciousness, the substratum of all experience and all manifestations.[34] The whole world of perceived duality is called an "act of the empirical mind" or the "mind's imagination". It is because of the 'modification of the mind' (*citta-vrttis*) that the external world appears as dual.[35] For all practical purposes the Self perceives the external world through the instrumentality of the mind. The mind forms the liaison between the Self on the one hand, and the object on the other. But from the standpoint of the Self, both the mind and the objects of the mind are mere illusions. Thus any form of this dual relationship is said to be mere appearance and thus likened to "imagination".

Sarasvati Chennakesavan argues that mind or *antahkarana* a product of *Māyā*. The self alone is consciousness, and consciousness cannot arise as a contingent factor of subject-object relation. The Advaitin agrees with the modern psychologists and says that mind is just a totality of conscious states and processes. The self which is neither mind nor matter is the ground of both mental and physical states of existence. That which reveals everything, namely, consciousness, is the basis of all experience whether it is psychic or physical. That mind is not consciousness is established on an analysis of the three states of experience, namely, the waking, dreaming and sleeping experiences. Consciousness is not mere knowing, it involves transcendence of the objects known and

the knowing process. Mind is that which has a locus in time and space, whereas consciousness is that which is not limited either by time or space, is that which gives meaning to these. Mind, like matter, is only an appearance of consciousness. Just as in dreams the material substantive experience of waking life becomes only an appearance, so also in the light of pure consciousness the mental and physical experiences merely become illusion.[36]

Manas or Mind as Consciousness

Besides the use of the term '*manas*' or 'mind' as the 'empirical mind', Gaudapāda also uses it to mean 'consciousness'. To him, "Mind" or "Consciousness" is considered to be unborn, non-dual, immovable, immaterial and all pervading, and yet it appears as dual, moving and as an object.[37] It is *asvapna* and *anidra*[38] (without dream and without sleep). It is *anabhasa*[39] (not appearing or manifesting in the form of objects), *asanga*[40] (having no attachment or relation to anything), *amanibhava*[41] (when the empirical mind ceases to exist) and *sanirvana*[42] (with cessation or freedom). The *manas* or *citta* or *vijnana* as consciousness is entirely different from anything else. It is unique. It is not a product nor a collocation of conditions nor is it further reducible into any constituents. It is foundational, the ground or substratum of all else. It is neither an attribute of something, nor possessed by anything. It does not come under any category of substance, attribute or action. For it is the basis of all. Consciousness is said to be eternal, unproduced, infinite, unlimited and self-revealing. It is undifferentiated, distinctionless unity, remaining ever unaffected and unchanged. That Consciousness is the presupposition of all knowledge and of the threefold division of subject-object relationship. It alone exists being One and Non-dual.[43]

Gaudapāda suggests that the process of the world-creation is due to the activity or the processes of the "mind" in its empirical sense and that when this process ceases, the true nature of non-dual consciousness, which though present at all times, is experienced, or rather it simply "is".[44] Consciousness or Mind (*manas*, *citta* or *vijnana*) is being held here as moving, oscillating or vibrating (*spandita*)[45]. When it does so, an illusion of an objective existence or an appearance of objects is produced. To fully illustrate this image, Gaudapāda uses the analogy of the fire-brand (*alata*).[46] The firebrand does its movement while "creating" different forms, shapes and patterns. When it is not in motion, it is seen to be free from all appearances and remain changeless. Similarly, consciousness also "creates" by its movement the phenomenal universe of names and forms and the duality of the perceiver and the perceived. Further, the forms or appearances when the firebrand is in motion are related only to it and have no other source. The appearances stay at the tip of the firebrand when motionless and do not go elsewhere. They do not enter the firebrand, nor do they really emerge from the firebrand. The appearances either go out of, nor enter into the firebrand. Similar is the manifestation of non-dual Consciousness into the plural world. The manifold plurality is neither identical with, nor independent from *Ātman* or Consciousness. It is neither separate nor non-separate form it. The pluralistic universe is nothing but this Reality, yet the world is not "real". Reality is not the world, yet the multiple universe has no existence without this Reality underlying it.[47] Thus, Gaudapāda declares that "the world exists only in the mind"[48] and that it is only "the moment of consciousness producing the appearance of "the perceiver and the perceived" thereby "imagining variety where it is not"[49]. In other words, the conceptual constructions are not the framework of the real but only those of mind-imposed structure on reality.

Gaudapāda does suggest that *abhutabhinivesa* is the "out going mind", the mind relating itself as possessive subject to its object. When their absence is known, when duality disappears, the mind becomes unattached (*nihsanga*) to them and "turns back" (*vinivartate*). This absence of relation to objects, the turning back and non-movement outwards is said to be the true nature of the Mind or Consciousness. Apart from this true nature of mind or consciousness, neither the empirical mind nor the phenomena enjoy any absolute existence, for they are relative to each other. This is the state of *amanibhava* (non-mind) in Gaudapāda. It is the state of quiescence, peace, bliss – the state of self-realization described from the perspective of the individual's mind-process. This non-mind *(amanibhava*) condition is the *samadhi* of the *yogins* wherein the mind is controlled and laid to rest (i.e., as in *amanasta* or *nigrhita manas*). When the "mind" becomes "non-mind", it becomes free from the three states of consciousness and their determinations (*vikalpa*) and is said to be identical with *Brahman* or *Turīya*. The empirical mind reaches the condition of quietude or equipoise (*samya*) when it becomes unified or one with the Absolute Mind. Rather than engaging in the processes of "mind creation", the mind is said to desist from all activity and remains in its birthless, non-dual, motionless nature as Mind or Unattached consciousness.[50]

Gaudapāda and Buddhism

In this background I will like to reexamine the possible relationship that might exist between Vedānta and Buddhism or between Gaudapāda and Śamkara which is a prerequisition for understanding Śamkara's epistemological and metaphysical position in a proper perspective. It is always possible that Vedānta and Buddhism were not isolated phenomena that ruled out any interaction between the two. With this in mind, I have summerised some observations made by some scholars on some issues including the relation between Buddhism and Vedānta. Although Śamkara is regarded as the founder

of the non-dualistic Vedānta, which developed mainly through his commentary on Badarayana's Vedānta aphorisms, the line of thought is at least as old as the *Upanisad*s themselves. A few centuries before Śamkara, the Vijnanavada and the Mādhyamika Buddhists began calling their ultimate reality non-dual (*advaya*). The *Prajnaparamita* literature, which is perhaps earlier than the birth of Christ, repeatedly uses the word non-dual. Bhartrhati (6th century A.D.), the author of *Vakyapadiya* which is perhaps the first great work on the deeper philosophical basis of grammar, developed his philosophy along non-dualistic lines. It is said that he became a Buddhist before he became again a Vedāntin. About the same time, Gaudapāda, the grand teacher of Śamkara wrote his *Māndukya-Kārikā*s and used a language very reminiscent of Vijnanavada Buddhism, and even incorporated some of its ideas. The logical significance of *Māyā* was already clarified by Buddhism in terms of the four-cornered negation.[51] Gaudapāda and after him the whole Advaita tradition incorporated it. Nāgārjuna maintained that, from the ultimate point of view, the world is neither born, nor exists, nor disappears (ajativada). Gaudapāda agrees with the Vijnanavadins in maintaining that the world is ultimately unreal, for it cannot exist independently always and outside of Consciousness which is the only Reality. It is unreal also because the relations which constitute it are all unreal. Even Śamkara says that Guadapada accepts the arguments of the *Vijnana*vadins to prove the unreality of the external objects.[52] Guadapada incorporated it into Vedānta developed it out of the *Māndukya Upanisad*. The forms of the world are like hallucinations, due to the principle of the Unconsciousness (*Avidya* or Ignorance). They are forms of mere flux appearing as Being, like the circle of fire that appears when a firebrand is moved in a circle with great speed. All such ideas are Buddhist, the only difference being that they have no ontological basis at least for the Mādhyamika Buddhism, while they are all rooted in the Being of the *Brahman* for Gaudapāda.[53] However, he had a great respect for the Buddha whom he considered as the "Greatest

of Men". But Guadapāda did not develop his ideas further, and the only work left by him seems to be his *Māndukya Kārikā*s. The task of developing the system, of entering into controversies with other religious and philosophical schools, and of commenting on the three basic works of the Vedānta – the *Upanisad*s, the *Vedānta Sutras*, and the *Bhagavadgita* – were left to Śamkara.[54]

The Absolute of Gaudapāda appears to be a highly abstract and negative entity when compared with that of Śamkara. S. Radhakrishnan observes, ' We need not say that the Advaita Vedānta Philosophy has been very much influenced by the Mādhyamika doctrine. The *Ālatasanti* of Gaudapāda's *Kārikā*s is full of Mādhyamika tenets. The Advaitic distinction of *Vyavahara* or experience and *paramartha* or reality, correspond to the *samvrti* and the *paramartha* of the Mādhyamikas. The *Nirguna Brahman* of Śamkara and Nāgārjuna's Śunya have much in common. The force of *avidya* introducing the phenomenal universe is admitted by both. The keen logic of abstractions, categories and relations appears in both.[55] Śamkara characterizes Gaudapāda as "one who knows the tradition" in his *Bhasya* on the *Brahmasutras*. It follows that he endorses the views of Gaudapāda as expressed in the *Kārikā*, which means that he is secretly in sympathy with the Buddhist, particularly the Mādhyamika, teachings.[56] Most of the post-Śamkarites, following Śamkara but probably missing his intention, condemned Śunyavada as utter nihilism and Vijnanavada in the sense of momentary *Vijnanas*. However, among the post-Śamkarites, Śriharsa tried to revive the long-lost spirit of Gaudapāda and who correctly represents Śunyavada and frankly admitted the enormous similarities between Śunyavada and Advaita.[57] The advance made by Śamkara and his followers on Śunyavada and Gaudapāda consists in the development of the view that *Avidya* or *Māyā* is a positive material stuff of 'Ignorance' which baffles all description.[58]

C.D. Sharma points out that those who dub Gaudapāda as a crypto-Buddhist tend to suggest that he had a definite leaning towards Buddhism and only outwardly professed to be a Vedāntin. If one is really fond of this '*Praccanna*' – terminology, then instead of dubbing Gaudapāda as a *Praccanna – Bauddha*, it will be far more appropriate for one to dub the Śunyavadins and the Vijnanavadins as *Praccanna*-Vedanitns.[59] The uniqueness of the *Māndukya Upanisad* is that it is the first *Upanisad* that articulates the fourth state, the *Turīya*, beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. *Brhadaranyaka* and *Chāndogya Upanisad* did not recognize the fourth state though they talked of the self in deep sleep as the ultimate seer which have resemblance to the *Turīya* state of the *Māndukya Upanisad*. But the *Turīya* state is an ultimate release of the triple state of walking, dreaming, dreamless, not intentional, free from subject-object duality in *Māndukya*'s position.

We have seen that with Gaudapāda the *Māndukya Upanisad* and its fourth state of *Turīya* attained great significance which is also similar to pure subjectivity on the state of 'suchness', the state of the self as it is 'pure consciousness', is the Sun, Self-liminous. It is obvious that Gaudapāda was much influenced by Buddhist epistemology as the language of his *Kārikā* is a reminiscent of Vijnanavada. Although Gaudapāda utilized some arguments from Buddhist authors he distanced himself from Buddhism and remained a Vedāntin. Again P.T. Raju says that "if there is a *svabhava*, the world would be devoid of diverse states, it will be unborn, without cessation, immutable" that if something does not have an intrinsic nature it cannot become different. He also accepts the consequences that follows from Nāgārjuna's view. But Gaudapāda differs from Nāgārjuna in this point that there is one thing that has *svabhava*, that is Reality (*Sat*) that is unborn, the *Brahman-Ātman*. Thus, we find that despite the fact that Gaudapāda incorporated many Buddhist elements into his thought his ultimate position is that of a

Vedāntin than of a Buddhist. From this I have also tried to see if the special relation between Śamkara and Gaudapda is indicative of more Buddhist influence on Śamkara through his revered Guru Gaudapāda.

Śamkara and Buddhism

Every great thinker tends to draw upon the experiential and speculative materials collected and presented by preceding investigators and thinkers. Śamkara was no exception to this rule. Consciously or unconsciously he accomplished in his system a synthesis of the most significant and intensely realized elements in the thoughts and teachings of his predecessors. Śamkara was fully acquainted with the *Vedic* tradition of thought, including the great *Upanisad*s on the one hand and the *Dharmasatras* and the Mimamsa system on the other. He was also cognizant of the pre-eminent position occupied by the Sāmkhya and Yoga philosophies. Nor was he unaware of the influence that the idealistic systems of the Buddhists had come to wield over a section of the intelligentsia. Śamkara absorbed and assimilated in the orthodox view the elements of the Sāmkhya -Yoga and Buddhist systems which were calculated to enrich his view.[60] Some critics (like Vijnanabhiksu) suggest that Śamkara has imported the concept of *Māyā* from Buddhism, since it is powerfully reminiscent of the Mādhyamika Śunyavada (*sarvam* Śunya*m*), especially of the statement of Nāgārjuna, in his *Mula*Mādhyamika *Kārikā*, that when we begin to reflect on things they give way and dissolve. Hence *Śri* Śamkara is charged by some of his uncharitable critics being a Buddhist in disguise (*Praccanna-bauddha*).[61] In his *Brahmasutra Bhasya*, Śamkara criticizes practically all the well-known Schools of Buddhism, including the Vijnanavada, and expresses his contempt to the Śunyavada School.[62] As this needs further elaboration, I am making an attempt at understanding this dimension in the following manner.

Śamkara and Vijnanavada

The *Brahman* of the Advaita is essentially changeless and without quality, while change is the very essence of the continuum of the *Vijnana*s (*Vijnana-Santana*). This basic difference, indeed, sharply divides the Buddhist systems from the different Hindu philosophies, particularly in their conceptions regarding the essential nature of the Self. Secondly, the Hindu philosophers, including the Vedāntin, do not seek to deny the existence of the external world. Even the Advaita Vedānta has to concede the existence of the external world, though it is not prepared to believe that whatever exists is real.[63] Śamkara undoubtedly owed his emphasis on the unreality of the world to the influence of the Mahayana philosophers, but he did not find it possible to accept their pronouncedly negative conceptions of the Absolute. Not only was his *Brahman* absolutely without change or eternal, to be sharply distinguished from the *alaya* and the *Vijnapti-matratā* of the Vijnanavadins; it was also characterized by blissful consciousness.[64] Śamkara in a sense admits Vijnanavada. But he wants to prove the unreality of the external world not by saying that it does not fall outside of consciousness, but by saying that it is essentially indescribable as existent or as non-existent (*sadasadanirvacaniya*). This view, however, was developed in Śunyavada and accepted by Gaudapāda.

Śamkara and Mādhyamikas

It has been suggested by some that the founder of the Advaita Vedānta failed to grasp the significance of Nāgārjuna's doctrine of the *Śunya*, which greatly resembled his own *Brahman*. Although Śamkara calls his *Brahman nirguna*, it has little or nothing in common with the Absolute of Nāgārjuna. Śamkara's *Brahman* further differs from the Absolute of Nāgārjuna in being identical with the self and thus a datum of direct experience. The *nirvana* and the *Tathata* (or suchness) which are declared to be wholly beyond speech cannot be compared with the Vedāntic *Brahman* which is identical with

our inmost self. Further, Śamkara's conception of *Ātman* as pure awareness has far reaching consequences for his theory of knowledge. This conception is derived from the *Upanisad*s and has affinities with the Sāmkhya conception of the Purusa; it has absolutely nothing in common with the Śunya of the Mādhyamikas.[65]

The resemblance of Śamkara's doctrine to Nāgārjuna's is confined to only two important tenets, namely, the theory of twofold truth and the belief in the phenomenal character of the world. The second tenet involves an attitude of rejection or negation towards life in this world. According to Mādhyamika the entities of the world lack self-nature or self-essence because they are all infested with relativity; according to Śamkara they are devoid of a constant nature or enduring essence. According to him, however, they derive from a reality which has a fixed nature.[66] However, Śamkara's reasons for regarding the world as an appearance are very different form those advanced by Nāgārjuna. The criteria of reality and unreality proposed by Śamkara are, in the last analysis, experiential and not logical, while in Nāgārjuna (and Bradley) they are certainly logical.[67]

Regarding Śamkara's relation to Buddhism one must acknowledge that there were much Buddhist influences on Śamkara's thought though like Gaudapāda Śamkara's ultimate position is that of a Vedāntin which has its doctrine of *Sat* and *Ātman* (permanence) against Buddhist doctrines of momentariness, a fact which made Śamkara also a critic of Buddhism. But Śamkara was respectful of the other elements of Buddhist thought which were similar to his Vedāntic ideals. Radhakrishnan observes : "There are no doubt similarities between the views of Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta, and this is not surprising in view of the fact that both these systems had for their background the *Upanisad*s" (S. Radhakrishnan, p. 472). As we know that Buddha considered his role as a reformulator than one destroys tradition, and he developed many ideas which had a

common *Upanisad*ic base to both Buddhism and Vedānta. Śamkara's *Māyā* is akin to phenomenalism of Buddhism. The in-between position of the world (phenomenal reality) as both to the middle position of Buddha as a process of 'becoming', neither Being nor Non-Being, the two levels of truth, *moksa–nirvana* similarities etc., opposition to exclusiveness of *Vedic* ritualism, are similar but there are some important differences between Śamkara and Buddhism regarding the nature of the object of illusion.

Differing from the Mahayana (Nāgārjuna) view that for whom the basis of the illusory object is void (Śunya), Śamkara fears that this would cut the very root of truth-falsity dichotomy. For Śamkara falsity (*Māyā*) is founded on truth and rejects Vijnanavada view that the real basis of illusion is pure consciousness or void. In that case pure consciousness or void will be the ground of both truth and falsity. For Śamkara and for Advaita Vedānta though both are based on *Brahman* one can ask, "how and where do we get the ideas of truth and falsity?" We get these ideas from empirical reality, an empirically true object forms the basis of a false object. For Vedānta, the illusory snake is a self-contradicted percept, it is based *on Sat* (deeper) non-conceptual indeterminate Being. Thus, we find that Śamkara's perspective is of a Vedāntin who is also inspired by logic and philosophy of Buddhist scholars.

Notes and References

1 Karmarkar, R.D. (1973) (ed. & tr.) Gaudapāda *Karika*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, p.xxiii. See also Pandeya, Muralidhara. (1986) Sri *Samkaratpragadvaitavadah*. Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, Delhi, p.304.

2 *yastam pujyabhipujyam paamagurumamum padapatair nato'smi*, *Mandukya Karika-Bhasya* of Samkara, last verse; and also *tatha ca sukasisyo Gaudapādacaryah*, *Svetasvatara Upanisad Bhasya* of Samkara, I,8.

3 *evam gaudair dravidair nah pujyair arthah prabhasith, Naiskarmya Siddhi*, IV, 44.

4 Tapasyananda, Swami (1978) (tr.) Samkara-*Digvijaya,* The Traditional Life of Sri Samkaracarya by Madhava-Vidyaranya, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, p.50.

5 Mahadevan, T.M.P. (1960) Gaudapāda : a study in Early Advaita, University of Madras, Madras, p. 233.

6 *ayam atma brahma*, *Mandukya Upanisad*. 2.(hereafter M.U.) This is one of the famous *Mahavakya*s of the Vedantic literature.

7 M.U., 3.

8 *Chandogya Upanisad* (hereafter C.U.) 5.18.2.
In *Chandogya Upanisad*, there is a use of the word *Vaisvanara* which primarily refers to the Lord as identified with the total gross cosmos. The Lord, as so identified, is otherwise called in C.U. as *Virat*. C.U. declares, "The heavens are his head, the sun is his yes, the air is his breath, the entire space is his body, all water in the world is kidney, the earth is his feet, and fire is his mouth".

9 M.U. 4.

10 M.U. 5.

11 M.U. 6.

12 M.U. 7.

13 *Mandukya Karika*, (Hereafter M.K.) IV. 87,88.

14 M.K. I. 1.

15 Ibid. I.2.

16 Ibid. I.3.

17 Ibid. I.6.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid. I.10.

20 Ibid. I.11.

21 Ibid. I.12.

22 Ibid. I.12.

23 Ibid. I.13.

[24] Ibid. I.14.

[25] Ibid. I.15.

[26] Though Gaudapāda does not use the word “ignorance” (*avidya*) here, these passages can be seen to contain the foundation for the teaching that developed in later Advaita, that *avidya* or *maya* has twofold power which both conceals (*avarana*) the real and projects (*viksepa*) the unreal.

[27] M.K. I.16.

[28] Deutsch, Eliot. (1969) Advaita Vedanta : A philosophical Reconstruction, East-West Centre Press, Honolulu. p.19

[29] M.K. IV, 26-28, 47-52, 72,77, 79-81.

[30] M.K. II. 15 and I. 1-6.

[31] M.K. IV, 45-52, 54, 61-66, 72, 77, 79-81.

[32] M.K. II, 16,17.

[33] M.K. IV,. 88-90.

[34] M.K. IV, 26-28, 47-52, 72, 77, 79-81.

[35] M.K. II, 72.

[36] Sarasvati, Chennakesavan. (1991) Concept of Mind in Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi. pp. viii-ix.

[37] M.K. IV, 45

[38] M.K. I.16., IV. 36, IV. 81.

[39] M.K. III, 46.

[40] M.K. III, 45., IV. 72, 79 and 96.

[41] M.K. III,. 31.

[42] M.K. III,. 37.

[43] Saksena, S.K. (1971) Nature of Consciousness in Hindu Philosophy, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi. pp. 60-61, 102-103, 132-140.

[44] M.K. III, 31-32.

[45] M.K. III, 28, IV.47 and 72.

[46] M.K. IV. 47-52

[47] M.K. II. 33-35.

[48] M.K., IV. 72 and 77.

[49] M.K. II. 15,17. IV. 47.

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[51] Raju, P. T. (1985) The Structural Depth of Indian Thought, South Asian Publishes, New Delhi. p. 380

[52] Sharma, C.D. (1994) Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, pp. 245-46.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Radhakrishnan, S. (1929) Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, Allen and Unwin, Revised Edition, London, p. 668.

[56] Devaraj, N.K. An Introduction to Samkara's Theory of Knowledge, p.22.

[57] Sharma, C.D. op cit. p. 312.

[58] Ibid. p. 323.

[59] Ibid. p.330-31.

[60] Devaraja, N.K. op. cit. p.4.

[61] Panda, R.K. (2002) (ed.) *Mayavadam asachsastram praccannam bauddham eva ca*, Studies in Vedanta Philosophy, Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, Delhi. p.57.

[62] Devaraja, N.K. op. cit. p.10.

[63] Ibid. p. 11.

[64] Ibid. pp. 150-51.

[65] Ibid. pp. 16-17.

[66] Ibid. pp. 204-5.

[67] Ibid. p.14.

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Chapter - 3

Consciousness in Śamkara's Epistemology

Introduction

Every system of Indian philosophy has developed its own epistemology or theory of knowledge. Epistemological questions are centered on such questions as: How does one differentiate knowledge from belief, opinion or false knowledge? This question leads to the questions of meaning, valid knowledge, sources of valid knowledge, etc. For Indian philosophers, knowledge of reality or valid cognition is called *pramā* and the source of such knowledge is called *pramāna***.** In the earlier prephilosophical discourse, especially in the *Upanisads*, the words '*cit*' and '*jnāna*' were used to define 'knowledge' sometimes using both these words synonymously or as different from one another. The scholars of Nyāya used these words as synonymous though in the tradition of Vedānta these words have different meanings.

All knowledge is of *pramā* and *apramā*, each of these is then divided into various subclasses. Every system of Indian philosophy defended a list of types of true cognition, or *pramā*. *Pramāna* means, "that by which true cognition is arrived at" (*pramiyate anena*); it may be taken then to be a cause of, or a means for, achieving true cognition. It is the peculiar feature of the Indian epistemologies that this causal meaning of *pramāna* is also taken to imply a legitimizing sense so that a cognition is true in case it is brought about in the right sort of way, for example, caused by a *pramāna*. A classification of true cognition (or *pramā*) is also a classification of the causes of true cognition (or *pramāna*).

While the Lokāyatas admit perception as the central *pramāna*, Buddhism admits both perception and inference; Vaiśesika admits perception and inference; Sāmkhya admits perception, inference and word; Nyāya admits perception, inference, comparison and word; Vedānta admits perception, inference, comparison, postulation, word and nonperception; Bhatta Mimamsa admits perception, inference, comparison, postulation, word and nonperception; and Prabhakara Mimamsa admits perception, inference, comparison, postulation and word.

Vatsayana defines *pramāna* as an instrument of knowledge or "that by which the knowing subject knows the object,"(Nyāya *Bhasya*.i.I.I.). Uddyotakara calls it the cause of knowledge (*upalabdhihetu*). He admits that this definition is rather wide, since the cogniser and the object cognised are also causes of cognition, but justifies it on the ground that "the cogniser and the cognised have their function fulfilled elsewhere, that is, the function of the cognising subject and the cognised object lies in, and is only fulfilled by the inciting of the *pramāna* into activity: *Pramāna*, on the other hand, does not have its function fulfilled (except by the bringing about of the cognition); so it is the *pramāna* that is to be regarded as the real cause of the cognition." Wherever the *pramāna* is present, cognition arises; wherever it is absent, whatever else may be present, cognition does not arise. *Pramāna* is thus the most efficient cause of cognition and the last to appear before the cognition arises. Sivaditya brings out the logical implication when he defines *pramāna* as that which produces *pramā* or knowledge in accord with reality. Jayanta makes *pramāna* the cause which produces non-erroneous, certain knowledge of objects. Before we investigate the nature of objects, we must know the capacity of the instruments of knowledge, for "knowledge of the things to be measured depends on the knowledge of the measure."(*Manadhina meyasiddhih*, *Citsukhi*, ii.18). *Pramānas*astra

(Epistemology) not only helps us to a right apprehension of objects, but also enables us to test the validity of knowledge.[1]

All knowledge implies four conditions: (1) The subject or the *pramātr*, the cogniser or the substantive ground of the cognitions; (2) the object, or the *prameya* to which the process of cognition is directed; (3) the resulting state of cognition, or the *pramiti*; and (4) the means of knowledge, or the *pramāna* (*pramākaranam pramāna*m). Every cognitive act, valid or invalid, has the three factors of a cognizing subject, 'a content' or 'a what' of which the subject is aware, and a relation of knowledge between the two, which are distinguishable though not separable. The nature of knowledge, as valid or invalid, depends upon the fourth factor of *pramāna*. It is the operative cause of valid knowledge in normal circumstances. (*Nyaya Varttika*, i.I.I)[2]

However, the words "knowledge", "*buddhi*", and "consciousness" are used synonymously in Indian philosophy. Four means of valid knowledge are admitted: perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony. Perception is defined as the knowledge that arises from the contact of the senses with the object, which is nonjudgmental, or unerring or judgmental. Inference is defined as the knowledge that is preceded by perception (of the mark) and classified into three kinds: that from the perception of a cause to its effect; that from perception of the effect to its cause; and that in which knowledge of one thing is derived from the perception of another with which it is commonly seen together. Comparison is defined as the knowledge of a thing through its similarity to another thing previously well known.

Śamkara on Sources of Knowledge

As Śamkara's main works are commentaries, it is difficult to say how many kinds of sources of valid cognition (*pramanas*) were accepted by him. He is said to have accepted three main sources – perception, inference and scripture or verbal testimony. But his followers accepted all the six sources, namely, perception (*pratyaksa*), inference *(anumana*), comparison (*upamana),* testimony (*sabda*), presumption (*arthapatti*), and non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*) which are also accepted by Kumarila, the Mimamsaka. It was natural also for them to accept all the six sources, because Kumarila's Mimamsa is the prior Mimamsa and the Vedānta is the posterior Mimamsa and is supposed to be a continuation of the former. Whatever be the reason, it is generally considered that Advaita as a whole recognized the validity of all the six sources of knowledge. Now let's examine one of the important sources of knowledge according to Śamkara, that is, perception.

For understanding epistemology of the Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara we should remember that for Śamkara self-knowledge is of an entirely different character from the knowledge of the empirical world. Following Kant we may call it *categorized* knowledge; it corresponds to Bertrand Russell's knowledge by 'description' or knowledge 'about'. Self-knowledge, on the contrary, is knowledge by acquaintance or by direct intuition. The peculiar epistemological contribution of Śamkara consists in the conception that knowledge of the former kind leads to the knowledge of the latter type. The work of the *pramānas* is done as soon as they have brought about a direct self-vision on the part of the embodied soul. The *pramānas* fulfill themselves by generating a knowledge which involves their negation or annulment. It is to be remembered that the *Brahman* of Śamkara, that transcends the *pramānas*, does not transcend *experience* itself. The word 'experience' here must of course be understood in a wider sense than perceptual

experience. Perceptual knowledge is not the highest type of direct knowledge. *Anubhava* or direct experience which is yet not of the type of perceptual experience, remains, according to Śamkara, the goal of knowledge.[3] All the *pramānas* are conducive to the final intuition, and if Śamkara is found assigning a higher place to *Sruti*, it is probably because he felt that the utterances of the *Upanisads*, being vital poetic records of spiritual experience, could induce intuitive knowledge which logic alone fails to produce. Inference is also a form of *pramā*, valid cognition, though it essentially depends upon perception[4] and cannot be valid when it contradicts the perceptual testimony.[5] Śamkara says, "Opposition to the seen is, in fact, what no thinker has ever vouched".[6] Śamkara remains a staunch supporter of the common sense of mankind (*loka*). It is too much even for the *Sruti* to come into conflict with the *loka.* Śamkara expresses his regard for experience, perceptual and intuitive, in most unequivocal terms when he makes the opponent defend the superiority of *yukti* to *Sruti* on the ground that the former is nearer to experience than the latter, and when he declares that the goal of all knowledge is *anubhava* or direct apprehension.

We don't find a systematic treatment of the means of knowledge (*pramānas*) in any of Śamkara's works. His theory of knowledge can be deduced from some portions of his works, especially his commentary on the *Vedānta-sutras*. He begins the quest for knowledge in his opening sutra or verse of the *Brahma Sutra* which undoubtedly explains that the text is aiming at the 'knowledge of *Brahman*', the Supreme Reality. The background of Śamkara's whole philosophy, and so also of his epistemology, is the well known distinction between the world in the ordinary sense (*vyavaharika-jagat*), corresponding to which there are ignorance (*Avidyā*) and knowledge (*vidya*) respectively. In the analysis of knowledge Śamkara holds a position very similar to that of Samkhya. He holds, like Samkhya, that it is the self which knows, and It is because of

the self that knowledge is possible. It is known by itself. It is the ego characterized by the sense of 'I'.[7] Knowledge results from the conjunction of the self, the internal organ (*antah-karana*), the sense organs and the object. Śamkara explains how this internal organ[8] variously called *manas, buddhi, ahamkara* and *citta* function in one way or another, and how it's function is an indispensable factor in all cognition. Śamkara raises the problem of knowledge and error in the opening lines of his commentary on the *Vedānta-sutras* by pointing out that in ordinary experience man fails to distinguish between two such opposite entities as the subject (*visayin*) and the object (*visaya*); and that superimposition (*adhyasa*) of the qualities of the one upon the other is due to ignorance (*Avidyā*). (*Tathapy anyonyasminn anyonyatmaktam……loka-vyavaharah).* [9] He defines Superimposition as 'the apparent presentation, in the form of remembrance, to the consciousness of something previously observed, in some other thing' – '*smrti-rupah paratra purva-drstavabhasah*' or simply, as 'the apparent presentation of the attributes of one thing in another thing' – '*anyasya anya-dharmavabhasah* as for example, 'mother-of-pearl appears like silver' or 'the moon although one only appears as if she were double'. 'This kind of superimposition', says Śamkara, 'learned men consider to be ignorance (*Avidyā*) and the ascertainment of the true nature of an object by discrimination they call knowledge (*vidya*) (*tad-vivekena ca vastu-svarupyadharanam vidyam ahuh*).[10]

For Śamkara, the ordinary human knowledge, which is the result of the *pramānas*, pertains to the world in the ordinary sense which has only an illusory existence, although within this phenomenal existence also we have distinctions of knowledge and error, for example, the perception of a rope as a snake. That Śamkara regards the world in the ordinary sense as illusory and the result of error just in the same way as a snake, while

there is a rope only, and also as something which can be sublated by the appearance of true knowledge, is clear from all his writings.

Nyāya- Vaiśesika Theory of Consciousness

Focusing on the theory of self-luminosity of consciousness, Śamkara starts with criticism of some other theories of consciousness. Śamkara's opposition to the theory that consciousness is an attribute or quality of the Self is made clear in his criticisms of the Nyāya-Vaiśesika school. According to Vaiśesika, all objects of experience can be classified either in terms of one of nine ultimately real substances (*dravya*) or in terms of the various properties and relations which pertain to these substances. According to this analysis, the self (*Ātman*) is only one of these nine real substances. But what really distinguishes this system, and makes it a particularly important object for Śamkara's criticism, is its claim that knowledge, or consciousness, is properly categorized as an attribute (*guna*) which is altogether distinct from each individual self yet which belongs to, or inheres in, the self adventitiously. Using the dreamless sleep state as an example of a case in which the self exists without being characterized by consciousness, the Naiyayika argues that consciousness must inhere in the self adventitiously and must be a product or combination of the self with a number of other factors which are non-functional in deep sleep, for example, the instrument of mental attention (*manas*), the senses (*indriya*) and the body (*visaya*).[11] Now the question is, how do we know that consciousness inheres in the self rather than in any of these other contributing causes? Two arguments are offered: first, consciousness cannot be discovered in any of the other three causes;[12] and second, consciousness cannot subsist without a locus.[13] In this sense consciousness, as an accidental attribute of the self, actually represents the limitation or qualification of the self by the three contributing causes of consciousness. This is, in short, the Nyāya thesis on consciousness.

Śamkara, nevertheless, shows dissatisfaction toward the Nyāya theory which tires to explain the necessary and eternal relationship between the substantial self and its distinct attribute, consciousness. It is the principle of inherence (*samavaya*) by which Nyāya explains this. Now the problem that is faced by Nyāya is that of how a permanent substance, for example, the self, is related to an impermanent attribute, for example, consciousness. Of a number of types of relationship posited in Nyāya philosophy, the one that applies between substance and attribute is the relationship of ontological inherence (*samavaya*), which is supposed to account for the production of an attribute, for example, consciousness, as well as for its necessary, simultaneous relationship with its substance, for example, the self. But Śamkara objects that this ontological relationship is itself a distinct entity. And because this relationship must be different from both the substance and the attribute in question, it will require an additional inherence relationship for it to inhere in both the self and consciousness. This clearly leads to an infinite regress.[14] Therefore, Śamkara argues, the Nyāya- Vaiśesika theory of inherence does not really explain how the self, which is different from consciousness, can both be its substance and one of its contributing causes.

Śamkara concludes that the position which treats consciousness as an attribute of the substantial self is false. All that Śamkara wishes to do is to maintain the essential identity between consciousness and Self as well as to deny the applicability of all relationships, including that of substance-attribute, to absolute consciousness. A quality is essentially of the nature of the substance.[15] Śamkara argues that there is no justification for positing a conscious seer different from consciousness. Consciousness, in fact, constitutes the very being of the seer as heat does of fire. There is hardly any sense in saying that heat exists differently from fire, being merely a quality of the latter.[16] Moreover, the Nyāya view which makes consciousness or knowledge a perishable quality. No eternal entity

can support an evanescent quality. Nowhere has a quality been observed coming and going without modifying the substance to which it is united.[17] Nothing that is without parts can change, nor what is eternal can support perishable qualities. It may be objected that space is eternal although its quality, sound, is non-eternal. The reply is that the Vedānta does not admit space to be an eternal entity.

Mimamsa Theory of Consciousness

The Purva Mimamsakas upheld the theory that consciousness is an activity (*karya*) of the self. This school developed from the pre-*Upanisadic Vedic* literature, which was primarily concerned with the performance of ritual. Upholding the position that "action is the sole end of *sruti*,"[18] these thinkers focused their attention on the study of injunctions to action and on the results accruing from prescribed conduct. Besides, they moved beyond the basic position that no *Vedic* passage can … be said to have any meaning unless it refers to some action or to some means or fruit of action[19] to the conclusion that the significance and meaning in all discourse comes from prescription to action. Thus, the members of this school arrived at the conclusion that activity itself was the essential nature of the entire universe. In conformity with this notion of reality, the Mimamsakas maintained that there was a plurality of active selves, each of which was eternal and permanent while nevertheless continuously undergoing various changes of form (*parinama*). The Mimamsakas considered each of these selves as both the agent (*karta)* and the enjoyer (*bhokta*) of the possible modes into which they could be modified. And one of the internal modifications or modes of the self was 'knowledge', or 'consciousness'. While consciousness was distinguished from the self on this account, it was nevertheless treated as a real modification of the self and was thus related to the self as an action is related to the agent who performs it.[20] In this sense, the Mimamsakas

stressed a certain intimacy between consciousness and the self that was lacking in the Nyāya- Vaiśesika substance-attribute model.

This above theory, however, is not acceptable to Śamkara. Because, to him, the radical distinction between absolute, eternal consciousness and the activity of the empirical self is parallel to the distinction between transcendental reality and the world of phenomenal illusion. He rejects the Mimamsaka claim that the self must be active since the sole purpose and validity of the revealed texts lie in their prescriptive function. In other words, Śamkara argues that the Self only appears to act because of the superimposition of the qualities of the no-Self on it. To quote him, "the attributes of enjoying are said to arise out of *Avidyā* or ignorance, and have no existence during the condition of knowledge."[21] Further, he argues that absolute consciousness would be imperfect if it were active, since all activity is motivated by desire, that is, by the feeling of incompleteness. Lastly, Śamkara claims that it is a contradiction to maintain both that the self is active and that it is eternal, since what is eternal is unchanging, while an activity changes the agent of which it is a modification.[22]

Buddhist (Vijnānavāda) Theory of Consciousness

The Vijnanavadin is a subjective idealist who believes that only separate, momentary ideas (*vijnāna*) or cognitions are real, and that there is no external world. One argument offered by the Vijnanavadin, while viewing against the existence of the external world, is that because the cognition of an object always occurs simultaneously with the act of cognition, the object is identical with the cognition itself. Another of their arguments is based on the analogy of dreams and illusions, wherein experience takes place without dependence on the external world.[23] Śamkara relinquishes these arguments by counter arguing that common sense and conventional logic both presuppose the existence of the

subject and the external world, and that true spiritual experience involves the transcendence of the empirical subject in addition[24] to the cancellation of the objective world. The Vijnanavadins, however, seem to point to a very important phenomenological fact, that is, to the primacy of the subject or consciousness in experience. This, along with the *Buddhi*st traditional theories of impermanence (*anitya*) and no Self (*Anātman*), resulted in the Vijnanavadin's denial of the reality of mental substance or a continuous self. Instead, these thinkers posited the existence of an infinite number of individual streams or series (*samtana*) of ideas. Now the problem arises, how is it possible for a theory which admits only the reality of momentary, subjective ideas to explain the coherence of empirical experience (the possibility of correspondence between our ideas and external objects having already been denied)? The *Vijnānavadin*s explain that our cognitions cohere because they are caused by impressions (*vasana*) left behind from previous experience.

Śamkara objects to this theory by claiming that this explanation is circular, that is, cognitions are caused by impressions which are themselves caused by cognitions, and that it leads to an infinite regress.[25] But the Vijnanavadins reply that an infinite regress does not undermine their position since each series of cognition, like *samsara* (the world) itself, is beginningless. Here, Śamkara raises a more fundamental question asking – where does this continuity of impressions reside? For he argues (by assuming the validity of the *svabhava* principle once again) that the experiences of personal identity and memory presuppose a continuous principle of consciousness.[26] And, he further dismisses it by asking how any kind of continuity, whether it is required to explain the existence of a substratum of impressions or the experiences of personal identity and memory be incorporated into an analysis of consciousness based on a doctrine of momentariness?[27]

Cārvāka Theory of Consciousness

While the Vijnanavadins tried to account for the existence of the self in terms of moments of consciousness, the Cārvākas, or Indian materialists, identified the self with consciousness and maintained that it was a product of a combination of the four material elements.[28] Using the production of the intoxicating quality of liquor from non-intoxicating ingredients as an example, the Cārvākas argue that consciousness is a quality of the body which can have no existence apart from the living body itself. Where do the qualities of consciousness reside, they ask, if not in the body itself?

To Cārvāka's empirical claim that we never perceive consciousness, except in conjunction with bodily activity and experience, Śamkara argues that the qualities of the self are not perceptible to others since they are as different from the perceptible qualities of the body as consciousness is different from matter.[29] In this sense Śamkara is claiming that it is impossible to establish perceptually that consciousness exists, since it is invalid to identify existence and knowability with, and thereby reduce them to, the contents of empirical perception alone. Further, Śamkara objects that the Cārvāka is unable to explain the relationship between the material elements and their supposed product, consciousness. For if the Cārvāka tries to reduce consciousness to the faculty of perception arising from the combination of the elements, then Śamkara's criticism rests on the fact that it would be impossible for perception to apprehend the elements whose combination is presupposed by perception itself. On the other hand, if the Cārvāka treats consciousness as a property or quality of the combination of the elements, that is, of a physical body, then Śamkara wants to know why other material objects, such as jars, do not share in the quality of intelligence. Rather, Śamkara argues that the self, being essentially intelligent, must be different from, and independent of, the material elements and the human body.

In this sense Śamkara is reasserting the central theme which runs throughout his criticisms of all opposing theories of consciousness, that the self-revealing consciousness, beyond all qualifications and determinations, is fully independent. The ontology of consciousness is thus ontology of eternal self-autonomy. And how can any definition, using concepts which are relative and dependent upon one another, grasp that which is radically discontinuous with relativity itself? The self-manifest awareness cannot be defined in terms of anything which becomes an object of it. And since all categories and relations are objects of knowledge, it follows that the latter cannot be defined in terms of the former. Śamkara confesses that knowledge, consciousness or awareness is nothing but the element of illumination in our experience, the principle of revelation which informs all experience. This "essence" of experience is indefinable. Indeed, the very intimacy with which we know it incapacitates us to describe it into intellectual concepts. As Henry Bergson says, our knowledge of the nature of the knowledge is absolute and all our descriptions of that nature must be relative.

Nature of Consciousness in Advaita Epistemology

This leads to positing his own thesis that consciousness as that which is *Svaprakasatva* or *Svatah prakasatva*, that is, self-luminous. He considers this self-luminosity both as the *adhisthana*, that is, the ground and the ***sāksin*** which is eternal witness of all manifestations.[30] According to the doctrine of self-luminosity of consciousness, the self-revelation of consciousness consists in the fact that consciousness illumines or lights everything, including itself. This doctrine thus provides the Advaitin with the means of transcending the intentional functioning of modified or empirical consciousness, involving the distinction between the knowing subject and the object known. For while empirical cognition consists in the apprehension of an object by a subject, self-luminous transcendental consciousness is neither an object nor a subject and is known solely by

means of itself. In this sense, *Brahman* knowledge, or the self-revelation of consciousness, is completely self-caused or autonomous, and eternally known, or indubitable. In order to emphasize the autonomous and indubitable nature of absolute consciousness, Citsukha, a thirteenth century Advaitin, has defined self-luminosity as "the capacity of being called immediately known in empirical usage while not being an object of cognition." However, the basic point behind the Advaitic doctrine of self-luminosity is that consciousness is a light which illuminates itself and every thing else at once. And there is a considerable amount of Upanisadic precedent for the Advaitic reliance upon this particular metaphorical description of consciousness. To cite just an example: "The self indeed, is his light…for which the self, indeed, as his light one sits, moves, does his work, and returns."[31]

Śamkara submits, "So *Brahman* being the only self-luminous entity beyond the sun and moon etc., everything that exists and shines does so on account of the light of *Brahman*. It manifests everything but it is not manifested or perceived by any other light."[32] Again, "There being nothing else but the *Ātman*, what should he see or know in particular, except being eternally aware of himself? The *Ātman* therefore is eternally conscious of itself."[33] Śamkara, however, objects that any self-luminous physical object, such as a lamp, or the sun, is objectified by its own light and thus becomes an object of illumination, just like all the objects illuminated by it.[34] Absolute consciousness, on the other hand, is immaterial and therefore is never perceived by the sense organs, and in particular by the eye.[35] In this sense, the "self-luminosity" of absolute consciousness is unique because the consciousness illuminated is identical with, and never an object of, intelligence, while all other entities and non-entities are objectifiable, and therefore distinct from consciousness itself.

It is to be noted here that many Western thinkers also found in 'light' an appropriate means to convey something significant about the nature of consciousness. Let's have a look over their treatment of this metaphor of light. The light metaphor has long had an important and even predominant place in Western treatments of consciousness. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, and continuing through the Neoplatonists to Medieval Christian thinking and seventeenth century Rationalism, this metaphor has been used to focus attention on the intelligible nature of the universe as well as on the capacity of the rational mind to have knowledge of reality. Let us look at three of the earliest examples of the use of this metaphor. The first example is taken from Plato, who speaks in the Republic about the 'Form' of the 'Good', which is the supreme form of divine Reason and thus the highest possible object of knowledge for the individual soul (psyche) or consciousness. Plato proceeds to liken this Form of the Good, as the cause of intelligence and intelligible objects, to the sun whose light is the cause of vision and of visible things.[36] The light of divine Reason, in Plato's analogy, not only accounts for the power by which the soul knows but also is the source of the existence and essence of the Forms themselves. In the second example, Aristotle uses the light metaphor to emphasize the causal, or active dimension of mind (*nous*). He says that the active intellect makes knowledge possible, just as light makes vision possible when, for example, it changes potential colors into actual colors.[37] Finally, Plotinus transcendental One, which is beyond intellectual activity but neither unintelligent nor unconscious, is likened to the sun in the sense that both the One and the sun are said to illuminate the universe while remaining entirely undiminished in the process.[38] This particular use of the analogy between the sun and the One, which represents Plotinus' development of the analogy in Plato's Republic, is the closest to the Advaitic use of the light metaphor that we find in Western philosophy.

Thus, so far we have seen, the self is its own light; it is self-luminous. It is not an object that is to be made manifest; it is self-manifest. The so called luminaries such as the sun and the moon are themselves made manifest by the self. Even the mind shines only by the light that it borrows from the self. However, knowledge or consciousness is the very nature of the self. Terms such as *prajna* and *jnāna* meaning knowledge are employed in the *Upanisads* to indicate the nature of *Brahman- Ātman*. As in Sāmkhya , so also here in Advaita of Śamkara, a distinction is made between the consciousness which is the nature of the self and the consciousness that is due to a mode of the mind. The self is 'consciousness-as'; the mental mode leads to 'consciousness-of'. The former is *svarupa jnāna*, essential knowledge; the latter is *Vrtti-jnāna*, knowledge which results from the operation of a mental mode.[39] We shall deal with this in more details in the following on 'nature of perception'. By themselves, the mind and its modes are inert, since they are the products of *prakrti*. But since the mind is made of the *sattva* constituent of *prakrti*, it has the ability to reflect the consciousness which is the self. Thus far the Sāmkhya and Advaita agree. The one difference between them is that while for the Sāmkhya , the mind and its parent, *prakrti* are real, for Advaita, *prakrti* is the principle of illusion, *Māyā*, and therefore not real.

***Sāksi Caitanya*, the Witness Consciousness**

The idea of an enjoyer as well as an onlooker being located on the same tree, which evidently refers here to the human body, is a unique conception that has been highlighted by the Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara at more than one place. Śamkara while commenting on the *Mundakopanisad* refers to *Īsvara* as the ***sāksi*** [40] or witness and the *jivātman* as the enjoyer. The witness merely looks on (*pasyatyeva kevalam*), and it is regarded as the director (*prerayitā*) also. It is only in the sense of his being the *drasta* or the seer like the king, says Śamkara, "*darsanamatram hi tasya prerayitrtvam rajāvat*".

Further, while commenting the *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, Śamkara says, " ***sāksi ceta kevalo nirgunasca***". Śamkara here refers to *Panini Sutras* to point out that ***sāksi*** or witness is only a seer of every thing, ***sāksi sarvadrasta***.[41]

The witnessing consciousness knows, although without modes of inner sense, all internal as well as external objects directly. The external objects are known either *as* already known, or *as* unknown. This concept of knowing an external object *as* unknown is peculiar to Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara. The concept is necessary for understanding that knowing an object for the first time means *knowing a previously unknown* object. This *knowing* is really *recognizing*, that is, knowing what was already known, although *as* unknown. There cannot be any emotional involvement in objects *known* thus; this kind of knowledge is bare knowledge – knowledge of witnessing consciousness. Although an individual is, most of the time, involved in actions still the underlying witnessing consciousness reveals all that the individual feels, does, thinks, all the time. That is, witnessing consciousness is all-seeing (*Sarvadrk*) and always. This is why there can be no unconscious states, desires etc., in the individual of which he is unaware. This inner consciousness is aware of everything that goes on within an individual.

The knowledge of objects is made possible by the functioning of the cognitive mode (*Vrtti*) of the mind. But the mental mode can function only as carrying the reflection of the essential consciousness which is the self. For objective knowledge to arise, then, there are required the mental mode and the prototype consciousness which is described as the witness-consciousness (***sāksi-caitanya***). There are cases of knowledge where the witness alone is the revealer, and not the mental mode. The cognition of a pot, for example, arises in the form "This is a pot". For this cognition, the instrument is the appropriate cognitive mode (*Vrtti*) of the mind. But how is this cognition known? When I say "I know this is a pot", how is this knownness of the pot known? The Nyāya-

Vaiśesika view is that the first cognition is known through reflective cognition (*anuvyavasaya-jnāna*). But this will lead to infinite regress. And so, the Advaita position is that the knownness of an object is revealed by the witness consciousness. While cognitions manifest objects, it is the witness that manifests cognitions. It is not cognitive modes alone, but also all modes of the mind, such as desire, anger, pain, pleasure, etc., are directly revealed by the *witness*.[42] There is one more significant instance where there is awareness because of the witness, without the instrumentation of a cognitive mode, that is, the awareness of the absence of objects, as in deep sleep, is nonetheless awareness; the unknownness is also known. Here it is the witness, the on-looker that is the revealing principle. The witness-self is the constant and unfailing consciousness. It neither rises nor sets. It is the eternal, immutable, pure awareness (*cin-matra*). It is on the basis of the self that all empirical knowledge takes place, involving those distinctions of cognizer, means of cognition, and object of cognition.[43]

Nature of Perception in Śamkara

Let us now try to understand the Vedantic theory of perception as presented by Śamkara. It is to be noted, as mentioned above, that the elaborate discussion of the *Vrttis* going out and enveloping or assuming the form of the objects is not found in Śamkara. He seems to be interested only in the metaphysical aspect of perception; he doesn't aim at giving a complete analysis of the mechanism of the perceptual process. However, Śamkara's theory of perception at first distinguishes between two levels of consciousness which correspond to the realms of reality and appearance, higher and lower knowledge, and freedom and bondage. This constitutes the heart of Śamkara's vision of the non-duality theory. He identifies the higher or absolute consciousness (*sāksi Caitanya*) with the realm of reality and the transcendental Self (*Ātman*), and lower or modified consciousness (*Vrtti Caitanya*) with the realm of apparent reality and the

phenomenal self (*Jiva*). As the absolute consciousness is universal and undifferentiated, the modified consciousness appears to be individualized, that is, to belong to different intelligent beings. Thus, Śamkara accounts for the variety of mental activities and phenomenal experiences which characterize worldly existence, or bondage, in terms of the modified consciousness. Now let's examine the role of this modified consciousness in the theory of perception.

Śamkara defines 'modified consciousness' as the basis of individual experience in terms of the association or combination of the absolute consciousness with ignorance (*Avidyā)*.[44] Further he has drawn another important distinction within modified consciousness according to whether this combination is active and functional, or latent and purely potential. In the former mode, modified consciousness or the individual self is the result of the active appropriation by, or misidentification of, the self with conditions and limitations, for example, knowing, doing, enjoying, etc., that do not properly belong to it. In this mode, individual consciousness consists in the mutual superimposition (*adhyasa*) of pure consciousness and ignorance, that is, in the identification of the self with "the *upadhis* (limiting adjuncts) of body, sense and mind…. on account of the absence of discrimination." [45] According to the Advaitic tradition, this active association of the Self with ignorance brings about an "objective attitude" in, and "self-limitation" of, absolute consciousness which in turn results in the production of the mind or "internal organ" (*antahkarana*) that functions in all waking and dream experience.[46] In order to have a complete understanding of the active mode of modified consciousness, that is, of the Advaitic philosophy of mind, it is necessary to analyse the nature of the *antahkarana* in more detail.

Antahkarana, the Advaitic Theory of Mind

Advaitins divide mental functions into four aspects, namely, sense-mind (*manas*); reason-intellect (*buddhi*); I-sense (*ahamkara*); and recollection-memory (*citta*). The sense-mind, as its name indicates, is the means by which the mind "assimilates and synthesizes sense impressions and thus enables the self to make contact with external objects.".[47] This aspect of mind is associated with the mental condition of doubt or indecision, since it provides the knower with percepts but is incapable of discriminating among them. The decisiveness or certitude which accompanies our perception of objects is thus due to the discriminating aspect of mind, *buddhi*. It is by means of reason that we discern, judge and understand the data of experience. But through the processes of sense assimilation and reasoning, we begin to develop a point of self-reference which manifests in terms of the I-sense, that is, in terms of self-consciousness and the pride of egotism. In this context, it is important to note that Advaitins dismiss Self-consciousness, if it is defined as the attempt to know the pure Self as an object, as a pseudo-problem.[48] They do, however, admit the validity of the more conventional type of self–consciousness in terms of the I-sense, although the analysis of this ultimately illusory dimension of experience is perhaps somewhat cursory. Finally, the fourth aspect of mind distinguished by Advaitic thinkers is recollection. In addition to accounting for the actual experience of memory, recollection also serves to explain the manner in which the effects of past experience, in the form of behavioural, perceptual and intellectual habits or tendencies (*samskara*), make their influence felt in present mental activity. The Advaitin thus concludes that mind is nothing apart from its various functions, which in turn are merely forms or modes of the modification of consciousness resulting from the association of the Self with ignorance. "Desire, resolve, doubt, faith, want of faith, steadiness, unsteadiness, shame, intelligence and fear – all these are but the mind."[49]

P.T.Raju, however, tries to explicate the nature and function of the *antahkarana* according to the followers of Śamkara (which is not very clear in Śamkara himself). To quote P.T.Raju, " According to Advaita, perception is a function (*Vrtti*) of the inner sense (instrument) which consists of four parts or levels – mind (*manas*), ego (*ahamkara*), reason (*buddhi*), and apperception (*Citta*). The function of mind is analysis and synthesis of whatever is perceived by the senses. When I see an apple, my mind first gets all the impressions of colour, shape, taste, etc., synthesizes them and separates the total unified object thus built up from other objects. The function of the ego then is to appropriate the object as its object as in " I see an apple." Reason then makes the object an existing object in the form, "That is an apple." Until reason does its work, the object is an object of my experience, not an object of the common world. The function of reason is to make it an object of the objective world through an assertion or decision. "That is an apple" is the result *(phala, Ergebnis*) of the decision of reason. But the inner instrument goes further in its work. In turning the sensations into a unified object, the inner instrument brings in past experiences also into the unity, relates the apple to the tree, to my eating, its price and so forth. This relating is the function of apperception (*citta*, that which gathers or collects), which collects different ideas about the object and relates them."[50]

Further, to quote him, "To the above analysis, the Advaitins add another factor from their doctrine of the 'unconscious' (*Avidyā*). Before the perceptual cognition of the apple arises, I am ignorant, unconscious of its existence. The darkness of this unconscious has to be lighted up for the cognition to arise. It is lighted up by the consciousness present in the senses and mind coming into contact with the object. When the light in my consciousness, reflected in mind and senses, lights up the area, the objects of that area are disclosed. This discloser is affected by my mind, which acts through the senses and

takes the form of the object. The object has its own reality, its own place in the cosmos. But my mind also has the power to take on exactly the same form, and then abstract the mental form later, if necessary, for instance, when it remembers the object."[51] P.T. Raju maintains that the Advaitins insist upon in the case of perception that it reveals, along with the forms, Being (*satta*) that is common to every existent and without which the forms cannot be real and cannot have objective status. In "That is a cow" and "that is a horse", along with the forms of the cow and the horse, being also is revealed through "is" whether or not we express our cognition in words.[52]

Śamkara makes the self, the absolute consciousness responsible for all manifestation in experience. All appearances hang round the light of consciousness. The *Ātman*, however, does not reveal the whole world directly. In the graded series of objects which are subtle and internal, *buddhi* occupies the very first position being the subtlest and the most internal of all things. Hence it is the first to receive the light of consciousness. Next comes *manas* which is in contact with *buddhi*; then the senses which are in contact with the *manas*; then the body which is in contact with the senses, and then the rest of the world bound with the law of cause and effect.[53] Nevertheless, what is implied by this is that the objective world is experienced only when illumined by the light of the *Vrttijnana* or the *buddhi*-consciousness. The pure *cit* is known as *vijnānamaya* when conditioned by, without being distinguished from, this *buddhi*-consciousness. Just as the *rāhu* is observed only when it is in contact with the moon and the sun, similarly *Ātman* is caught in experience only when it is associated with the internal organ and it's modes. The *Ātman* wrongly identifies itself with the *buddhi* and its modes, the result being it's having to move in both the worlds.

The agentship which is the result of this wrong identification belongs not to pure *cit* but to consciousness conditioned or determined by the internal organ. We have also seen that

there can be no perceptual or direct knowledge of an object unless it is presented before consciousness in the form of a *Vrtti* or mode of the internal organ. The *Vrtti* being a mode of the *antahkarana* itself it is obvious that in perceptual experience there is a fusion of the subject and the object into one. As a later writer puts it, there is direct or immediate knowledge of the object because the latter becomes a part of the knower's self. To Advaita Vedānta, the ultimate truth is to be the nature of direct experience. Mediate knowledge cannot eradicate nescience which is directly felt. In one place the Vivarana School remarks that what mediate knowledge grasps is merely the existence of the causal object. No wise man can be satisfied merely with such mediate or inferential knowledge of an object.

Śamkara observes that all knowledge with which we are concerned, which dispels ignorance, which admits of the distinctions of direct and indirect, true and false knowledge, which, in short, must constitute the starting-point in all epistemological enquiries, is the so-called *Vrttijnāna*, knowledge which consists in the modes or modifications of the internal organ illumined by the pure *cit*. There is no doubt about the fact that the modes of the internal organ, the *antahkarana*, have illumination, or that knowledge in the sense of *Vrttijnana* reveals objects. As we have seen, Śamkara nowhere in his writings gave a detailed systematic analysis of the perception, although it has been scattered throughout his writings. A theory of perception was expounded by the author of the Vivarana School of Vedānta. This theory was further elaborated and perfected by Dharmaraja in his celebrated piece *Vedāntaparibhasa*. The theory of perception as expounded by these later writers, since it is the very opposite of modern scientific views on the subject, has been the object of much unfavourable criticism in recent times.[54] Dr. D.M. Datta has tried to give a scientific defence of the theory on the

basis of certain tenets of the Gestalt School of psychology coupled with some other common-sense considerations.[55]

Out of the two elements in the neo-Vedantic theory of perception, namely, (1) the going out of the *antahkarana* to the object and (2) the *antahkarana* assuming the form of the object, neither is included in Śamkara's discussion of perception. In contradistinction to the Vedantic view, modern science believes that in perception objects send out stimuli which are received in the brain where they somehow result in the perception of the object. Śamkara, it seems, would have no objection to this analysis of perception provided it were granted that the stimuli running from the object through the sense-organs along the nerve-paths needed the light of the self, the pure consciousness (*cit*) to be enlivened into perceptual experience. It must further be granted that the form of the object somehow travels along with the stimuli. One thing which comes out clearly even from the modern description of the perceptual process is that the light of consciousness does not directly fall upon or illumine the object of experience. The form of the object has first to be assimilated by what Śamkara calls the internal organ[56] and what modern psychology generally identifies with nervous processes. Thus, Śamkara is interested in showing that besides the changing modes of the internal organ which constitute experience, a pure *cit* or awareness, an ever-shining light, of which those modes are objects and without which memory, recognition, etc., would be impossible.[57]

Though the phenomenal consciousness is a modified product it is not different from absolute consciousness, it only appears to be different. This leads to the question of the place of *Māyā* or *Avidyā* in Śamkara's theory of knowledge. Rejecting the Mimamsa doctrine of Kumarila and Prabhākara, Śamkara expresses his position regarding the nature of the objects of illusion which is similar to the one that we find in the Mādhyamikas. The object of illusion is neither real nor non-real, nor both, nor neither. It

is *anirvacaniya*. But Śamkara differs from the Mādhyamikas for whom the basis of the illusory object is void (Ś*unya*), the inexplicable. This cuts at the very root of truth-falsity dichotomy as both are inexplicable. Śamkara rejects the Vijnānavāda position that the real basis of illusion is pure consciousness, of that it is void which makes pure consciousness or void the gland of both truth and falsity. Although for Śamkara too both are based on *Brahman* and are based on *Māyā*, he still can ask the question, 'how and where do we, get ideas of truth and falsity? For him, we get them in empirical reality, an empirically true object forms the basis of true and false objects. The illusory snake is thus a self-contradicting percept in Advaita Vedānta, it is not a self-contradictory concept. Beyond this state of truth and falsity there is their substratum, '*Sat*', the deeper dimension of reality which is non-conceptual, indeterminate Being. It is Being itself in which Being and consciousness are identical. Being is posited by epistemological consciousness (*jnāna*). Accordingly, there are levels of reality (*satta*), Being or *Satta* is not imaginary as the 'snake' in the rope is not imaginary, it faces us, Being (existence), shines forth through it. This would allow the Advaitin to say that what is inexplicable is not actually the non-existent, it contains within itself the elements of self-contradictoriness. Thus the snake in the rope is not a self contradictory concept but a self contradictory percept that contains its own contradictoriness and is inexplicable (*anirvacaniya*). At this juncture the Advaitins use much of destructive dialectic found in Western thought and also in Buddhism to show that none of the categories of thought like space, time, causality, etc., are self-consistent as they are all *anirvacaniya*.

With this dialectic the Advaitins try to deny the ultimate validity of all categories, though not establishing acosmism (unlike Buddhism) as *Māyā* is based on Being, the *Brahman*, a reality higher and deeper than the world and not explicable in terms of any category except that of Being. The categories of the world are not for the Being but they are used

as concepts for the world of action (*vyavahara*). Being is identical with consciousness because Being is posited by our epistemological consciousness (*jnāna*) which is different from relational and intuitional levels of empirical or modified consciousness. Epistemologically the lowest level of reality can be left out as no true question arises on that which has no reality, though the other levels are epistemologically significant.

The illusory snake is perceptually negated but the self-contradiction (both being and non-being) world is dialectically contradicted. *Māyā* means falsity of both these types (falsity by self contradiction). " But it should be clear now what the Advaitins mean by the four levels of Being. We can also understand why the Advaitins say that inference and scriptures have to be accepted and perception rejected in cases of conflict, for the *Brahman* is established by the scripture and dialectic, which is a form of inference, and the world by perception. We can see furthermore, why the other Vedantins object to rejecting perception in such cases and advocate reconciliation for instance, why should we not treat the perceptual world as real and treat it and the other lower levels as depending on the higher? Cannot the idea of dependence, which Madhva introduces, solve our difficulty? The Advaitins accept the idea but say that it does not solve the difficulty, for the idea of self-contradictoriness as the mark of falsity has still to be accepted. If we accept it, the world has to be regarded as illusory and false although relatively to *Brahman* ".

Māyā is a mystery that the snake should appear as independent and individual object, although the real object is the rope. The world is a cosmic illusion while the snake is an individual illusory, the latter is *Avidyā* while the former is *Māyā* although by nature both are same. This also leads to the two level of truth, knowledge a higher and lower. The pragmatic criterion enables us to distinguish what is empirically true for what is

empirically false, which is not what higher knowledge (*paramarthika jnāna*) is. That higher knowledge is uncontradicted (*abadhita*) and uncontradictable (*abadhya*), is absolutely true. All other knowledge, including Vedic knowledge, are lower, not direct intuition of *Brahman*. In the Mahayana Buddhism there is the level of worldly truth (*samvrti satya*) and ultimate truth (*paramarthika satya*), but unlike in Advaita Vedānta, it does not lead to Being or *Brahman*. For Mahayana, Being belongs to the world of becoming, a combination of both being and non-being. But according to Vedānta, Being can exist apart from non-Being, though the latter cannot exist without the former, in *Brahman* there is only one sided dependence as *Brahman* is independent of and is not dependent on the world or on *Māyā*.

This is the eternal self-revelation of existence, intelligence and bliss. The unique epistemological status of this ultimate level of consciousness, which is also called the *sāksi caitanya*, the eternal witness, is *svaprakasa*, self-luminosity. It is that level of consciousness which illumines everything including itself, transcends intentional functioning or modified consciousness and the distinction between subject and object. This is neither a subject or an object. It is completely self-caused, eternally known, and indubitable. Thus the epistemic framework in the Vedānta is through a gradual negation of (*neti neti*) of the lower realm of being as self-contradictory ultimately poetically describing the undifferentiated higher state of Being as the light of the sun that illumines itself, to all as well as others.

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Chapter-4

Consciousness in Śamkara's Metaphysics

Introduction

Indian philosophy stands as one of the foremost Eastern traditions of abstract metaphysical enquiry. Indian philosophy, expressed in the Indo-European language of *Sanskrt*, comprises of many diverse metaphysical schools of thought and includes a substantial body of intellectual debate and argumentation among the various schools of *darśana* and their diverse position. Metaphysics, as understood in Western sense, constitutes the most important part of doing philosophy in India. Metaphysical enquiry into the question of the nature of a Supreme Being and it's relation to the world, are debated among different systems of *darśana* like Buddhism, Advaita Vedānta and theistic Vedānta contributing much to this debate. Much Buddhist philosophy promotes the idea of the interdependence of everything; theistic Vedānta finds no gap between the world and God (the world is God's body); and Advaita Vedānta insists that everyone's true self is nothing other than *Brahman*, the Absolute. As academic philosophy in India is deeply conversant with Western philosophy, it addresses many of the same issues and methods. It would, however, be quite wrong to think of metaphysics as a uniquely 'Western' phenomenon. Classical Indian philosophy, and especially Buddhism, Jaina philosophy, Vedānta philosophy and Sāmkhya philosophy also can be considered as a very rich source of metaphysics.

I have made an attempt at understanding the metaphysical position of Śamkara under the following heads: 1) The doctrine of *Brahman*, 2) a brief reference to the doctrine of *Vivartavāda* and of *Māyā* which is already discussed in epistemology, 3) the doctrine of

Moksa or with special reference to the grades of consciousness levels. Metaphysics and epistemology are very closely interrelated in Śamkara's philosophy. In his epistemology, Śamkara expressed distrust for a kind of logical reasoning that is rhetorical, and was looking for metaphysical principle which was to be established solely on the basis of experience, though supplemented by logic as well. According to S. Radhakrishnan, metaphysics is a consideration of what is implied in the fact of experience. Its problem is not one of observing and tabulating the facts of consciousness; it is concerned with what the existence of facts implies regarding the nature of reality. N.K. Devaraja observes, "The business of metaphysics, according to Śankara, consists in a synthetic and critical evaluation rather than an analytical and classifications of the objects of experience. Metaphysics, in other words, is an enquiry into the nature of reality; it is not a science of the existents. Metaphysics for him is the *parā vidyā* whose special concern is the study of the indestructible. The moral and the psychological distinction made by certain *Upanisad*s between the pursuit's of the higher and the lower goods is raised by Śamkara to the status of the metaphysical tenet. The division of knowledge into *parā* and *aparā,* corresponds to their respective fruit's or consequences, namely, prosperity and release."[1]

The Doctrine of *Brahman*

The metaphysical quest is a search for '*ontos*', or 'Being', a study of reality, which plays a pivotal role in Śankara's Advaita Vedānta. Śamkara defines reality as ''that the ascertained nature of which does not undergo any change."[2] At another place he says that, "that object which necessarily remains what it is, is truly real."[3] The most distinguishing feature of Śankara's Advaita is the concept 'reality' which is none other than the Unqualified *Brahman* (*Nirguna Brahman*). *Brahman* is one and the only reality and is admitted as devoid of all determinations *(Nirvišesa*). Plotinus' transcendent and

ineffable One or God is in itself beyond all qualifications of thought and is in this sense similar to Śankara's *Brahman*.[4] Hence the philosophy of Advaita is often named as *Nirvišesa Brahma-Vada* (doctrine of Unqualified *Brahman*). This *Nirvišesa Brahma-Vada*, however, has it's root in the scriptures.

Śankara's Advaita is rooted in the *Upanisad*s. At a time when false doctrines were misguiding people and orthodoxy had nothing better to offer than a barren and outmoded ritualism counteracting the atheism of the heterodox, Śamkara expounded the philosophy of the *Upanisad*s. Though he was a great logician he did not aim at logical and analytical skill alone. His was a conviction and authority born of living experience. It was out of his own self-evidencing plenary experience that Śamkara poured forth his philosophy which bears the name "Advaita". He set up a model in thinking and exposition which subsequent philosophers in India have striven to follow. His works are characterized by penetrating insight and analytical skill. He wrote stupendous works both in prose and verse; and all of them are marked by lucidity of language and depth of thought. Among his major works are the great commentaries on what are known as the three cannons (*Prasthanatraya*) of Vedānta, namely, the principal *Upanisad*s, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and the *Brahma-sutra*, and such independent manuals as the *Upadesasahasri* and the *Vivekacudamani*. If we analyse Śankara's writings, we find that he summerises his whole philosophy in the following manner.

"*Slokardhena pravaksami yaduktah granthakotibhih*

brahma satyam jagat mithya jivobrahmaiva naparah".

This means, "I would explain in half a sentence which is said in crores of books of wisdom, that – *Brahman* is the only real, the world is illusory, the individual self (*Jiva*) and *Brahman* are essentially one and the same".

Meaning of '*Brahman*'

The word '*Brahman*' is derived from the Sanskrit root '*brh*' which means 'to grow' or 'let grow' or 'to be great', 'to increase', 'to expand well', "that which has reached it's ultimate evolution, development, expansion or growth".[5] Because of it's greatness, the Absolute is called *Brahman*. It is known as *Brahman* as it is "fully accomplished and the greatest of all." Again it is known as *Brahman* as "it is (fully) grown and makes other things grow."[6] Śamkara in his *Brahma Sutra Bhasya* defines *Brahman* as "*Janmadasya Yatah*"[7] which means that *Brahman* is that from which origin, sustenance, and destruction of this world proceeds. In other words, *Brahman* is the cause and effect of the world that we see and we do not see. This spatio-temporal world of causality is dependent on *Brahman* from beginning to the end. There is difference of opinion among writers like Professor Deussen, Roth, Oldenberg, Hillebrandt and Radhakrishnan about the etymological and chronological meaning of the word *Brahman*. Even if we call it by different names like 'absolute', 'the great', 'world producing energy', etc., the word '*Brahman*' is finally taken in the sense of Ultimate Reality to which phenomenal reality and it's evolution is due.

The *Nirguna* (Unqualified) *Brahman*

There are scriptural passages which characterize *Brahman* as the cause of the world,[8] as well as the home of all auspicious qualities.[9] Now the problem arises regarding reconciliation of the two views, the view that *Brahman* is the Absolute, without characteristics, and the view which characterizes it as the cause of the world, and as endowed with attributes? Śamkara solves this problem by postulating two standpoints, namely, the absolute (*Paramārthika*) and the relative (*Vyavahārika*). The supreme truth is that *Brahman* which is non-dual and relationless. It alone is; there is nothing real besides it. But from the empirical, relative standpoint which we adopt when we speak of

Brahman, it appears as God, the cause of the universe, as what is related, and as endowed with attributes.[10] Thus, *Brahman*, which is unconditioned or relationless, and is without attributes and qualifications, is called *Isvara* when viewed in relation to the empirical world and empirical souls. *Brahman* is one and the same *Nirguna* (attributeless) and *Saguna* (with attributes). Śamkara says, "*Brahman*, verily, is known to be of two forms, and that which, on the contrary, is devoid of all adjuncts… Although *Brahman* is one, it is taught in the Vedānta texts as what is to be meditated upon as being related to assumed adjuncts, and as what is to be known as being devoid of any relation to adjuncts."[11] Further, Vedānta *Paribhasa* outlines the nature of *Brahman* in two ways, namely, (i) *svarupa-laksana* (essential nature), that is, by definition with reference to the essence, and (ii) by *tatastha-laksana* (accidental nature), that is, by definition with reference to accidents. On this Śamkara opines that creatorship etc., are *tatastha laksana* of *Brahman* whereas *satyam jnanam anantam* is its *svarup laksana*.[12] Thus, we saw that following the spirit of the *Upanisad*s, Śamkara reconciles the two aspects of *Brahman* adopting a distinction between *Brahman* as it is in itself and *Brahman* as is conceived by us in relation to the world. The former is called *Para-Brahman*, the letter *Apara-Brahman*. The former is called *Nirguna Brahman*, the latter is called *Saguna Brahman*. It is to be noted here that the *Nirguna Brahman* is not a mere negation. To quote Dr. Radhakrishnan, "When the Absolute is said to be *Nirguna,* this only means that it is trans-empirical, since *gunas* are products of *prakrti* and the Absolute is superior to it. The *gunas* qualify the objective as such and God is not an object."[13]

Nirguna Brahman is also called *Paramārth-tattva* (the highest entity),[14] *Sat*,[15] without attributes,[16] *Bhuma* (unexcelled),[17] Self-identical, uniform in nature, real and yet devoid of the nature of the world, without part, *Vibhu*,[18] pure and perfectly stainless,[19] though beyond time and space everything is permeated by it. It is devoid of name and form. It is

strictly one.[20] It is immediate and direct,[21] the innermost self.[22] It is of the nature of eternal knowledge, without interior or exterior, consisting only of knowledge, all pervading like the ether and of infinite power, the self of all. It is unseen seer, the unheard listener, the unthought thinker, and the unknown knower.[23] All these do not suggest that *Brahman* is mere blank; an abyss which swallows up all the finites but rather it is fullness of Being. To quote Professor Hiriyanna, "What is meant by speaking of *Brahman* as featureless is that it transcends the distinction between substance and attributes. So the *Upanisad* says, '*nirguno guni*'." *Brahman* has neither genus nor differentia that it can be defined. Śamkara admits that even the definition of *Brahman* as *Saccidananda* is imperfect though it expresses the reality in the best way possible. Only *brahman*ubhava, the realization of *Brahman*, gives the insight into *Brahman*, and the best way to express oneself is by maintaining silence when words fail to express that which is beyond description. For example, Badhva, when asked by Bāskali for a definition of *Brahman*, expounded it in the language of silence. When repeatedly pressed for a definition he cried out, "We are telling you, only you do not understand, this *Ātman* is silence."[24] Henry Bergson too says that no amount of concepts can exhaust the nature of finite individual even what to tell of the Absolute.

Now it can be said that the above account of *Brahman* could give rise to a suspicion that *Brahman* is pure abstraction, 'an uncomfortable night of nothingness', 'an indeterminate blank'. Śamkara conceives it as the highest reality. As Radhakrishnan says, " It does not follow that it is pure nothing since the negative has it's meaning only in relation to the positive."[25] An assumption that nothing is intelligible unless qualified by a quality will land us in infinite regress as that quality will need further quality to qualify it. It is described in Śamkara neither as 'this' nor as 'that' (*neti, neti)*, the way it is defined in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*. Eliot Deutsch says that the via negative of Advaita Vedānta

also safeguards the unqualified oneness of that state of being called *Brahman* and rules out all arguments that would seek either to demonstrate or to refute it. Human language has its source in phenomenal experience which is limited in its application to the state of being that is beyond that experience. In favour of the above view, Deussen upholds that *Nirguna Brahman* is the last unknowable origin of the existent. Negation of quality doe not mean negation of existence of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is *kutastha nitya*, one who remains uniform in all times. It is ***trikāla-satya, trikālabādhita,*** that which is not sublated in any period. There is nothing real which is not existent. *Brahman* is the essence of existence, *satyasya satyam*.[26]

Different Ways to Define *Brahman*

Nirguna Brahman as Distinctionless (*Abheda*)

Nirguna Brahman is beyond the Vedantic theory of distinctions (*Bheda*). According to this theory, there are three types of distinctions, '*Vijātiya bheda*', heterogeneous distinction, the distinction between two different classes of things, for example, the distinction between a cow and a horse; '*Sajātiya bheda*', homogeneous distinction, the distinction between two cows. While these two are the two kinds of external distinction, there is a third kind of distinction, namely, internal distinction (*Svagata bheda)*, which exists within an object, between it's different parts, for example, the distinction between the tail, horns and legs of a cow. Śankara's *Nirguna Brahman* is free from all above kinds of distinctions.

Nirguna Brahman as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (*Sat-Cit-Ānanda*)

Though the definition of *Brahman* as existence, consciousness and bliss is imperfect, it expresses reality in best possible way. To put the definition in *Sankrt*, "*Sat kim*? *Kālatrayepi tisthati iti sat*." This means, "What is existence? That which abides in all the

three periods of past, present and future." "*Cit kim? Jnāna-svarupam*." This means, "What is consciousness? It is of the nature of knowledge". "*Ānandah kah*? *Sukha-svarupah*." This means, "What is bliss? It is the nature of pleasure." Thus, in the form of Sat-*Cit-Ānanda*, *Brahman* is present within everything. It is the mark of every appearance of the worldly objects. Everything in this world has five elements in it's make-up, namely, existence (*asti*), manifestation (*bhāti*), lovability (*priyam*), name (*nāma*) and form (*rupa*). Of these the last two vary from object to object. They are not constant, and are products of *māyā*. They are the stuff of the world, and are unreal. But the first three constitute the essential nature of *Brahman* which is existence-consciousness-bliss. We speak of every object as existing (*asti*), as manifest (*bhāti*) and as being attractive (*priyam*). These characteristics which are common to all products really belong to *Brahman*.[27] In fact, these characteristics are not really the attributes of *Brahman*, rather the essence of it. Thus Śamkara has conceived existence, consciousness and bliss as constituting the very essence of *Brahman*.

In terms of *Māyā*

Saguna (qualified) *Brahman*

Nirguna Brahman associated with *Māyā* is represented as God or *Isvara*, the cause of the world. *Isvara* is the qualified (*Saguna*) *Brahman*. He is the supreme personality. *Saguna Brahman* is not other than *Nirguna Brahman* conceived with the adjunct of *Māyā*. The moment we try to think of *Brahman* in terms of intellectual categories, the moment we try to make this ultimate subject an object of out thought, it is converted into qualified God. *Isvara* is the 'personal aspect of the impersonal *Brahman*'. *Brahman* is unqualified Pure being, Pure consciousness (*Caitanyamatrasattakam*), *Isvara* as such is being-in-becoming. *Brahman* is inactive, *Isvara* is active. God to an Advaitin is the

personal aspect of the Absolute and the Absolute is the impersonal aspect of God, the Lord of *Māyā*. In *Nirguna Brahman* all distinctions are obliterated and are overcome, in *Saguna Brahman* they are integrated, a duality in unity is present here. *Nirguna* Brahman is a state of "spiritual enlightenment"(*jnana*), *Saguna Brahman* is a state of "Vital loving awareness (*bhakti*). "While God necessarily requires world and individual soul to be ruled by Him, *Brahman* is beyond all these. "*Saguna Brahman* is the content of loving experience of Unity, *Nirguna Brahman* is the content of intuitive experience of identity."[28]

Isvara or God is endowed with all auspicious qualities. He is omnipotent, omniscient, the cause of the origin, subsistence and dissolution of the entire world and also the object of worship. Radhakrishnan says, "The reality of *Isvara*, in Śankara's philosophy, is not a self-evident axiom, is not a logical truth, but an empirical postulate which is practically useful."[29] *Isvara* is both material and efficient cause of the world, is both suggested and directly expressed in different *Upanisad*s.[30] As spider prepares its cobweb out of its own saliva, it is both the efficient and the material cause of it, similarly *Isvara* is the cause of the world.[31] He is the first cause since he has no origin.[32] According to R. Otto, Śankara's Advaitic philosophy represents theism of high type, it is not simply the theism of old monastic *Upanisad*.[33] *Isvara* in Advaita is a spiritually significant principle from which derive all life and it's value. *Isvara* is *Brahman* himself deprived of qualities. Max Muller says that the exoteric *Brahman* was substantially the same as the esoteric, that there was in reality and that there could be, one *Brahman* only, not two.

In terms of rational justification

The reasons that Śamkara adduces for the existence of *Brahman* may be considered to be threefold.[34] Firstly, *Brahman* is the cause from which the "world has sprung into being." But it cannot be thought that *Brahman* itself has originated form something else –

that will lead us to the theory of infinite regress (*anvastha dosa*). Secondly, A non-intelligent source cannot be the cause of law and order of the universe – that intelligent source is none but *Brahman*. Thirdly, *Brahman* is that consciousness which always shines as the real self through the objects of the world. To deny *Brahman* is to deny ourselves.

Not in terms of proofs

Śankara's approach to the Ultimate reality is not rationalistic as the ultimate dimension of reality is beyond one's rational grasp. Kant says all proofs for the existence of God would lead to 'antinomies', Śamkara believes that if we say that *Brahman* is the cause of the world it is on the authority of the *Upanisad*, not on the basis of logic and reasoning. Even if we admit the universality of causal relation is guaranteed, the category of causality cannot be applied to supra rational reality. Cosmological argument can promise only a 'finite creator of this finite creation.' If *Isvara* is the cause, he must fall within space and time, he will no more be infinite or omnipotent. The teleological proof can only point out the fact that a conscious principle is working at the root of creation. The ontological proof can give an idea of God and not God as a real object. Paul Deussen, too, does not think high of this argument. He remarks, "Indians are never ensnared into an ontological proof. On the other hand, we find a new proof in which the concept of God blends with the concept of the soul."[35] But Radhakrishnan does not agree with him and he remarks, "So far as any logical proof of *Brahman* is available in Śankara's writings, it is undoubtedly the ontological proof."[36] To him the idea of perfection leads to Reality that is *Brahman*. *Moksa* is only the other name for it.

Finally, for the existence of God "as Kant falls back on faith, Śamkara leans on the authority of *Śruti* or the revealed texts rejecting the logical and the rational justification that is not supported by *Śruti*." He says that *Brahman* is proved on the basis of testimony of scriptures. Perception is not adequate means for knowing *Brahman* as *Brahman* cannot be an object of experience, nor can it be known by *anumana*, inference.[37]

Reasoning too has no solid foundation as it depends upon human mind.[38] Reason is insecure.[39] The question of *upamana* does not arise as its field is very limited. In fact, the *pramanas* hold good only in the phenomenal world of *avidyā* [40] as rest in the *jiva*. How can these *pramana*s produce the sense and knowledge of reality in us. In reply Śamkara points out that the *pramana*s do succeed in producing right knowledge, even as lines straight and crooked and letters such as 'a', 'i', become instrumental in the production of the cognition of real sound for letters. Reason, according to Śankara, is only "ancillary to revelation." Only *Śruti* can provide proofs for the existence of God. He puts *Śruti* on the highest dias because it is a record of realized experience which 'can fetch for us our goal earlier than by logical understanding.' At best, arguments can point out the possibility of God and at worst, they make atheism plausible, but they cannot help us in realizing the vision of God. But setting aside proofs for the existence of God does not mean denial of God altogether. Radhakrishnan says, "Śankara's point is that no purely rational argument for the existence of God as a personal Supreme Being is finally acceptable. At best the "proofs" only tell us that God is a possibility. The reality of God transcends our rational power of conceiving as well as comprehending; only if we resort to the spiritual insight of seers as recorded in the scriptures can we be certain of God." [41]

In terms of gradations of reality:

Doctrine of Appearance (Vivartavāda)

Experience is always related to certain conditions and with changes in that particular experience is also sublated. For example, when we perceive a snake in the rope some conditions may present such as feeble eyesight, tension of the nerves to dim light, etc. And after a while when the conditions are removed we perceive the rope. Therefore, reason cannot accept the verdict of experience as truth of experience is subject to certain conditions. In our empirical experience some facts are accepted as true at closer scrutiny which could then be denied. For example, we perceive silver in the shell which is illusory. The silver vanishes at closer scrutiny. This disappearance of the presentation of false percept makes the Advaitins think upon the issue seriously: Is the presentation real? Do we perceive appearance or reality? The solution to this problem is known as the doctrine of 'world-appearance' or 'Vivartavāda' in Śankara's Advaita.

Vivartavāda may be defined as the appearance of a higher reality as a lower one, as for example, when the transcendental (*Paramarthika*) Reality (*Brahman*) appears as the empirical (*Vyavaharika*) reality (the world) or when an empirical reality, say a rope, appears as a seeming (*Pratibhasika*) reality (a snake). But Śankara's position is not of a subjective idealist as Śamkara himself refuted subjective idealism in his commentary on *Brahma Sutra* 2.2.28-29. To him, the external world must exist because we perceive it. T.H.Green has rightly remarked that there is real external world – is one which no philosophy disputes. [42] He emphasizes that the dream-state of consciousness and the waking-state of consciousness are not on a par. He wants to prove the unreality of the external world not by saying that it does not fall outside consciousness, but by saying that it is essentially indescribable as existent or as non-existent (*Sad-asad anirvacaniya*). Like Kant, Śamkara also believes in the phenomenal appearance of the empirical world.

Now, to that the world is an appearance necessarily points to something of which it is the appearance. The *Upanisad*s declare that *Brahman* is the Reality and the empirical world is manifestation of the *Brahman*.

The concept of appearance and it's relation to reality is discussed by Western Philosophers. By reality, the idealist philosophers like Bradley, mean that which is free from contradiction and is a self-consistent whole. For them, appearance is not reality as it is self-contradictory, appearance is always the appearance of the real. For Śankara, the real must always exist as existence is the other name of real. It is also said in the *Gita*, the real is not Non-existence. Śankara's conception of Reality though based on the authority of the *Śruti*, is also sought to be explained through logic.

Doctrine of Error (*Anirvacaniya – Khyati*)

The basic problem of Śankara's philosophy is how the one *Brahman*, in ordinary experience, appears to be many and to be an object? As he stated it in his introduction to the *Brahma Sutra Bhasya*, subject (*asmad*) and object (*yusmad*) are as opposed to each other as light and darkness, yet the properties of the one are superimposed on the other. If something is a fact of experience and yet ought not to be so – that is rationally unintelligible – then this must be false. According to Śankara's doctrine of error, the false appearance is a positive, presented entity that is characterized neither as existent (because it is sublated when the illusion is corrected) nor as non-existent (because it is presented, given as much as the real is). The false, therefore, is indescribable (*anirvacaniya*) either as being or as nonbeing; it is not a fiction, such as a round square. The world and finite selves are not creations of *Brahman*; they are not real emanations or transformations of it. *Brahman* is not capable of such transformation or emanation. They are appearances that are superimposed on *Brahman* because of man's ignorance.

This superimposition was sometimes called *adhyasa* by Śamkara and was often identified with *avidyā.* Later writers referred to *avidyā* as the cause of the error. Thus, ignorance came to be regarded as a beginningless, positive something that conceals the nature of reality and projects the false appearances on it.[43]

***Māyā* (Illusion)**

The principle which accounts for the appearance of the world of plurality in the non-dual *Brahman* is *Māyā* or *avidyā*. To quote Śankara, "That which is supremely real is non-duality: through *Māyā* it appears as diverse, even as the plurality of moon on account of defective eyesight, or the rope appearing as a snake, water-streak, etc., and not in reality, for the Self is partless… The partless, unborn reality can by no means become different. This is the meaning. If what is immortal, unborn, and non-dual were to become really different, then it would become mortal, like fire becoming cool. But this is not acceptable, for a change of one's nature into it's contrary is opposed to all evidence. The unborn non-dual Self becomes different only through *Māyā*, not in reality."[44] Śamkara refers to this principle, which makes the one appear as many, by different terms such as *Māyā*, *avidyā*, *prakrti*, *avyakta*. "The seed-power (responsible for creation)," says Śankara, "is of the nature of nescience (*avidyā*); it is designated by the word *avyakta* (the unmanifest); it is dependent on God, is of the form of *Māyā*, the great sleep. In it the transmigrating souls sleep, being devoid of the knowledge of the Self. The unmanifest, indeed, is *Māyā*."[45]

Māyā-avidyā is beginningless, indeterminable, and of the nature of the existent. It is said to be beginningless [46] because, if a beginning is predicted of it, there would be something antecedent to it, and this would lead to *infinite regress*. But *Māyā-avidyā* is not beginningless in the sense in which *Brahman-Ātman* is. If it were really

beginningless, there would be no end to it. So the beginninglessness of *Māyā* is like that of a perennial stream. To the questioning intellect *Māyā-avidyā* is a riddle. It cannot be defined as being either true or untrue, and so it is said to be indeterminable. It is called *Māyā*, according to Śankara, because it is not possible to define it in terms of known categories.[47]

***Moksa* (Liberation while living)**

The highest human end is liberation, which must be distinguished form others such as wealth, pleasure and moral goodness, which are only instrumental values. Liberation is the release of the Self from the beginningless chain of *karma* (action) and from the cycle of transmigration. True liberation can only take place upon the physical death of one who has realized *Brahman*. This doctrine, called *videhamukti*, has been accepted by Śankara. He says, "If both good and evil deeds are said not to cling to the person who has realized *Brahman*, or are said to be destroyed in their effects so far as he is concerned, it follows that he attains to *Moksa* as soon as his body falls." [48] There is another understanding of liberation in Śamkara which is liberation in embodied state (*jivanmukti*). Śamkara describes the *jivanmukta*'s body by comparing the latter to a lifeless slough, cast off and no longer connected to a snake.[49]

Following the Upanisads, Advaita describes liberation as 'remaining in one's own Self' (*svĀtmanyavasthanam*), as 'remaining in one's own state' (*svarupavasthanam*). It is the Self that is the reality in the *jiva*; it is the Self that *constitutes* the essential nature of the *jiva*; and so to know the Self and be the Self is liberation. Since the Self is no other than *Brahman*, to 'attain' the Self through knowledge is to attain *Brahman*; consequently liberation is also referred to as 'the attainment *Brahman*' (*brahma-prapti*). The point to be noted here is that, since the right knowledge of *Brahman/Ātman*, which is spoken of in

the tradition as *brahma-bodha* or *atma-bodha*, can be attained here in this life itself through the discipline of *sravana-manana-nididhyasana*, Advaita Advocates *jivan-mukti*. Advaita holds that the Upansadic texts such as 'Being *Brahman*, he goes to *Brahman*', support to the theory of liberation-in-life.

Śankara, further, explains the continued existence of the body after liberation by distinguishing three types of *karma*. The first two types, *sancita* and *kryamana*, refer to action done in the past which has not yet borne fruit and action done in the present which is to bear fruit, respectively. These two types of *karma*, Śamkara says, are completely destroyed by *Brahman* knowledge.[50] The third type is called *prarabdha* and refers to action done in the past which has already begun to bear fruit through the formation and vitalization of the present body itself. And this type of *karma*, Śamkara argues, cannot be stopped until death, "just as an arrow which leaves the bow continues to move so long as it's initial motion is not exhausted."[51] Just as a potter's wheel goes on revolving for some time even after the push is withdrawn, similarly the body may continue to exist even after knowledge has dawned, though all attachment with the body is cut off.[52] However, the fact remains that while the *prarabdha karma* continues to motivate bodily activity, the *jivanmukta* remains completely detached from, and unaffected by, it. He thereby enjoys the eternal tranquility characteristic similar to the state of *Turiya*. One who attains liberation while living, has realized the eternal bliss for which the devout Hindus pray :

From non-Being lead me to Being.

From darkness lead me to light.

From death lead me to immortality.*

* *asota ma sadgamaya, tamaso ma jyotirgamaya, mrtyor mamamrtamgamaya. (Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, 1.3.28.)*

Liberation is not a post-mortem experience to be achieved in another world. It is the supreme felicity which is the eternal nature of the Self, and so one need not go elsewhere in search of it. As release is the eternal nature of the Self, one need not wait for realizing it till death overtakes the physical body. Even while tenanting a body, one is released at the onset of knowledge. The continuance of the body is in no way incompatible with the status of release. Taking *Ātman* and *mukti* as synonyms, the Self is ever free. This truth is not realized because of concealing power of *avidyā*. Śamkara says: "Being *Brahman* is release … Release is of the nature of *Brahman* which is eternal and pure." [53] Again, the Self, although always attained, is unattained, as it were, on account of ignorance; when that (ignorance) is destroyed, it becomes manifest, as if attained, like the ornament round one's own neck.

Nature of Consciousness

The goal of philosophy for Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara is similar to the one expressed by Socrates and others, it is self-knowledge. It is a discovery of man and his essence as a complicated passionate being or a being whose nature is centered in a divine reality. This quest for self-knowledge is pervasive in Indian thought and is given a preeminent place in the Vedānta. For in the *Upanisad*s, which are the main source of systematic Vedānta, it is held that a knowledge of the self is a "saving" knowledge; that he who knows himself knows reality and overcomes all pain, misery, ignorance, and bondage (e.g., *Mundaka Upanisad*, III, 2, 9). The Self in Advaita Vedānta is pure, undifferentiated self-shining consciousness, which is beyond time and space, is beyond thought which is not-different from *Brahman* which underlies and supports the individual human person. *Ātman* is pure, undifferentiated, self-shining consciousness, a supreme power of awareness, transcendent to ordinary sense-mental consciousness, aware only of the oneness of being. *Ātman* is the name for that state of conscious being wherein the division of subject and object, which characterizes ordinary consciousness, is overcome.

Nothing can condition this transcendental state of consciousness: among those who have raised it, no doubt it can arise. *Ātman* is thus void of difference, but it is not for Advaita simply a void: it is the infinite richness of spiritual being, the real.

Vedic Speculations about Consciousness

In order to understand the true nature of consciousness in the metaphysics of Advaita, we should trace its source in the earlier tradition. If we take a review of the philosophical reflections of the time from the *Rg Veda* to the *Upanisad*, we arrive at the following successive finding regarding consciousness.

1) At first there is recognition of the oneness of the principle of the universe. This principle is both transcendental and immanent in it.
2) A complete transformation of this principle from the region of the outer to the inner in man.
3) The absolute identification of the outer macrocosm with the inner microcosm.
4) The recognition of the nature of this principle as absolute consciousness which is all-pervading, immutable and eternally present.
5) Insistence on the transcendental nature of this consciousness which is entirely unlike any other known object of the empirical world, and providing a solid bedrock to the later transcendental theories of consciousness in the Sāmkhya-Yoga, and the Advaita Vedānta.

Accordingly, the seed of this non-dual consciousness could be traced in the *Vedic* source though it is in the *Upanisad*s, consciousness is conceived and propounded as an independent and eternal reality without any distinctions whatever, in it, as completely inactive, capable of existing as pure '*jna*', pure light without content, untainted by experience and yet, strangely foundational of all experience. This theory of the

foundational nature of consciousness is the legacy of the *Upanisad*s. The subsequent systems have sometimes deduced from it quite contradictory doctrines about the nature and function of consciousness. Kanada and Gautama, for instance, have relapsed into the reality of the empirical and the conditional consciousness only, as against the transcendental and the Absolute consciousness which marked the last stages of the *Upanisad*s.[54] Historically, it is for the first time perhaps, that in the *Aitareya Aranyaka* we find a determined effort to reflect systematically on the different stages of the development of consciousness in the universe. Here a beginning is made in the successive gradation of reality on the basis of degrees of sensibility and intelligence discovered in plants, beasts and men. The *Aranyaka* says, "There are herbs and trees and all that is animal, and he knows the *Ātman* is gradually developing in them. For in herbs trees, sap only is seen but '*citta*' is seen in animated beings. Among animated beings, again, the *Ātman* develops gradually; and in man, again, the *Ātman* develops gradually for he is most endowed with '*prana*'. He says what he has known, he sees what he has known, he knows what is to happen to-morrow, he knows the visible and the invisible world, by means of the mortal he desires the immortal. Thus is he endowed. With regard to other animals, hunger and thirst are a kind of understanding, but they do not say what they have known, they do not know what is to happen to-morrow, etc. They go so far and no further."[55]

Consciousness in the *Upanisad*s

In the *Chandogya Upanisad*, Prajapati unfolds successively the nature of the Self in the dialogue between Indra and Virocana.[56] The *Ātman* is progressively, and step by step identified with the body consciousness, the dream consciousness, and the deep sleep unconsciousness till finally it is declared to be the one which persists unaffected through all these conditions of the empirical existence. A similar physico-psychological method is

adopted in the Taittiriya,[57] and here too, the successive unfolding of the essence of the *Ātman* finally ends in its characterization as *Anandamaya*. In the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, the *Ātman* as pure consciousness has been described as the fundamental and the basic reality. Pure '*Cit*' exists independently and by it's own right. Even if no phenomenal reality of the sun, moon, the sense-organs, and the '*manas*' is manifest, absolute consciousness always exists. It eternally exists as the '*svayam-jyotih'*, through the light of which all else shines.[58] This eternal consciousness thus shines unconditionally. Like a lump of salt which consists through and through of savour, the *Ātman* is through and through conscious.[59]

The keynote of this Absolute and unconditional consciousness is that, though it has no consciousness of particular objects, as it is not characterized by the distinction of subject and the object, yet it is not unconscious. It is non-dual and unitary consciousness without the consciousness of differentiation like the consciousness of a man embraced by his wife. This eternal and unconditional consciousness which at times appears to be non-existent, as in as in deep sleep, does not disappear even for a while. It has no specific cognition, not because it ceases to be conscious, but because there are no objects separate from it which it can see.[60] If the *Ātman* were not unceasingly and unconditionally conscious, and if consciousness actually became extinct, whence could it come back later on? [61] It, therefore, appears not to see, because when the unity of the *Ātman* with the 'all' (*sarvam*) has been realized, and when there is nothing left beside itself, who shall see whom? The characterization of the Ultimate Reality which reaches it's climax in the Absolute consciousness of Yajnavalkya's 'vijnanaghana', and which is beyond the categories of time, space and causation, is yet not the last one. The true nature of the *Ātman* is '*Saccidananda*'. The concept of '*Cit*' and '*Ananda*' though arrived at by different methods, are later on identified as ultimate qualities. Pure and absolute

consciousness cannot be differentiated from '*Ananda*', while '*Ananda*' is the same as '*Bhuman*'.[62] This highest *Ātman* is '*Ananda*', because in it there is not want, no second, no more tension or limitation. The *Brahman* is '*Ananda*' as the last super-conscious stage and as absolutely different from empirical consciousness.

The *Upanisad*s teach us of a principle of consciousness which differs so entirely from a state of consciousness which will be able to enjoy or feel *Ananda* or bliss as not to be indicated by that name at all. This bliss is of a being which has no consciousness or feeling of any kind, and which is better designated as 'Silence rather than as '*Ananda*', as in 'I teach you indeed, but you understand not, Silence is the *Ātman*'. [63] It is clear that such an Absolute consciousness cannot be regarded as '*Ananda*' in any empirical sense of the term. The term '*Ananda*' is only to indicate that the nature of Reality is positive, and no negative. Reality is '*Saccidananda*'. It is '*Sat*' as unchanging, '*Cit*' as it is not '*acit*' (unconscious) or '*Jada'* and '*Ananda*' (bliss) as it cannot be of the nature of pain or discord, for all negation must have a basis in something positive. Even this description of *Brahman* as '*Saccidananda*' can only express the reality in the best way possible.[64] In Śamkara *Bhasya* of the *Brahma Sutra* 1.4.22 and the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad Bhasya*, 2.4.12, Śamkara says that 'no more particular consciousness there is', and not that there is total loss of it.

Ultimately, the reality is '*jna*' or '*cinmatra*', for as repeated so frequently, [65] this is the very meaning of 'eternal witness' or the '*drasta*', or '*drsmatra*' that it is eternally conscious, '*kutastha saksin, nitya caitanya svarupa'* which is a compact mass of intelligence '*vijnanaghana*'.[66] Though the Absolute consciousness is logically and empirically uncharacterisable, it is yet not unknown, and it's nature is '*jna*' or pure intelligence as opposed to unintelligence. It's nature is not that of the variable moulds of

intelligence of which we have an experience in our daily life of mediated consciousness, but it's nature is of the constant, unchanging and basic consciousness, which is the presupposition of all distinctions and manifoldness. According to Śankara, the 'real' is that whose negation is not possible. And the only thing that satisfies this criterion is consciousness, because denial of consciousness presupposes that very consciousness which denies it's own status. It is conceivable that any object is not existent, but the absence of consciousness is not conceivable. If difference cannot be predicated of it, then consciousness is the only reality and anything different from it would be unreal. If the other three kinds of absence are not predicable of it, then consciousness should be beginningless, without end, and ubiquitous. Consequently, it would be without change. Furthermore, consciousness is self-intimating; all objects depend upon consciousness for their manifestation. There are not many consciousnesses; the plurality of many centers of consciousness should be viewed as an appearance. There is no reality other than consciousness. It does not admit any internal parts. This ever present consciousness should not be confused with determinate and objectified consciousness because the very grammatical form of the language in which we have to express our thoughts have encouraged the conception that it is something like the table or the chair. But consciousness cannot be so defined in as much as it is the ultimate presupposition of all knowable objects. Once it is admitted that consciousness is *sui-generis,* it must also be admitted that it cannot be defined in the ordinary way. Pure consciousness cannot be defined because it is something entirely different '*anyad eva*'. From this we must not conclude that it is unknown.

For Śankara, consciousness is awareness, intelligence or knowledge that can be viewed from two perspectives, namely, absolute or transcendental (*Parāmarthika*) perspective and relative or phenomenal (*Vyavaharika*) perspective. From the transcendental

perspective, consciousness as *Brahman* exits eternally and is identical with reality itself which is conceived as pure knowledge, "a solid mass of knowledge only." [67] From the phenomenal perspective, consciousness also persists in all phenomenal experience as well where it is called an enjoyer (*bhoktr*).[68] The *Upanisad*s say that the absolute consciousness or consciousness *per se* cannot be "known as an object of mediate knowledge, yet it is known as involved in every act of knowledge." [69] Consciousness, Śamkara urges, has to be something different '*vyatireka*' from the material elements and it being essentially knowledge in it's nature '*upalabdhisvarupa*', cannot be the same as the physical body. Firstly, because whatever is presented to consciousness cannot be identified with it, it must be entirely different from matter. Secondly, the object of consciousness cannot be a precedent factor in the genesis of consciousness. As it would be absurd on the part of a physiologist to explain the vital processes of the body with reference to the movement of the muscles etc., for it is the vital process itself that render the movement possible not vice-verse. Similarly it is absurd on the part of a materialist to explain the consciousness process with reference to the movement of the material elements. Consciousness therefore has none of the characteristics that belong to any or all of the collection of knowable objects. It is peculiarly itself and '*sui-generis'*.[70] Furthermore, all objects of knowledge have temporal determinations, such as past, present or future, but that for which these temporal determinations have meaning cannot itself be in time. It is an eternal presence, '*Sarvada Vartamanasvabhavah*.'[71]

However, these two perspectives or orders of consciousness does not lead to an ultimate duality between these two orders. Instead, the higher order consciousness persists as the underlying, unifying and intelligent ground of all phenomenal states of consciousness. "Reality is consciousness" [72] and consciousness is "like a thread, that courses through and holds together a collection of pearls" [73] but which is never identical

with them. Perhaps the most complete statement of the hierarchical persistence of pure consciousness in phenomenal states of experience is found in the *Mandukya Upanisad*. Here, as we have seen in the first chapter, the waking, dream, deep sleep states, along with the "fourth" (*Turiya*) state, or freedom itself, are identified as the four quarters of the Self (*Ātman)*. Consciousness is said to be the witness which underlies the first three states and remains unaffected as it moves through them. For Advaita Vedānta, it was by means of these analyses of the levels of consciousness that an Advaitic student could "develop in himself …. the ability to discriminate the real from the non-real."[74]

Consciousness – Self – Reality Equation

All Vedantins agree that the essence of *Vedic* wisdom can be summarized by four great sayings (*mahavakya*)[75], each of which expresses the fundamental identification (*tadatmya*) of individual consciousness with pure consciousness and with reality. The four statements are :

a) *Brahman* is consciousness (*prajnana*m *Brahma*)

b) I am *Brahman* (*aham Brahmasmi*)

c) Thou Art That (*tat tavam asi*)

d) This *Ātman* is *Brahman* (*ayam Atma Brahma*).

Śamkara accepts the relation of '*tadatmya*' or Identity between '*Ātman* ' and '*Cit*'. He argues that the relation between intelligence and Self must be either of difference or of identity, or of both identity and difference. If the two are absolutely different, there cannot be any relation of substance and attribute link between them. They cannot be related by the external relation of '*samyoga*' also, for they are not corporeal objects, nor can the internal relation of '*samavaya*' (which was discussed in Chapter-II in Śankara's criticism of Nyaya-Vaisesika theory of consciousness) holds between them for fear of infinite

regress. Thus the two cannot be different. To say that they are both different and identical would be to make contradictory statements; and if the two are identical, there is no meaning in saying that one is the attribute of the other. Hence intelligence and Self are identical "*Atma-caitanyaor abhedah* ". [76] Consciousness or intelligence and self are, therefore, one. A distinction between the two is, however, allowed for practical convenience, in so far as the term consciousness is used to denote the self in relation to objects.

This identification is portrayed throughout the *Vedic* literature. For example, the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* mentions that the transcendental, infinite and limitless *Brahman* is "a solid mass of knowledge" (*vijnanaghana eva*), that is, a mass of homogeneous, pure intelligence or consciousness. [77] Further, it identifies *Brahman* with *Ātman,* the innermost essence of all forms that transforms itself in accordance with the likeness of all forms. [78] Thus *Brahman*, the utterly distinctionless and transcendental reality, is identical with the immanent essence of all things. In this sense the *Upanisad*ic doctrine of absolute consciousness establishes at once the transcendence and immanence of consciousness with respect to the world. Advaitins thus use the term *Ātman* to refer to reality or consciousness immanent in the world, and the term *Brahman* to refer to consciousness in it's purely transcendental state, which is conceived as the utter perfection of non-duality, free from limitations (*upadhi*) of *Brahman* that bring about creation and dissolve in the highest realisation. With his preference for the purely transcendental view of consciousness, Śamkara concludes in his commentary on the second of the verses quoted above from the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, that "Obviously, in a passage like this, the differences are mentioned only for the purpose of canceling them." [79] Making the same point in a different context, Śamkara asks why the Lord came in so many forms. He answers: Were name and form not manifested, the transcendent

nature of this Self as Pure Intelligence would not be known."[80] Thus, the realization of the identity of the Self with transcendental consciousness is the highest goal of human life from the Advaitic Perspective.

***Neti… Neti…*, the Negative Formula**

Śamkara says that pure consciousness "has no distinguishing mark such as name, or form, or action, or heterogeneity, or species, or qualities." [81] The only way to describe the true nature of reality is "to describe it as 'not this, not this', by eliminating all possible specifications of it that one may known of." [82]

Self-revelation of Consciousness

Because consciousness transcends the duality between the knower and the objects of knowledge which characterizes cognitive activity, the essential nature of consciousness is itself self-revelation. [83] Consciousness is essentially self-revealing that it's nature can be directly and immediately known (but not indirectly cognized) to be identity of existence (*satyam*), knowledge (*jnanam*) and infinity (*anantam*) (*Satyam Jnana*m *Anantam Brahma*).[84] It is "undecaying, immortal, beyond fear, pure, homogeneous"[85] and fully in and by itself. It is eternally self-luminous, that is, aware of it's own essential existence and perfection, and that it is the unmanifest (to thought), omnipotent witness of all that is apprehended.[86] No argument can be offered to prove the reality of this self-revealing experience itself. Firstly, Śamkara argues by his *Svabhava* principle that reality would not exist at all if it were not identical with it's own unchanging and eternally existing, original self-cause (*svabhava*). If reality "were to be only an effect, then in the absence of an original cause, the effects will not be what they are, and there will be nothing but the theory of void."[87] This argument is based on applying the Advaitic analysis of the nature of phenomenal causality (*satkaryavada*) to absolute consciousness. The phenomenal analysis offers a variety of a substantialist causal model which maintains that an effect is nothing more than, and is ontologically not

different from, it's material cause (*upadana karana*).[88] Secondly, to Śankara, "none can doubt its existence; for it is involved even in doubting. Fire cannot cancel it's own heat; even so self-consciousness can never doubt itself."[89] This argument seems to be similar to Descartes' *cogito* argument.

Śankara, however, concludes that consciousness as eternal, transcendental existence is unchanging, uncaused and homogeneous. It is *sui generis*, '*svayambhu*', a reality in itself, unlike any other object, sharing no other quality with any other object excepting existence or Reality, and absolutely uncharacterisable in terms of either a quality, an action, or even a substance. It exists as '*cinmatra*' and as the source of all '*Cit*ta'. It is a contentless consciousness in which there is no consciousness of either 'I' or 'this', '*Aham*' or '*Idam*'.[90] It is eternal, pure, and unobjectified and distinctionless infinite-reality, or the theory of a transcendental and a foundational consciousness with no distinction of ego and non-ego.[91] "All this is guided by intelligence, is based on intelligence. The world is guided by intelligence. The basis is intelligence. *Brahman* is intelligence." [92] "There is nothing but Intelligence at the time of the origin, continuance and dissolution of the universe."[93] The three states of experience in the *Mandukya Upanisad* concludes that intelligence or knowledge is the essential nature of the substance which persists through and witnesses these different conditions.[94] Śamkara further argues that existence and intelligence, as essences of absolute consciousness, are identical not only with each other but with: "existence is intelligence and intelligence is existence." [95] Knowledge as the essence of consciousness is neither a product nor an activity. Further, infinity (*anantam*) and bliss (*Ananda*) are synonymous for Advaitins because consciousness is revealed to be full (*purna*), perfect and beyond all determination and qualifications, and because the realisation of perfection is the source of ultimate valued in the universe. "There is nothing else which could be desired in addition to the absolute unity of

Brahman,"[96] because "this Self is dearer than the son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, and is innermost." [97]

Some metaphors for Consciousness

The theater metaphor for consciousness has attained a certain prominence in Western thought as a result of Hume's analysis of experience. Hume, like the British Empiricists before him, emphasized the priority of individual experience in the formation and content of fundamentally passive consciousness. In carrying basic empiricist premises to their logical conclusion Hume rejected the simple mental substance of Locke and Berkeley and offered an analysis of mind in terms of a "bundle or collection of different perceptions." Reflecting his belief that consciousness is passive and changing in response to the variety of human experience, Hume says: "The mind is a kind of theater, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations . . . . The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind, nor have we the most distinct notion of the place, where these scenes are represented, or of the materials, of which it is composed." [98]

Reflecting upon this, Śamkara may say that the theater metaphor, describing Hume's empirical theory of consciousness, leaves us with a very limited vision of the scope and potential of intellectual and spiritual experience. For Śankara, consciousness has the radically transformative power to throw light on darkness and to unify the knower with the known. In comparison with Advaitic transcendental consciousness Hume's passive theater fails to consider, let alone explain, this revolution at all. Consciousness has also been described as a stream. The most influential theory of consciousness as stream in Western thought is the radical empiricism of William James. James was particularly

opposed to the classical Empiricist model of a passive consciousness receiving simple sensations. He tried to counter this with a more active, process-oriented analysis. Trying to account for the "warmth and intimacy" with which the self greets it's own past thoughts and feelings, James emphasized the continuity experienced by mind. He says: "Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bit's. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described." [99] For James, the stream of consciousness was neither a substance nor an entity but a continuous, active process which was selective in dealing with objects independent of itself. On this, the Advaitins may observe that the continuity of consciousness experience emphasized by the stream metaphor fails to allow for the radical discontinuity which characterizes the distinction between empirical and transcendental consciousness, and thus fails to convey the panoramic, illuminating and witnessing dimension of consciousness.

Finally, the storehouse metaphor for consciousness has been dealt with the Buddhistic Vijnanavada theory of the existence of a plurality of individual series of "streams" of consciousness. Unlike James' stream of consciousness, which orders objects independent of itself, the Vijnanavadins denied that there were any objects independent of consciousness. Thus in order to account for the coherence of experience, the Vijnanavadins claimed that the stream of consciousness has a storehouse (*alayavijnana*) of past impressions (*samskara*) buried within it, and that these impressions rise to the surface of the consciousness in the form of an appropriate cognition at the proper moment.[100] On this, Śamkara may observe that a momentary, continuously changing series cannot consistently be a substratum of impressions at the same time.[101]

To conclude, the Advaitins maintain that absolute consciousness is identical with the essence of subjective and object reality and that it is pure, homogeneous, autonomous, self-revealing and self-validating. Further, while Advaitins have insisted that consciousness is ultimately beyond determination and qualification in terms of the categories of thought, and have criticized various attempts to classify consciousness according to conventional philosophical categories, they have nevertheless tried to indicate what consciousness is not, that is, it is not ignorant, not unreal and not painful. Finally, in more poetic terms, Advaitins have likened consciousness to the undifferentiated light of the sun, which illuminates itself while witnessing and giving birth to all creation. And it may well be the case, after all, that the most effective way to convey a sense of transcendental consciousness is through the use of just such a metaphor. In a nutshell, we can have the following important tenets of Advaita vision of consciousness.

Self - proved

Consciousness is a self-proved (*svayam siddha*) reality which is presupposed by all proof and disproof and which falls beyond the region equally of logical justification or refutation. It is the basic experience on which is dependent all determinate knowledge and as such it needs no further proof in respect of itself. If such a foundational experience or consciousness were not admitted, then knowledge itself would not be established, and consequently nothing would be manifested in the universe. Though such an experience is not clearly manifest in the waking state, it is apparent in the states of dreamless sleep (*susupti*), trance (*samadhi*) and release (*mukti*), where consciousness manifests itself in it's true nature.[102]

Self- luminous

This '*svayamsiddha*' character of consciousness follows from it's self-luminosity or '*svatah prakasatva'*. It means that it reveals every other object but itself is not revealed

by any other entity. Consciousness is not to be perceived like an unconsciousness object by any other cognitive act: It is self revealed. [103] This is stated in *Mundaka Upanisad* as, *'tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam, tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati*'. In *Bhagavad Gita*, we read, 'As the one sun, O Arjuna illumines the whole world, so the self, the knower of the field of this body illumines the whole body.' [104] Thus consciousness is characterized as '*svayamprakasa*'.

Transcendental and eternal

Consciousness by its very nature is transcendental. By transcendental consciousness is meant a consciousness which does not change in time, is unchanging, permanent, and in fact beyond the category of time. It is not in time, for time is in it. It is unmodified because it is the witness of all modifications. It is eternal for it exists in all the three divisions of time – past, present and future (*sarva kala vartamanam*). It is neither produced nor destroyed.[105]

Uncaused

It is uncaused because there is nothing else beside it which could precede it. It has nothing 'before' it. It is therefore '*aja*'. And since there is nothing else excepting itself, it follows that it is not only uncaused but also uncausing. It is free from all the limitations of time, space and causation which have a meaning only as functioning within it.[106]

Unaffected

It is unaffected by the experiences of good and bad and pleasure and pain, for it stands isolated as a spectator and is not a participator in experience. Feelings of desire and longing, pleasure and pain, and joy and sorrow, do not touch it, because they do not form part of it.[107]

Undifferentiated

It does not also admit of any difference within itself. It is undifferentiated in character, because it is consciousness; whatever admits differentiation is invariably found to be an object. Further, there is no diversity in it, because he who perceives diversity "goes from death to death".[108] As all differentiated objects are adventitious and illusory, the distinction even of the knower and the known and the principle of egoity '*Ahankara*' which appears to the empirical knowledge so basic and ultimate, is also illusory, and is due only to the limiting adjuncts of the '*Antah-karana'* and the rest. When this *Ahankara* dissolves itself in deep sleep or in the state of liberation, the undifferentiated consciousness shines forth in it's eternally unmodified light. Thus it is only the distinctionless *Ātman* which is truly real. The *Ahankara* is superimposed on it and is not an ultimate reality, and does not exist even in deep sleep. According to Śankara, the key to the understanding of the problems of consciousness lies in the understanding of it's '*Parāmarthika*' and the '*Vyavahariaka*' aspects. We have the self-consciousness in the '*Vyavaharika* realm, in which we do perceive the self, but it is a self which is not the true self. It is only the self as conditioned and qualified by the internal organs. We do not have self-consciousness in the '*Parāmarthika*' realm, in which the true self exists as the only reality, as 'no other', as the objectless subject, and as the substrate and the basis of the distinctions of the known and the knower, and not as either the knower or the known.[109]

Hierarchy of Levels of Consciousness in Śankara's Advaita

Śamkara distinguishes between two ontologically distinct levels of consciousness corresponding to the radical discontinuity between reality and appearance, higher and lower knowledge, and freedom and bondage which lies at he heart of non-dual vision. Just as he identifies absolute consciousness with reality and the transcendental Self, so

he identifies the lower level or modified consciousness (*citta, vrtti caitanya*) with the realm of apparent reality and the phenomenal self (*jiva*). As absolute consciousness is universal and undifferentiated, modified consciousness appears to be individualized, that is, to belong to different intelligent beings.[110] Thus Advaitins account for the variety of mental activities and phenomenal experiences which characterize worldly existence, or bondage, in terms of modified consciousness. But what is the nature of this modified consciousness end how is it derived from the Self?

The Advaitins define modified consciousness in terms of the "association" or "combination" of absolute consciousness with ignorance (*avidyā*). Further, they have drawn an important distinction within modified consciousness according to whether this combination is active and functional, or latent and purely potential. In the former mode, modified consciousness or the individual self is the result of the active appropriation by, or misidentification of, the Self with conditions and limitations, for example, knowing, doing, enjoying, etc., that do not properly belong to it. In this mode, individual consciousness consists in the mutual superimposition (*adhyasa*) of the pure consciousness and ignorance, that is, in the identification of the Self with "the *upadhis* (limiting adjuncts) of body, sense and mind…on account of absence of discrimination."[111] In other words, this active mode is modified consciousness consists in the endowment of absolute consciousness with a "psychophysical organism". According to the Advaitic tradition, this active association of the Self with ignorance brings about an "objective attitude" in, and "self-limitation" of, absolute consciousness which in turn results in the production of the mind or "internal organ" (*antahkaranan*) that functions in all waking and dream experience.[112]

In the latter mode, however, there exists only the potential combination of absolute consciousness with ignorance. Thus, while this mode of modified consciousness, which is characteristic of the deep sleep experience alone, consists in a suspension of the superimposition that objectifies and limits the Self, it nevertheless nurtures the seeds of future mis-identification and is therefore an important dimension of the phenomenal self.[113] Now the question arises, how the Advaitins account for the association or combination of the Self with ignorance, for it is by no means clear that absolute, homogeneous and unlimited consciousness can be associated with anything at all.

We find that later Advaitic thinkers have attempted to account for the emergence of phenomenal experience resulting from the association of the absolute consciousness with ignorance through the use of one of two metaphors, reflection (*pratibimba*) or limitation (*avaccheda*). It is clear, however, that Śamkara did not see any significant difference between the two. To cite just two instances in which Śamkara uses both metaphors in conjunction, we read: "The individual soul is not directly the highest *Ātman* because it is seen to be different on account of the *upadhis* (limiting adjuncts), nor is it different from the *Ātman,* because it is the *Ātman* who has entered as the *jivatman* in all bodies. We may call the *jiva* as a mere reflection of the *Ātman.*" [114] It is because the *Ātman* is pure intelligence, without any difference, transcending speech and mind, and is described negatively, that all the characteristics or the apparent differences in it are said to be due to *upadhis*. Just as the self-luminous sun or the moon appears as many because it is reflected in many waters, even so the unborn, intelligent *Ātman* appears as many after he enters into different bodies and *upadhis*.[115] Śankara's remarks show his concern to uphold non-duality by using both metaphors to point to the ultimately illusory and false nature of all distinctions, that is, of all apparent differences. But Śankara's

successors felt that these metaphors could not properly be conjoined without a loss of the correct understanding of the status of modified consciousness.

The Vivarana School

The followers of the Vivarana school, known as Pratibimbavadins, claimed that the reflection of a prototype in a mirror most accurately represents the nature of the association of absolute consciousness with ignorance because this metaphor emphasizes the non-difference of the reflected image, or modified consciousness, from the prototype, or *Ātman.* These Pratibimbavadins argue that the reflection of an image in a mirror requires neither an impression on, nor a transformation of, the mirror itself. Rather, the true location of the reflection is the prototype, just as the locus of the illusory self is absolute consciousness. Further, these thinkers maintained that this metaphor allowed them to attribute individual differences in the potential for intellectual discrimination and spiritual sensitivity to the degree of ignorance into which the absolute is reflected, just as the reflection of an object in water varies according to the clarity and calmness of the water.[116]

The Bhamati School

The Bhamati School opposed this theory of reflection and insisted that individual or modified consciousness results from the limitation of pure consciousness by ignorance. Known as Avacchedavadins, these philosophers argue that the metaphor of reflection fails to explain how absolute consciousness, which has no sensible qualities, can be reflected. Instead, they pointed to the stock example of a jar that appears to limit or separate the space (*akasa*) within it from infinite space outside and claimed that this was analogous to the nature of the association between ignorance and the absolute. On this metaphor, there is still only one Self, although it appears to be separated, just as there is

one space that is assumed to be divided. However, this metaphor suggests a greater degree of empirical reality of individual consciousness than does the reflection metaphor because limitation implies that ignorance actually separates the universal Self, at least phenomenally.[117]

Nevertheless, it is clear that both the schools attempt to convey an essential feature of the Advaitic theory of consciousness, that is, that modified or phenomenal consciousness is a product of, but not different from, absolute consciousness. In other words, essentially unchanging absolute consciousness is not really modified or phenomenalised through the manifestation of the individual self. Rather, non-dual reality only appears to be individualized while remaining essentially undifferentiated. Thus, the distinction between these two levels of consciousness consists precisely in the fact that the higher level is reality and truth while the lower level is appearance and falsity. Thus, the reflection and limitation metaphors indicate on the one hand that modified consciousness is never different from absolute consciousness, and on the other hand that the ontological distinction or discontinuity between the two collapses in the light of higher knowledge. In support of this point, Śamkara says: “Just as the knowledge of the rope destroys the serpent which appears on it through ignorance, even so, the illusory nature of the individual soul, so far as it is erroneously understood to be separate and distinct from the highest God… vanishes the moment there arises the true knowledge.”[118] In this sense it is clear that the reflection and limitation metaphors point to the Advaitic theory of the radical ontological discontinuity between the levels of consciousness and provide the Advaitin with a means of accounting for both individuality and the unqualified identity of reality while categorically denying difference at the same time. Further, although the realisation of absolute consciousness contradicts, sublates or cancels the appearance of modified consciousness, and thus amounts to the most

fundamental of the criteria distinguishing the two levels, Śamkara suggests a number of additional criteria in terms of which this distinction can be elaborated.

The Levels of Consciousness to Śankara

Śamkara distinguishes *Brahman* from the world, while distinguishing the waking state from dream and the dream state from deep sleep is precisely the relative discontinuity existing between them. For example, the intentional perception of gross material objects and the confinement of experience to the conditions of space and time, both of which characterize waking experience, are absent in the dream state. Further, the duality between subject and object and the desire and consequent frustration which characterise the previous two levels of experience are no longer present in the deep sleep state. Thus it would not be inaccurate to say that dream sublates the waking state of experience and deep sleep sublates the dream state.[119]

Waking Level Consciousness

To Śankara, waking consciousness consists in the mutual involvement of the subject and the object where the subject is either some mental content or some material existents. This mutual involvement is due to the 'erroneous identification of the one on the other which is again due to the desire (*kama*) to find something real, permanent and unchanging in one's phenomenal experiences. To quote Śankara, "the only cause of [the individual's] identification with everything' and therefore the "root of transmigratory existence."[120] The Advaitins argue that the perceptual situation provides the closest approximation to the nature of absolute knowledge that the subject or knower can possibly experience at the waking level. Admitting that waking experience consists of the common sense, the naive realist dualism between the subject and the object, the Advaitic tradition nevertheless maintains that this opposition is ultimately false, since

consciousness limited by the mind and consciousness limited by the object are both appearances of all-pervading consciousness (*Brahma-caitanya*) and are therefore ultimately identical. As the author of the *Advaitasiddhi* contends that "that *Brahma-caitanya* which is the unknown object of knowledge is the knowledge of the object when known." The individual consciousness is motivated by the desire to become identified with a particular object and thus fails to understand the true nature of objectivity or *Brahman*. The individual is conditioned by the impressions of past *karma* and thus fails to become aware of the essence of his own subjectivity or *Ātman.* In other words, the limitations (*upadhi*) of *Ātman -Brahman* which creates the duality between the subject and the object are still in effect during the identification of the knower and the known in perceptual experience.

Now the question arises, what is the nature of the union or identification of the subject-consciousness and the object-defined-consciousness? Some Advaitic thinkers, including Padmapada and Suresvara, maintain that this identification of the subjective and objective poles of *Brahma-caitanya* is really an interconnection between the two which takes place as a result of the perceptual act. On this account, caked "removal of the veil" (*avarana-bhanga*), the temporary ignorance (*tulavidyā*) or non-conscious covering that conceals phenomenal object is contacted and lifted by the perceptual psychosis of mind, allowing the object-defined intelligence to manifest itself. A second theory explains this identification between the subject and object in terms of the "thinking of the subject-consciousness" (*ciduparāga*) which occurs as the psychosis of the mind contacts and reflects the object to the knower. Finally, *Vedāntaparibhasa* argues that the identification which results from the perceptual act is the coincidence of, rather than merely the interconnecting contact between, the subject and object. Further, it maintains that perception "manifests the oneness" (*abhedabhivyakti*) of absolute consciousness

underlying both subject and object by uniting the knower with, and thereby revealing, the known.[121]

Intentionality in waking level of Consciousness

In spite of this disagreement regarding the nature of the immediate non-difference between the subject and object that occurs in waking perception, one common and extremely important feature of the Advaitic theory of perceptual consciousness emerges from each of these explanations, and that the perceptual subject contacts something that appears to be external to itself. This contact occurs, according to some Vedantins, as the mind first goes out (*prapya-kari*) to the object through the senses and then takes on the form of the contacted object. In this sense, then perceptual consciousness at the waking level of experience is, for the Advaitin, an intentional activity which goes out to, and assimilates the form of, the intended object.

Advaitins have traditionally offered a number of similies in order to convey a sense of the way the mind contacts and assumes the form of its objects in the perceptual act. Perhaps the most well-known of these is the one drawn from the activity of irrigating a field. “Just as the water of the tank, going out through a hole, and entering fields through channels comes to have a quadrangular or other figure, similarly, the internal organ too, which is of the nature of light, going out through the sense of sight, etc., and reaching locality of contents like pot is modified in the form of content like pot.”[122] Another maintains, “Just as the molten metal which is poured into a crucible puts on the shape of the latter, the mind which pervades an object assumes the form of that object.” [123] And a third argues, “even as the light of the sun takes on the shape of the object which it illumines, the intellect which enlightens everything assumes the form of the object which it reveals. “ [124] From these and other similes it is clear that the mind or knowing subject goes out through it’s own psychosis, which is referred to as the means of knowledge

(*pramana*), to the object. Further, both the psychosis of mind and the sense organs through which the psychosis extends out to objects are composed of the same subtle physical stuff as the mind itself. Thus the mind, which is limited by ignorance and is not fully conscious, can only "reflect" the light of absolute consciousness. Similarly, the modifications of the mind, and the sense organs through which these modifications extend out to external objects, operate by serving as the medium of reflection or pure consciousness. In visual perception, then, *Brahman* intelligence reflected in mind is extended out along the medium of the organ of vision, which Advaitins claim is of the nature of light (*tejas*). And in auditory perception the same intelligence is carried outward through the organ of hearing, which is of the nature of ether (*akasa*). In each of these cases the subtle matter which comprises the sense organs is stirred up, or activated, by the externally directed psychosis or modification of the material, mental stuff which finally contacts an object, assumes it's form, and reveals it as known.[125]

Now the question arises, on what grounds does the Advaitin defend his theory of the direct, external extension of the mind to objects? One argument rests on the assumption that attention, and therefore mind (*antahkarana*), is not only essential to sense perception but is actually prior to it. For example, in sound sleep and instances of total absorption, perception need not follow stimulation of the sense organs. For this reason the Advaitin concludes that the senses only function as such when "the mind takes the lead" in establishing contact with the external world. However, the Advaitin's theory of intentional waking consciousness further outlines that intentional perception is not a spontaneous and unconditioned movement, but a highly selective activity instead. This selectivity is based on two factors:

(A) That intentionality is motivated by the desire to appropriate certain objects, which means that those objects that are not desired for themselves, and do not inhibit the appropriation of other desired objects, can be ignored.

(B) And, that the individual is conditioned or habituated by present perceptions to remember and intend similar forms in the future.[126]

Thus, waking consciousness is not only bound and frustrated by its present desire to attach itself to objects, but is also conditioned to function according to the same pattern in the future. In this sense, then, we can say that intentional consciousness serves as the paradigm for the inauthenticity, lack of autonomy and duality (temporality, spatiality and causality) which characterize waking experience for the Advaitic tradition. This shows that consciousness in our waking experience is always consciousness of something. In our waking experience we do not have access to consciousness as such apart from the object which it reveals and to which it gets related. When we reflect on our consciousness, we know it to be intentional: we know it as the consciousness of this or that object. The intended object in this state may be physical like a table or a tree existing in the external world. Or, it may be one's own subjective state like pleasure or pain. In short, *Visva*, that is, waking-consciousness, is intentional. It needs must have transcendent objects related to it at this level. Being awake means being awake to. The mind and the sense which function in this state are the instruments through which *Visva* experiences all kinds of external 'gross' objects. It is *bahis-prajnah*.

Dream level Consciousness and Intentionality

The Advaitins characterize the second level of consciousness, or dream experience, in terms of the awareness of interior mental life as presented to the individual in the form of subtle dream objects. In this sense individual dream consciousness is withdrawn from

the world of external objects and from the “self-forgetfulness” that accompanies the waking level of experience. Nevertheless, the dreamer does remain involved in the causal or *karmic* order as a result of his identification with, and enjoyment of, dream content. For this reason the consciousness manifest in the dream state is bound, just as it was in waking experience. At the same time, however, dream experience represents a relatively greater degree of autonomy of consciousness because the self, even though under the influence of ignorance and desire, creates and illumines the content of which it is aware.

The Advaita tradition, however, has usually come to address the study of dreams in the context of the analysis and defense of some other issue, whether it be the nature of error, perception, magic or, as in our present case, consciousness and reality. Furthermore, the perspective in terms of which these issues were treated also varied, from ‘psychology’ and ‘physiology’ to ‘philosophy’ and ‘spirituality’. Thus, we find that both individual thinkers and schools of thought often subscribed to more than one analysis of dream phenomena, depending upon such factors as the context of the discussion, the position of an opponent and, indeed, the complexity and intangibility of dreams themselves. In fact, six general analyses of the nature and origin of dreams were presented in classical Indian thought, and it is clear that Śamkara and his followers upheld, in one context or another, at least five of these six. Let us discuss a few of the six.

The first account of the nature and origin of dreams has been called the “presentative” theory because it’s proponents treat dreams as a kind of positive perception, rather than as a form of memory or recollection, consisting in the direct and immediate presentation of an object to the mind. These theorists argue that the objects of dream-cognition are

actively produced by the mind in response, for example, to certain internal physiological changes, from subconscious impressions (*samskara*) based on past experience rather than from the present activity of the external sense organs. In this sense the resemblance between dream and waking consists in the fact that in both cases the mind is active in the formation of vivid, direct perceptions although the increased activity of mind in the dream state is accompanied by the objective invalidity of it's content. The most obvious instance of a preventative analysis of dreams to be found in the Advaitic tradition is contained in the *Vedāntaparibhasa*. It treats the dream experience as a kind of direct, non-sense-generated perception resulting from the activity of the mind. He argues that these perceptions are defective or delusive and must therefore be included in a discussion of the Advaitic analysis of error.[127]

Some of Śankara's remarks on the nature of dreams have been interpreted to indicate that he too was open to an analysis in terms of the presentative model although, as will be made clear in the subsequent discussion, he usually used other models to account for this level of experience. In his commentary on Gaudapada's discussion of illusion, for example, Śamkara says that we have direct perception of objects in dreams, such as mountains and elephants, brought about by mental activity although these objects are false, that is, not objective, precisely because they are located in the mind.[128] Again in his commentary on the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, Śamkara argues that the individual creates ("Becomes the light" of) the objects of dream perception through the stimulation of subtle past impressions.[129] Śamkara further argues that although the dream content, for example, seeing oneself flying through space, is contradicted upon waking, the dream experience itself remains an empirically real fact, that is, one has actually dreamed that one flew through space. Śamkara concludes two important points from this. First, he maintains that the content of dreams is as consistent in it's own sphere as

waking content is to the waking subject, since dream content is only sublated or contradicted upon waking.[130] The fact that dream is incongruous with waking and waking is, likewise, incompatible with dream, establishes that the two spheres are discontinuous from each other, and that each is equally autonomous in it's own domain. In this sense, Śamkara offers an implicit rejection of Descartes' attempt, in the Sixth Meditation, to distinguish waking from dreaming on the basis of the claim that the former is more consistent than the latter.

Second, Śamkara maintains that perceptual experience in dream state is real in terms of phenomenal consciousness. So is waking perceptual consciousness and that ultimately both are bound and illusory.[131] And in this sense Śamkara extends the discussion of philosophically relevant experience beyond the waking state and it's conditions. The second theory in terms of which Advaitins describe the nature of dream experience emphasizes the reproductive function of memory as the cause of dreams. Śamkara says that "what we experience in dreams is due to memory, while what we experience in waking life is immediate apprehension (of external objects)." [132] And he seems to indicate that this model offers an adequate description of the nature of most dreams when he says, "a dream is not an entirely new experience, for most often it is the memory of past experiences."[133]

It is clear, however, that certain dream content cannot be accounted for in terms of the literal reproduction of waking impressions, for example, pink elephants or men flying through space. In order to explain these types of dream experiences, Advaitins introduce the notion of the mind's capacity for creativity or constructive imagination (*kalpana*) based upon the impressions supplied by memory. And in this context Śamkara asserts that the greater freedom demonstrated by consciousness in creating the objects and

conditions of, and the emotional response to,,. its dream experience indicates that consciousness is actually more detached from it's content in this state. Thus consciousness is not only involved in the creation of, but is also the witness to, dream experience. Further, Śamkara argues that the fact that consciousness witnesses its dreams means that consciousness reveals or illumines them. Indeed, without the aid of the external senses and physical light, what other than the light of consciousness itself illumines dream objects?[134]

In other words, beginning with the creativity and detachment of dream consciousness from its content, Śamkara argues both for the continuity of self-awareness throughout the various states of experience as well as for the self-luminosity of consciousness itself. In this way Śamkara attaches great metaphysical significance to the analysis of dream experience in general, and to the point that dream objects are the creation of the mind in particular. Indeed, he says, "By the illustration of dreams it has been proved that there is the self-luminous *Ātman,* and that it transcends the forms of death (i.e., is eternal)."[135] The third theory maintains that dreams constitute the fulfillment of desires. Quoting from the *Upanisad*s, "He who desires, dreams; he who does not desire does not dream."[136] Thus, Śamkara says that "the individual soul…. after the cessation in sleep of the senses, creates a subtle body of desires, and shapes the dreams according to the light of his *buddhi*."[137]

During dream consciousness, the senses are non-functional, only the mind functions, and consciousness becomes intentional. In dream state the impressions of experiences of the waking state, that were stored up in the mind, would come out of it as 'real' objects even though they are nothing but the states of the mind. Thus, *Upanisads* define *Taijasa*

experiences as 'internal objects' (*antah-prajnah*), that is, impressions projected by the mind, which are subtle.

Deep Sleep Level Consciousness

The third level distinguished by Advaitins in their analysis of consciousness is the experience of deep sleep. In opposition to the duality which characterizes waking and dreaming, this state is said to consist in the temporary identification of the individual self (*jiva*) with the *Ātman* which results from the cessation of the mutual superimposition of the Self and not-Self. Following the *Upanisad*ic analysis of sleep, Advaitins explain that this suspension takes place because the activity of the gross and subtle bodies, that is, of the external sense organs and mind, ceases to operate in this state. In other words, sleep is the temporary interruption of the projecting and differentiating activity which arises as a result of the limitations imposed upon the Self by ignorance. In the absence of this limiting activity the *jiva* is embraced by, and becomes one with, the Self, assuming what the texts like to describe as a knowing or witnessing attitude in which objects are undifferentiated and nothing is known.[138] That is, in deep sleep the limitations imposed by *avidyā* and constituting the content of waking and dream experience, for example, space, time and causality, desire and *karmic* activity, are in a latent or potential condition. Thus, there is nothing for the individual in it's witnessing attitude to confront beyond inactive *avidyā* itself. For this reason the deep sleep state is described as a thick mass of unified consciousness (*prajnanaghana*) in which the content of waking and dream experience has coalesced.[139] Dreamless sleep is said to consist in the non-apprehension of illusion or, more positively, in the consciousness of pure, potential *avidyā*, that is, of primal, blank objectivity. However, the Advaitins reject the suggestion that deep sleep is an unconscious state, that is, one in which there is a loss of consciousness. Rather, they insist not only that sleep is a conscious experience but also

that it has the characteristic of bliss (*Ananda*) as well. Advaitins offer two justifications for their position.

The *Mandukya Upanisad's* claim that deep sleep is full of the experience of bliss, is supported by *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad's* description of *deep* sleep as the experience of highest serenity (*samprasada*), which brings with it greater joy than can be found in the waking or dream states.[140] Sleep, this text continues, is an experience which is beyond all suffering, which is free from desire and grief. It is an experience of unqualified, incalculable happiness and well-being, of harmony and integration accompanying the loss of individual consciousness and all it's concerns in the identification with absolute consciousness, that is, in the embrace of the Supreme Self. Thus, the analysis of the deep sleep state is extremely important for the Advaitin, for it is in terms of this analysis that he argues for the non-dual, self-luminous, and blissful nature of pure consciousness. Śamkara claims that the undifferentiated, distinctionless nature of sleep experience demonstrates the true, non-dual nature of the consciousness which persists throughout, and remains unaffected by, all three phenomenal states. After offering a series of arguments to show there is continuity of self-identity between deep sleep and the dreaming and waking states, Śamkara concludes that we get a glimpse of the non-dual nature of this persistent consciousness in deep sleep, which is a natural state, free from effort, struggle, relationship to another and the limitations of ignorance.[141] Ramanuja found this point unacceptable, insisting instead that there is some differentiated awareness, however slight, of individual, ego consciousness in deep sleep.[142] And this, of course, was in support of Ramanuja's claim that individual self-awareness is the essential nature of consciousness itself.

Nevertheless, deep sleep plays an important part in the debate concerning the self-luminosity of consciousness. The Advaitin is committed to the doctrine of the essential luminosity of the Self as well as the claim that nothing is perceived or known in the sleep state. Though his opponents object that these two positions are contradictory since a state in which nothing is perceived or known is actually an unconscious state, a state in which luminous consciousness is absent, Śamkara counters this objection saying that the absence of knowledge in deep sleep is a consequence of the absence of anything experienced separate from consciousness, rather than the absence of consciousness itself. [143]

Furthermore, he argues that the blissful nature of sleep experience can only be explained as a presentation of self-luminous consciousness to itself, since all other modes of awareness are in their latent condition. It can be maintained that in deep sleep a person does not experience any object, external or internal, gross or subtle. When he wakes up from sleep and recollects the nature of experience he had, he reports, using the first person singular, 'I did not know anything at that time and I slept happily'. It means that no objects were presented to him as objects of his consciousness in that situation. Absence of objects does not mean the absence of consciousness at that time. If consciousness too were absent at that time, recollection to the effect, I did not know anything at that time," would be impossible. The point is that consciousness reveals objects if they are present; and when objects are not present, it reveals their absence. It follows that, since consciousness is present as a witness to the absence of objects in sleep, it is not intentional whereas it is intentional in the other two states revealing the objects which it is conscious of. Thus consciousness in this state (which is called *prajna*) is one, unified, and undifferentiated : that is to say, it is non-relational, non-intentional. Further, consciousness is of the nature of bliss as there is the enjoyment of happiness at

that time. However, it is not permanent as from it there emerges either the dream or waking state of consciousness, which leads us to the final state.

The final level of consciousness distinguished by Advaitins is called, appropriately enough, the Fourth (*Turiya*). Radically distinct in nature from the previous three states, *Turiya* is the realization of absolute consciousness, representing the culmination of the interioristic hierarchy and embodying the fulfillment of the hierarchical criteria. As we have seen in the chapter-I, *Turiya* is non-dual, non-sublatable, autonomous and certain awareness. It is freedom or liberation (*Moksa*), the spiritual goal to which the Advaitic system points. *Turiya* is the transcendence of phenomenal experience, the annihilation of the limiting conditions which give birth to human bondage. *Turiya* is not an activity but is the eternal and all-pervading ground from which activity appears to emerge. *Turiya* is neither an object of knowledge nor a knowing subject but is transcendental, undifferentiated knowledge.[144] *Turiya* thus represents a realisation of what we might call impersonal immortality, an undifferentiated, eternal awareness transcending the moral responsibility by which the individual is determined and the transmigratory existence to which he is bound. Further, *Turiya* is a non-sublatable realization in the sense that liberation entails an eternally unchanging awareness which not only cancels all distinctions but eradicates their source, *avidyā*, as well. Finally, *Turiya* represents a realization of unqualified certainty and authentic fulfillment. As eternal rest or repose *Brahman* knowledge "gives one the conviction that one is completely blessed, and it requires no other witness than the testimony of one's own experience."[145] Since *Turiya* is undifferentiated, "He who attains the Supreme Goal discards all such objects as name and form, and dwells as the embodiment of Infinite Consciousness and Bliss."[146]

It follows that the objects which appear during waking consciousness disappear in dream consciousness; similarly, those which appear in dream consciousness disappear in waking-consciousness. The implication here is that the Self, the *Turiya*, is really non-relational though it appears to be relational in these states. It's intentionality, that is to say, is contingent and not necessary. It is for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of this central idea with it's corollary, namely, that the Self is non-relational and unbound by anything and that it's intentionality is adventitious and not natural to it, that Yajnavalkya repeats the statement, '*asango hi ayam purusah*'.* Consciousness becomes intentional only as a result of its association with the mind; and it has this connection with the mind in waking and dream experience. But in deep sleep experience, mind as mind is absent with the result that consciousness remains alone without being intentional. Advaita maintains that intentionality is not essential (*svabhavika*), but only adventitious (*aupadhika*), to consciousness.

Thus, it can be observed here that the levels of consciousness refer simultaneously to distinct levels of reality. The absolute consciousnesses (*Kutastha saksi*) unchanging and non-dual reality, eternally self-luminous awareness and the blissful transcendence of all finitude and limitation. Modified consciousness, on the other hand, represents the concealment and distortion of reality which is the changing world of appearance, awareness based upon the illusory separation of subject and object, and bondage to inherently unfulfilling life activity. In this sense, these two distinct levels point to radically opposed kinds of experience, that is, while man appears to be the victim of misfortune and misery, he is in realty both unaffected by circumstances and eternally free. Furthermore, while phenomenal experience is illusory, it nevertheless represents the

* It means the *Purusa*, which is another name for the Self, is non-relational. (*Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, 4.3.15-16.)

means by which modified consciousness is cancelled and liberation realized. The Advaitic theory of consciousness thus stands as a statement of hope, as an injunction to live a just and virtuous life, to pursue higher knowledge and to transcend the delusion of suffering.

Conclusion

We have shown in this chapter that consciousness has transcendental aspect which alone is its basic nature. Transcendentally, consciousness is one, eternal, unchanging and a distinctionless universal which stands constantly as the support and the substrate of it's ceaselessly varying manifold of inner and outer fluctuations. It is the presupposition equally of plurality as well as of unity of all knowledge and experience. This transcendental consciousness, though always behind the phenomenal consciousness is yet unallied, '*Kevala*' and isolated. It is a substrate which never gets mixed up or shares the qualities of what it supports. That is why it is called 'pure' and '*Kevala*'. It remains aloof in itself, untouched by the impurities of the phenomenal consciousness, it itself provides its own basis. This detached, yet ever present consciousness is the only true reality, for that alone is the truth which is never sublated.[147] The reality of the phenomenal consciousness is like the reality of the experience of the dream which is true only so long as the dream lasts but is later on sublated. Men, due to an original '*avidyā*', confuse between this transcendental consciousness and it's phenomenal representation. But, sooner the true knowledge or '*Vidyā*' destroys the wrong knowledge or '*Avidyā*', the transcendental consciousness alone shines as the only reality and the phenomenal play of consciousness then finally disappears like a dream. The transcendental consciousness persists throughout all states of consciousness. There is no discontinuity of consciousness, but there is one consciousness, namely, that which is associated with *Ātman,* which appears in different states because of various *upadhis* or mis-identifications of self with one or more aspects

of phenomenal in the development of one's power of awareness, and correspond to the ontological levels recognized by Vedānta.

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Chapter - 5

Consciousness in Franz Brentano

Introduction

This chapter attempts at a brief introduction to the philosophy of Franz Brentano (1838-1917) and its possible impact on the development of Husserl's thought which centrally focused on 'intentionality of consciousness'. Initially, it was Brentano's idea of establishing philosophy as an 'exact science', as *descriptive psychology* (*Descriptive Psychologie*), that exercised the first and foremost intellectual stimulus for the formulation of Husserlian phenomenology. Husserl was inspired by Brentano's reformulation of Aristotle's conception of intentionality, as well as by his account of the peculiar kind of self-evidence of mental states which could yield apodictic truths, which further produced a descriptive science of consciousness.[1]

Background of Franz Brentano

Brentano had a strong grounding in Aristotelian philosophy and was interested in the science of psychology. For him, psychology was a renewal of the enquiry regarding the nature of the soul, which he believed was undertaken by Aristotle's *De animam* and later continued in Thomas Aquinas's philosophical developments and in Descartes's accounts of the soul. Throughout his life, Brentano constantly referred back to Aristotle, though he eventually abandoned the conviction that philosophy could be founded on the Aristotelian system of thought.[2] Husserl studied with Brentano for two years (1884 – 1886), a very fruitful period that had contributed for his intellectual development, a fact which he had gratefully acknowledged Brentano's influence throughout his subsequent

career. Prior to that Husserl had completed his doctorate in pure mathematics and had showed genuine interest in philosophical questions of his own field, philosophy of mathematics. Brentano's lectures provided Husserl with his first serious introduction to traditional philosophy. He passed on to Husserl a conviction concerning the self-critical and serious life of the philosoher, and, within a short time, could influence Husserl's decision to make philosophy his Alma Matter. Husserl accepted Brentano's view that any worthwhile philosophical pursuit must be rigorously scientific, which would restrict philosophy's usual association with unscientific and arbitrary opinions that are speculatively generative.

In the first decade of research (1890-1900), Husserl identified himself with Brentano's programme of 'descriptive psychology', with firm conviction in Brentano's account of *intentionality* as the key concept for understanding and classifying conscious acts and experiential mental processes (*Erlebnisse*). Brentano's philosophy of 'Evidenz' (evidence, i.e., self-evidence), 'authentic' and inauthentic' presentations and the difference between 'empty' and 'filled' intuitions that had an enormous impact on Husserl's philosophy. Over the years, Husserl became more critical of some aspects of Brentano's teaching, and eventually he came to see that he had progressed far beyond his teacher in the study of consciousness. In his conception of philosophy, Husserl has had finally attained a position that led to a rejection of Brentanian 'descriptive psychology' and opted for his brand of phenomenology of consciousness. Husserl, though he had developed Brentano's theory of wholes and parts, and although parting with Brentano's metaphysical interests, specially the Aristotelianism of Brentano and the doctrine that only individual things exist, and thus ruled out the possibility of knowing along with these individual things.[3]

Life and writings (1838-1917)

Brentano was born in Germany on 16 January 1838. He graduated from the Royal Bavarian Gymnasium there in 1855, and, after a year at the Lyceum, also in Aschaffenburg, in 1856 he enrolled in the Philosophy Faculty at the University of Munich, where he spent three semesters, followed by one semester studying theology at the University of Wurzburg. He then went to Berlin, where he studied for one semester under the great logician and Aristotle scholar Friedrich August Trendelenburg (1802-1872), attending his lectures on psychology. In 1862, he submitted his doctoral thesis entitled *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, to the University of Tubingen. The thesis indicates Brentano's early interest in metaphysics and his doctrine of presuppositionless description of psychical phenomena. Further, in 1866, he published another work entitled *The psychology of Aristotle, In Particular His Doctrine of the Active Intellect* which shows his careful reading of Aristotle's psychology. In it, he argues that we can perceive properties like 'cold', 'hot' objectively'. He defends two of Aristotle's doctrines, namely, the immortality of the soul and the creation of the world. He interprets the Aristotelian God as 'thought thinking itself' and as also 'thinking of itself' as governor of the universe, as a Creator. Indeed, Brentano never lost his belief in the existence of God and in the immortality of the individual soul.[4]

In 1874, he published the *First Edition* of his ground-breaking work *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. Although traditionally Brentano held that psychology is a study of the soul "the substantial bearer of presentations" (*der substantielle Trager von Vorstellungen*), the book avoided all metaphysical speculation on the nature of soul substance confining it's area only to a study of psychological processes, without raising the issue of the nature of the ego in which they are enacted, or the causal physiological processes which engender and support them. Further, he held that we experience only

psychic processes themselves, not an ego. He drew a contrast between empirical psychology and physiologically-based psychology. Here, he formulated 'descriptive psychology' (which he termed 'psychognosy' or 'phenomenology') that sharpened the contrast between this descriptive and apodictic science and all 'genetic psychology'. In 1911, he published a *Second Edition*, containing part of Book Two entitled *The Classification of Mental Phenomena*. By that time, he attracted a circle of brilliant students such as Meinong, Husserl, Freud, and so on.[5]

Nevertheless, Brentano criticized several contemporary interpretations of the traditional view of truth as correspondence, *adequatio rei et intellectus*. He reinterpreted it in terms of his notion of 'evidence' (Evidenz). For him, some judgements are evidently true and are self-evident, they assert, '*what is'*. Judgements do not 'combine' or 'separate' elements, the way traditional Aristotelian account would maintain, rather they affirmed something as *existing*, as 'being the case'. Brentano, in line with Aristotle and Descartes, emphasized the necessity of founding knowledge on judgements which are evident or certain in themselves. Truth is recognition of what is asserted, and the correspondence is between the thing given and its 'self-givenness' (*Selbstgegebenheit*). Brentano, however, thought that Descartes himself could not grasp the true significance of the 'evident' since Descartes interpreted *ideas* as bearers of evidence than judgements, ignoring the fact that when we grasp some judgements as evident, we find them as evident *for everyone*. Judgements can be given with evidence or without (i.e., they are 'blind'), a point which is crucial for understanding Husserl's concept of evidence. If given with evidence, the matter judged on, is characterized by a 'self-givenness'. To judge correctly is to assert something as one with evidential certainty can assert. [6] In his theory of intentionality, Husserl held that the 'unreal things' or 'states of affairs' and 'objectivities' are the objectives of true judgement that would posit objective correlates of

judgement contents. Brentano needed to posit these correlates of judgements in order to defend the correspondence theory of truth. In his later writings, however, he rejected these 'unreal things' along with the notion of correspondence. For him, the mental relation cannot have something other than a thing as its object. He held that judgements asserted certain states of affairs as existent. Further, truth is not so much as correspondence, but as a 'harmony', 'fittingness', or 'appropriateness' between the thing as it appears and the manner of judging about it.[7]

From these above observations we can form some ideas about distinctiveness of Husserl's ideas in relation to Brentano. Husserl accepted Brentano's view that primacy must be given to *description* over *explanation*, which is quite crucial for the subsequent development of Phenomenology. Brentano has proposed to reconstruct philosophy on the basis of psychology, and strongly argued that the nature of psychic acts had been misunderstood by much contemporary philosophy. For him, the domain of psychical phenomena possessed 'actual existence' (*eine wirkliche Existenz*), whereas the purely physical world had merely phenomenal existence. In *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint* he says, " Our mental phenomena are the things which are most our own".[8] Furthermore, he says that our mental acts are as they appear to the mind can grasp itself as it is, even if it does so in acts which are directed at other objects. Because psychic acts can be grasped immediately with absolute certainty, with what Brentano calls 'self-evidence' (*Evidenz*), we can make real discoveries about the nature of the mental which have the status of *a priori* universal laws though they could be grasped with insight even on the basis of a single instance. We can grasp necessary laws connecting items which are given in experience. Descriptive psychology, for Brentano, will be the apodictic science of inner perception, studying the elements of psychic acts

and their relations. This will have great impact in Husserl's understanding of Phenomenology. Brentano himself, at least in his earlier years, saw descriptive psychology as providing the scientific basis for aesthetics, economics, and other disciplines dependent on human judgements. Husserl would generalize to see phenomenology as the basis of all sciences. But both Brentano and Husserl see science as the securing of insights which are given with evidence.

In his earlier writings Brentano had postulated that, besides real things (*Realia*), there were various kinds of unreal entities corresponding to our true judgements. Brentano was not entirely clear how these unreal things (*Irrealia*) were related to the judgements made about them. In his later writings, especially after 1905, he maintained that the only true objects were concrete, individual entities such as a 'soul', a 'person', a 'judger', a 'thinking thing' (*ein Denkendes*), describing a 'thinking man' in metaphysical terms, as one should not speak of a substance ('man') to which an accident ('thinking') is added, but rather speak of a new concrete whole ('man-thinking-x'), wherein both the accident and the substance are to be construed as dependent parts of the new complex whole. Thus '*Socrates standing*' is a different individual thing from '*Socrates sitting*'. On this view, temporary whole objects are constantly coming into being and disappearing. Husserl was especially influenced by Brentano's account of wholes and parts.[9] Some ideas that are significant for both Brentano and Husserl are as follows. Firstly, Brentano seems to derive his doctrine of wholes and parts from the Aristotelian theory of the categories as really containing a theory of wholes and parts. For Aristotle, a whole and its proper part are not both actual at the same time; only the whole is actual, the parts only potentially real. While disagreeing with Aristotle, Brentano says that wholes have real parts upon which they depend. From this Brentano develops an important distinction, which would become especially significant for Husserl, between 'dependent'

and ‘independent’ or ‘separable’ parts. He further distinguishes between different kinds of parts, between the physical, and the metaphysical and logical parts of a whole. Husserl will distinguish between concrete and abstract, independent and dependent parts. In this connection, he holds that psychic acts relate to one another as parts to whole, objects are parts ‘nested’ inside the corresponding judgements, and so on. This nested parts and wholes had much influence on Husserl.[10]

Secondly, for Brentano, psychology is the descriptive study of our ‘psychical realities’, the ‘ultimate mental elements’. Descriptive psychology or descriptive phenomenology provides the necessary grounding for genetic or causal psychology and for other sciences. It is an exact science like mathematics which is ‘independent of’ or ‘prior to’ that ‘provides a basis for’ genetic or physiological psychology. Although Brentano said very little about the grounding of psychology, Husserl took over this task and developed it in his phenomenology. To Brentano, genetic or physiological psychology studies causal relations between the physical and the mental which does not affect the description of mental states which are accessible from within by the experiencing subject. In psychology, Brentano accepts the fact that description must precede causal explanation, for we must know the outline of the phenomenon before we seek to explain it. However, the purely physical can even explain the mental, that it is “a confusion of thought” to think that consciousness can be explained by physico-chemical events.[11]

Thirdly, since for him descriptive psychology is a combination of empirical and *a priori* factors, his psychological standpoint remains empirical. Experience or empirical observation alone is its teacher. Psychology is the science which studies the properties and laws of the soul, which we discover within ourselves directly by means of inner perception. Psychological laws were arrived at by the inductive method. Psychology,

through inner perception with evidence, can secure certain knowledge and identify universal laws governing the psychic realm. These laws are '*apriori*' and '*apodictic*'. The concepts themselves arise from experience but the laws governing them are arrived at by reflection and have the character of necessity.[12]

Fourthly, for Brentano, psychology proceeds through inner perception. Inner perception is the key to the discovery of our psychic states. Inner *perception* is evident, while inner *observation* or introspection is highly fallible and subjective. Both Brentano and Husserl repudiated traditional introspective psychology saying that one cannot observe his own mental states while occupying them. The phenomena of 'inner perception' or 'inner sense' are absolutely given, in a manner which makes them self-transparent or self-consciousness, self-evident. Thus one can have direct acquaintance of one's psychic acts and the acts themselves are present as they are in themselves. One knows one's own thoughts directly, with indirect awareness of the inner perceptions of others. This point is later developed by Husserl. This, however, gives rise to a central problem in Husserl's notion of intersubjectivity.[13] Further, Brentano holds that psychology studies what is given in immediate reflection on our self-consciousness acts. Thus, psychology has direct and certain awareness of its subject matter. He admits that we do not know things-in-themselves, and the truth of physical phenomena is relative only. As in the sciences, we infer the existence and nature of physical objects, whereas, in contrast, we are directly acquainted with our experiences in psychology. All consciousness of an object is accompanied by a consciousness of itself as act, though this need not be explicit. So there can be no unconscious mental acts. Something can be given with apodictic certainty while all its parts may not be distinctly noticed. Inner perception thus yields necessary truth.[14] Fifthly, Brentano says the character of the psychic is determined by its representational function, representation also would signify the

presence of an object (described as "relation to a content" "orientation toward an object"), accepting the fact that all human psychic states are object directed, consciousness is consciousness of something.

For Brentano, descriptive psychology must admit a tripartite structure of mental acts, namely, 'presentations', 'judgments' and the 'phenomena of love and hate' or 'relations of feelings' or 'phenomena of interest'. All mental processes are either presentations or founded on presentations. This is a psychological law and is *apriori* and necessary. Thus, there is no mental act without a presentation.[15] The term 'presentation' would also refer to that part of any mental process which brings something before the mind. We speak of a presentation whenever something appears to us. A presentation provides the basic 'object' or 'content' around which other kinds of mental act could crystallize. This is the gist of Brentano's concept of *intentionality*, according to which every presentation is presentation of something. Each kind of act has its own mode of presentation, loving and hating would present the object under different modes. He concludes that a descriptive psychologist is interested in the presentative act rather than the object of the act, that is, the ontological status of the object of a presentation. This view gives rise to his conception of intentional relation, on which Husserl's phenomenology is much depended.[16]

Finally, this leads to the most crucial concept of Brentano's philosophy, the concept of intentionality, which also constitutes the key to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. The term intentionality is derivative of the traditional Scholastic doctrine of intentionality. For Brentano, intentionality means that every mental act is related to some object. Although he did not use the term, he understood mind's awareness of an object, or of it's content, in terms of this intentionality. He speaks of the *intentional object* or *the intentional relation*. In *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, he states: "Every

mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object [*die intentionale (auch wohl mentale) Inexistenz eines Gegenstandes*], and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not here to be understood as meaning a thing) [*die Beziehung auf einen Inhalt, die Richtung auf ein Objekt (worunter hier nicht eine Realitat zu verstehen ist*)] or immanent objectivity (*oder die immanente Gegenstandlichkeit*). 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."[17] "The common feature of everything psychological, often referred to, unfortunately, by the misleading term "consciousness", consists in a relation that we bear to an object. The relation has been called *intentional*; it is a relation to something which may not be actual but which is presented as an object. [Brentano adds in a footnote: A suggestion of this view may be found in Aristotle; see especially Metaphysics, Book V, Chapter 15, 1021a 29. The expression "intentional", like many other terms for our more important concepts, comes from the Scholastics.] There is no hearing unless something is heard, no believing unless something is believed; there is no hoping unless something is hoped for… and so on. For all the other psychological phenomena." [18] As a matter of fact Brentano talks not about intention or intentionality but he uses terms like "intentional inexistence" or "intentionally contain" which he introduces in order to distinguish psychical phenomena from physical phenomena. An isolated quality such as red is a physical phenomenon; red as belonging to consciousness is on the other hand a psychical phenomenon.

Expressing intentionality in terms of the intentional inexistence of the object, understanding 'inexistence' as 'to be in', meant 'to be in' the way it was used by the

Scholastics to characterize the manner in which an accident is said to be *in* a substance (e.g., knowledge is *in* a man), epistemologically, it meant the manner in which a form is in the mind. By 'inexistence' Brentano seems to mean that the object of an act of consciousness is something *immanent* in consciousness, whether or not there is also a real object or 'reality' outside consciousness. There is something in the mind when it thinks, and, further more, what the mind thinks about may or may not have any actual existence outside the mind. It may be a real entity or something unreal. Brentano's student, Twardowski, while correctly interpreting Brentano says that 'intentional inexistence' is 'phenomenal existence', the kind of existence possessed by an intentional object in consciousness.[19]

For Brentano, the intentional object is a mentally immanent object and the intentional relation is immanent relation between the mind and its contents, not maintaining difference between the characteristic of 'directedness towards an object' and 'relation to content'. The intentional object is purely immanent and as non-real. However, in his later writings, he explicitly repudiated this idea of any special kind of existence of the intentional object. He says that when one thinks of a 'horse', one is thinking of an actual horse, not the 'thought-about horse'. He stressed that he always followed the Aristotelian interpretation of intentionality, whereby the mind is directly related to an object, receives the form of the object intentionally, and is not related to the immanent mental thought of the object. In a letter to his student, Marty, he writes: "But by an object of thought I meant what it is that the thought is about, whether or not there is anything outside the mind corresponding to the thought. It has never been my view that the *immanent* object is identical with the "object of thought" (*vorgestelltes Objekt*). What we think about is the *object* or *thing* and not the "object or thought".[20] However, the intentional relation, to Brentano, reveals that one of the *relata,* an object, something over and against a

subject. The intentional relation, further, is a kind of relating where only one of the terms, the fundament, is real. The following illustration makes the notion of intentional relation very clear.

Psychic act – intentionally relates to – immanent objectivity

(May or may not be a real thing)

In the conception of intentionality, Brentano's use of the term 'physical' is sometimes misunderstood, as if it refers to certain real parts of the mental processes. This perhaps is the result of misunderstanding of the Brentanian distinction between the physical and the psychical. Husserl, and phenomenology in general, would hold that phenomenology is interested in the fact that every mental act intends an object, not that there is a fundamental distinction between the physical and psychical domain. However, Brentano while making the domain of psychology distinguishes the 'appearances' or 'phenomena' of consciousness into two classes. To quote him, "All the appearances of our consciousness are divided into two great classes – the class of physical and the class of mental phenomena."[21] For Brentano, the only truly reliable characteristic for distinguishing mental from physical phenomena is the intentional relation of the object, the object's immanence in the act. No physical phenomena possess intentionality; they do not refer beyond themselves intrinsically. However, by 'physical phenomena' Brentano here is referring to physical phenomena as the manifest or phenomenal properties or objects – a tone, a colour and so on – as these are grasped in the mind. To quote him, "Examples of physical phenomena…. are a color, a figure, a landscape which I see, a chord which I hear, warmth, cold, odor which I sense; as well as similar images which appear in the imagination."[22] Ultimately, he holds that physical phenomena are the phenomenal occurrences of external objects in or acts of perception. The relation

between an intentional act and the accompanying consciousness of it became a theme for great importance in the Husserlian phenomenology.

Husserl was influenced by this (rigorous) scientific attitude towards psychical phenomena, the emphasis that Brentano has made on description, paving the way for a "positive" science of consciousness which was not possible in the framework of Kantianism or psycho-physics. But Brentano was convinced that description of psychical phenomena is possible only in terms of inner perception, that is, of psychology. This was not acceptable to Husserl as it would lead to psychologism. It is, however, true that this concept obstructs the view towards the intentional object, which can be distinguished by description from that which is immanent to consciousness. Husserl's discovery of the intentional object led him to the question of its constitution, a part not found in Brentano. For Brentano the idea of a (transcendental or psychical) constitution would be unacceptable because as it would lead to subjectivism. Husserl thus proceeded his own way to phenomenology; his own philosophy can rather be regarded as an endeavour to develop a constitutive philosophy with Brentanian means such as description and part-whole-theory as a rigorous science. [23] The crucial thing for Husserl is the belief that meanings are identities which can be accessed again and again by the same speaker, or shared between speakers, are non-individuated, transtemporal identities are *idealities*, for Husserl. Husserl distinguishes the 'psychological' – or what he calls the 'real' – content from the 'ideal content' or 'meaning content'. On this account the *psychological* content is individual, a temporally delimited slice of the living stream of consciousness, but the meaning content is not 'real' in that sense at all. Meanings are shared, accessible by many. The meaning cannot be a real component of the act. As the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901) will make clear, Husserl considers meanings as the ideal contents of acts, alternatively called *intentional* contents. For Husserl ordinarily our psychic acts would go directly to the object, are

about the object, not about the content. It takes a special act of reflection to make the 'content' of an act into its object.[24]

Husserl's phenomenology takes its beginnings from a certain project of describing mental acts and their parts initiated by Brentano, in his *descriptive psychology*. Brentano's account of mental acts emphasized an intentional structure whereby acts are in intentional relations to their objects. Husserl was led to a critique of "psychologism", and this critique led to the founding of phenomenology as a science, that is separate from both psychology and logic. In "psychologism", says Husserl, a psychologist believes that psychology provides the basis for logic. For Husserl logical laws cannot be reduced to psychological laws, as the distinction between them is the difference between the logical (or "intentional") order and the psychological (or constitutive) order. It is also described as the difference between *noema* and *noesis*, that is, between what is signified or what appears in consciousness [called the "intentional correlate], and the act of signifying, the constitution of consciousness. It may also both mean the object known, and act of knowing that object. While psychology uses the term "contents of consciousness" indiscriminately, pure psychology will consider only the "fact" of consciousness, Erlebnisse; pure logic will consider only the object of consciousness, apart from the way it is known or brought into consciousness.[25] Husserl would develop his own distinctive philosophy as a phenomenon appears to consciousness.

References

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p. 25

4 Ibid., pp. 26-29.

5 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

6 Ibid., p.31.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid. p. 34.

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10 Ibid., 36.

11 Ibid. pp. 39-40.

12 Ibid., p. 40

13 Ibid., pp. 40-42.

14 Ibid., pp. 42-44.

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16 Ibid., pp. 45-47.

17 Ibid., p. 47.

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Chapter - 6

Consciousness in Edmund Husserl

Introduction

This chapter deals with Husserl and his philosophy known as Phenomenology, with an introduction to Husserl and to his phenomenology. It is an outline of the sort of problem that Husserl was rooted with and the solution that he would offer. With an introduction to Husserl and his Phenomenology, I will begin making a brief reference to the basic ideas of some of his predecessors that had a great influence toward the phenomenological pursuit. Like any other philosophical movement in the twentieth century, namely, neo-Kantianism, idealism, logicism, pragmatism, positivism, etc., Phenomenology is associated with Edmund Husserl in 1900-1901. Although phenomenology can be traced back to the writings of Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel and Ernst Mach, phenomenology, as a new way of doing philosophy was first formally expressed by Edmund Husserl in his *Introduction to the Second Volume of the First Edition* of his *Logische Untersuchungen* (*Logical Investigations*). While discussing the need for a wide-ranging theory of knowledge, he speaks of "the phenomenology of the experiences of thinking and knowing".[1] In the *Second Edition of the Logische Untersuchugen*, he declares: "The phenomenology, like the more inclusive pure phenomenology of experiences in general, has, as its exclusive concern, experiences intuitively seizable and analyzable in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real acts, as experiences of human or animal experients in the phenomenal world that we posit as an empirical fact. This phenomenology must bring to pure expression, must describe in terms of their essential concepts and their governing formula of essence, the essences which directly make themselves known in intuition, and the connections which

have their roots purely in such essences. Each such statement of essence is an *a priori* statement in the highest sense of the word." [2]

Throughout different phases of his philosophical development, there are changes in the different phases of the Phenomenological movement though certain basic characteristics remained unaltered. Husserl's earlier project of 1900, concerned with the clarification of epistemological concepts, has grown, by 1913, into an *a priori* transcendental science of pure consciousness. As Husserl's conception of phenomenology deepened and broadened, he came to see himself as the founder of a new movement, and gradually developed the most important current of European thought throughout the century as a whole. Before Husserl, 'Phenomenology' pre-existed in the writings of J. H. Lambert, Herder, Kant, Fichte and Hegel.[3] By phenomenology, Lambert meant a science of appearance which permits us to proceed from appearances to truth. For Kant, phenomenology is a branch of science which deals with things in their manner of appearing to us, for example, real motion, or colour which depends upon human observation. J.G. Fichte meant phenomenology as a manner of deriving the world of appearance, which illusorily appears to be independent of consciousness from consciousness itself.[4] Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* [5] made the frequent use of the term. Nonetheless, it is to be noted here that none of the above philosophers could inspire Husserl the way he was inspired by Franz Brentano who first employed the term 'phenomenology' in 1889.

Edmund Husserl and the beginning of the Phenomenological Movement

Husserl was born in 1859, in Prossnitz, a village in the present Czechoslovakia. He studied mathematics, physics, and astronomy and received his doctorate in mathematics for his dissertation on "*Contributions to the Theory of the Calculus of Variations*."

Though Husserl pursued his formal education in mathematics, he became interested in philosophy very early in his life. His interest in philosophy was kept alive by the lecture he attended by Wilhelm Wundt at the University of Leipzig and Friedrich Paulsen at the University of Berlin. Eventually, he decided to complete his education in philosophy and from 1884 to 1886 attended Franz Brentano's lectures in philosophy. On the advice of Brentano, in 1886, Husserl accepted a position at the University of Halle as the assistant of Stumpf, which provided him with a thorough grounding in psychology. A year later, he was offered a teaching position in philosophy at Halle. The same year, he published his first major work entitled *Philosophie der Arithmetik.* (*The Philosophy of Arithmetic*). He published *Logical Investigations* in 1900, which earned him a great deal of reputation and he was invited to be a Professor at the University of Gottingen in 1901, where he stayed until 1916. From 1916 to 1928, he taught at the University of Freiburg. After his retirement in 1928, he remained in Freiburg, during which time he published some of his major works. [6]

The important books through which Husserl developed his philosophical thinking are (1) *The Philosophy of Arithmetic*, 1891; (2) *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, 1900, vol. II, 1901; (3) *Ideas,* vol. I, 1913, vols. II & III, published posthumously, 1952; (4) *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 1929; (5) *Cartesian Meditations*, 1931; and (6) *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Parts I & II, 1936; Other parts published in *Husserliana* VI, 1954. Husserl died in 1938 and left behind him a rich store of philosophical ideas which has played an important part in the shaping of contemporary philosophical thoughts.

Husserl's Starting Point – The Quest for Certain Knowledge

For Husserl, the goal of philosophy is the attainment of certain, indubitable knowledge of the existing world.[7] The phenomenological method as a whole is to render "knowledge completely immanent and hence capable of complete unification, and completely necessary for subjectivity as such, which gives it its universal objective validity."[8] Thus, Husserl, not only sought to clarify epistemological concepts, he was also interested in an *apriori* transcendental science of pure consciousness as such. He frequently considered himself as an explorer in the new domain of consciousness and tried to arrive at a new land of transcendental subjectivity. Phenomenology, to him, was a 'set of infinite task'. He introduced concepts like 'suspension' or 'bracketing' of the natural attitude that assumed the existence of the world in order to get back into the domain of pure transcendental subjectivity. Without this suspension, he thought phenomenology would cease to be so, but with the application of 'suspension', phenomenology would be free from the 'naturalistic psychology of consciousness' which treats consciousness as just "a little tag-end of the world" (*ein kleines Endchen der welt*).[9] It is to be noted here that phenomenology has its beginnings in the efforts of Franz Brentano (1838-1917) who attempted to provide a philosophical foundation for the newly emerged science of psychology. He wanted to tie it to the Cartesian discovery of consciousness as the domain of apodictic self-evidence. Brentano is responsible for his rediscovery of the 'intentional structure of consciousness' and the scientific description of consciousness.

Husserl's problem – Naturalism and the Collapse of reason

Before asking the question "What is Phenomenology ?" one should ask the question "What led Husserl to discover Phenomenology?" Phenomenology is rooted in Husserl's deep conviction that Western culture has lost its true direction and purpose. This is reflected in his title of his last major publication, "*Philosophy and the Crisis of European*

Man". The "crisis" consists of philosophy's departure from its true goal, which is to provide the best possible answers to man's human and humane concerns, to deal rigorously with man's quest for the highest values, and, in short, to develop the unique broad range capacities of human reason. Husserl described the "crisis" as the "seeming collapse of rationalism " and he set his mission, his life time objective as " saving human reason." Husserl identified the crisis of Western man as the obsession with the scientific world-views that took man away from its experiential roots. But his spirit is not scientific, against science and the achievement of science. Husserl is profoundly impressed by the brilliant successes of natural science. Indeed, his ultimate objective is to save human reason by developing philosophy into a rigourous science. His criticism is therefore not directed at science as such but rather at the assumptions and methods of the natural sciences. Husserl believes that the natural sciences have over the years developed a faulty attitude in Western man regarding what the world is like and how to know it. The natural sciences rest upon the fatal prejudice that nature is basically physical and that the realm of spirit or "soul", the realm of knowing, valuing, and judging, in short, the realm of culture, is causally based upon corporeality. The possibility of formulating a self-contained science of the spirit is rejected by the natural scientist, and this rejection, says Husserl, explains to a large degree the crisis of modern man.

To insist that the realm of spirit must be understood after the manner of the physical sciences reflects, says Husserl, the "*naivete*" of modern scientific rationalism. What makes this rationalism naïve is that it expresses the questionable assumption of the various forms of naturalism which is that physical nature envelopes everything. This means, for example, that all psychology is psychophysical. It means, moreover, that knowledge and truth are "objective", based upon a "reality" beyond the self. Just how this "objectivism" of naturalism constititutes the *naivete* of modern rationalism is explained by

Husserl as a fundamental departure from the original philosophical attitude developed in Greece.

The distinctive Greek attitude as exemplified in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle was that the task of philosophy is to search for universal ideal norms for man's thought and behavior. Philosophy had transformed the earlier pre-philosophical mode of human existence which was characterized as a naively direct living immersed in the world, in a world constantly there. Life in this state was practical and even the developing mythologies and early religions supported the basically practical concerns of individuals and larger groups. In this condition there was no culture of ideas in the sense of ideas reaching beyond the immediate boundaries of local experience and practical interests. What Greek philosophy did, says Husserl, was to develop a new kind of outlook or attitude, namely, a universal critique of all life and its goals. This was critique of all systems of culture that had grown up in the life of mankind. The positive side of this critique was its aim of raising mankind through universal reason toward a radically new humanity, rising above the limited horizons of custom, geography, and social groups. What made this possible was a new conception of truth, a truth independent of tradition, universally valid, and capable of infinite refinement. Here, then, is the origin of the spiritual life, the culture of Europe, of Western man. It was in ancient Greece that this new attitude grew up orienting individuals toward their environing world. The systematic formulation of this attitude is what the Greeks called philosophy. Correctly translated, says Husserl, this philosophy "bespeaks nothing but universal science, science of the world as a whole, of the universal unity of all being." But it was this one science, philosophy, with its comprehensive grasp of all nature which included the cultural as well as the physical, ideas as well as objects, which ultimately began to splinter into the several separate sciences. The intervening step was the discovery of how the world of

perceived nature can be changed into a mathematical world, a discovery which eventually led to the development of the mathematical natural sciences.

Ultimately, the success of the mathematical natural sciences resulted in the gradual scientific repudiation of the spirit. By steadily focusing upon the environing world, the objective attitude was developed wherein every thing was considered to be physical or derived from the physical. This spirit is also reflected in the differences that one finds between Democritus and Socrates, for Socrates, man is viewed primarily as having a spiritual life within the context of society. For Plato and Aristotle, man is basically spiritual, though they are parts of this universe of objective facts, they are nevertheless persons, egos, who have goals and aims. But with the gradual success of the mathematical and natural sciences, the methods of the natural sciences were extended to the knowledge of the spirit. Man's spirit was now conceived as an objective fact founded upon corporeality, taking on, Husserl says, "a predominantly dualistic, that is, psychophysical form." Hence, the same causality embraces the one world in such a way that all explanations of the spirit involves the physical. For this reason, Husserl said that from the attitude of natural science, "there can be no pure self-contained search for an explanation of the spiritual, no purely inner-oriented psychology or theory of spirit beginning with the ego in psychical-self-experience and extending to the other psyche. The only way to reach it is the one that is similar to the path of physics and chemistry." Husserl concluded that there can be no improvement in our understanding of mankind's true purposes so long as naturalistic objectivism, with its "naïve" and "absurd" dualistic interpretation of the world, looks upon spirit after the manner of spatio-temporal objects and studies spirit according to the methodology of the natural sciences. It was his desire to develop a proper method for grasping the essential nature of the spirit, to overcome naturalistic objectivism, that led Husserl to formulate his transcendental phenomenology.

The Phenomenological Way

Phenomenology happens to be a radical way of doing philosophy, a practice rather than a system. It is a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophizing which attempts to get to the truth of matters. It describes the phenomena, whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer. “Phenomenology is a return to ‘phenomena’. Husserl understands *phenomena* as ‘what appears as such’; in other words, everything that appears, including everything meant or thought, in the manner of its appearing, in the ‘how’ (*Wie*) of its manifestation.”[10] Phenomenology aims to avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance, resulting from religious or cultural traditions, from science itself. Understanding the phenomena from within is to be freed from the imposition of explanations beforehand on experience itself. Freedom from the impositions, or misconstructions, is also freedom from the prejudices of traditions and history that involve dogmatic *apriori* metaphysical premises Earlier notions of knowledge (such as, Neo-Kantianism, Neo-Hegelianism and positivism), were considered inadequate keeping room for a renewal of philosophical inquiry. Phenomenology believed in reviving live contact with reality. Thus, the slogan of phenomenology was, to ‘return back to the life of living human subject’. It was an appeal to return to concrete and lived dimension of human experience, with a rejection of traditional tenets of knowledge as a mental representation or copy of what exits outside the mind, theories associated with John Locke and others. To it, experience proper, truly speaking, must be the experience of engaging directly with the world. Philosophical knowledge must be based on the deepest experiential evidence.

Phenomenology is a clear study of the nature of consciousness centering in its intentional dimension, differing from the way common sense or the philosophical tradition would understand it. For example, one must not think that experiences in

consciousness are like objects in a box. As Husserl says in his celebrated "*Formal and Transcendental Logic*," "But experience is not an opening through which a world, existing prior to all experience, shines into a room of consciousness; it is not a mere taking of something alien to consciousness into consciousness….. Experience is the performance in which for me, the experiencer, experienced being "is there", and is there as what it is, with the whole content and the mode of being that experience itself, by the performance going on in its intentionality, attributes to it."[11] This is the significant character of Phenomenology; it is description of things as they appear to consciousness.

Development of Husserl's Thought

Husserl's philosophical interests developed through his preoccupation with mathematics and the part played by psychology in the understanding of numbers. His inquiry into the foundations of mathematics led him to the field of logic, through which he reached the area of epistemology and finally, to philosophy proper. Possibly, Husserl was attracted by the Cartesian ideal of certainty and wanted to ground philosophy on the model of mathematical knowledge. Like Descartes he desired to make a radical beginning in philosophy and thought of establishing philosophy as a rigorous science.[12] Husserl, though influenced by many, acknowledges his debt to people like Franz Brentano, Descartes, Hume and Kant, who, according to him, do phenomenology to some extent without realizing the consequences.

As we have already discussed Brentano's influence on Husserl in the early period of the phenomenological development, phenomenology as initially understood by Husserl in the *First Edition* of the *Logical Investigations* meant *descriptive psychology* and had its origins in the project of Brentano. From Brentano, Husserl took over the conviction that philosophy is a rigorous science, as well as the view that philosophy consists in

description and not causal explanations. Husserl also adopted from Brentano a general appreciation of the British tradition of empiricism, especially Hume and Mill, along with an antipathy towards Kantian and Hegelian idealism. Like the positivists, Husserl went on to reject Neo-Kantian and Hegelian problematics as 'pseudo-problems' (*Scheinprobleme*) and pseudo-philosophy. For Husserl, as for Brentano, philosophy is the description of what is given in direct 'self-evidence' (*Evidenz*). The major concept which played an important part in Husserl's phenomenology was the idea of intentionality.

Husserl says, "Phenomenology must honor Descartes as its genuine patriarch." Descartes's influence was important as it led Husserl to begin where Descartes began, had also with the '*cogito*', the thinking self. It can also be said that Husserl accepted the principle of Cartesian doubt, though he applied it in a different way. Descartes went through a systematic doubt to achieve an absolutely certain foundation for knowledge, Husserl suspended any judgment about his experiences, seeking to describe his experiences as fully as possible in terms of the evidence of experience itself. For Husserl as well as for Descartes, the source of all knowledge and experience is the ego or the self. While for Descartes the ego becomes the first axiom in a logical sequence which enables him to deduce logically, Husserl sees the ego simply as the matrix or foundation of experience. Husserl, therefore, puts primary emphasis upon experience than on logic. His concern is to discover and describe 'the given' in experience as it is presented in its pure form and is found as the immediate data of consciousness. Husserl, however, criticises Descartes for moving beyond the conscious self, the ego, to the notion of extended substance, namely, a body, which relates the subject to an objective reality producing thereby the mind-body dualism. For Husserl, "pure subjectivity" describes the actual facts of human experience more accurately. Descartes

emphasizes on the *ego cogito* (I think), whereas Husserl emphasises the *ego cogito cogitatum* (I think something). Thus, Husserl saw the relation between consciousness, thinking, the things thought, and the element of intentionality which "creates" the phenomena of experience.

Regarding the influence of David Hume, it can be said that the influence has been both negative and positive. To consider the negative influence first, Husserl was not ready to accept the Humean position of skepticism, that knowledge is not possible. For Husserl, all knowledge depends on an intuition of the essences of what we want to know. But Hume, an advocate of empiricism, denies essences. Husserl wants to substitute the word 'intuition' for 'experience'. To him, empiricism itself gets involved in skepticism, as it denies the possibility of the intuition of essences, or seeing in general. To consider the positive influence, it is believed by Husserl that Hume's *Treatise* gives the first systematic sketch of a pure phenomenology which, though under the name of psychology, attempts to supply a philosophical transcendental phenomenology. Husserl wanted to understand the transcendent in terms of the immanent and in that respect, Hume's sensationalism could give an account of the world in terms of impressions and ideas. It had thus an 'immanental character', even though its sensationalistic subjectivism has a paradoxical character. Such immanentism is possible by way of reduction of the known world through some intuitive evidence. Thus, Hume's theory of knowledge anticipates and accepts a proper intuition-oriented philosophy of immanent consciousness, a kind of philosophy which phenomenology wants to work out.

Husserl was influenced by the most important idea of Kant's philosophy of science, namely, how to provide a secure foundation to philosophy, a position that the natural sciences like mathematics and physics have already attained. Husserl, like Kant, wanted

to inquire into the fundamental conditions that would make our knowledge and experience possible. Kant discovered the conditions in the subject and to Husserl, subjectivity is the principle on which our knowledge of the world which we mean or intend depends. Husserl recognizes in Kant the philosopher who made a significant contribution towards establishing the transcendental subjectivity as the ground of all our knowledge, which is stated in his famous dictum, 'The understanding *maketh* nature'. Subjectivity, for Husserl, like Kant, is the ground on which all meanings and valid principles are formed. So the constitution of the world which is obtained by experience is traced back to the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity. Thus, it seems Husserl and Kant more or less proceeded in the same way, though there are significant differences between them about the role of the subjective principle in the construction or constitution of the world of our experience. Finally, Husserl admits that in showing how syntheses are made in the region of consciousness, Kant has produced a new way of developing the method of phenomenology.

Though Brentano anticipates many of the themes of phenomenology, it is with Edmund Husserl that phenomenology, conceived of as a science of the essential structure of pure consciousness with its own distinctive method, begins. Husserl first announced his allegiance to phenomenology, as pointed out earlier, in the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901). While writing the last two *Investigations* in particular he came to see the need for a more general 'phenomenological' approach to consciousness. Phenomenology, as Husserl conceived it, would be theory of science, a 'science of sciences' (W*issenschaftslehre*), a rigorous clarification of what essentially belongs to systematic knowledge as such. Later, in *Ideas* I and elsewhere, Husserl talked of the need for a wide-sweeping 'critique of reason',[13] and 'a complete reform of philosophical knowledge'.[14] Phenomenology gradually grew to be a project of "ultimate grounding'

(*Letztbegrundung*) which finally, in Husserl's vision, came to encompass the whole of philosophy. However, in order to have a clear picture of what phenomenology is all about, the following celebrated themes can be systematically discussed.

Doctrine of Essence and Intuition

Merleau Ponty in his *Preface* to "*Phenomenology of Perception* " says, "Phenomenology is the study of essences; according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness, for example. But phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any staring point other than that of their 'facticity'."[15] Husserl's essences are destined to bring back all the living relationships of experience, as the fisherman's net draws up from the depths of the ocean quivering fish and seaweed.[16] Looking for the world's essence is not looking for what it is as an idea once it has been reduced to a theme of discourse; it is looking for what it is as a fact for us, before any thematisation.[17] Husserl discusses the notion of 'essence' in his *Logical Investigations* as the necessary first stage of a phenomenological philosophy. In *The Idea of Phenomenology,* Husserl outlines the programme of a universal phenomenology conceived as the ultimate foundation and critique of all knowledge. In this respect, the relationship between fact and essence is one of Phenomenology's prime concerns. Phenomenology is supposed to be concerned with essences and not with particular facts. In order to detach the essences from the particular facts, Husserl proposes a methodological reduction called *eidetic* reduction. Merleau Ponty says that this recourse to essences does not mean that philosophy is not concerned with the world in which we live, but on the contrary the essences are the means of 'becoming acquainted with and to prevail over its facticity'.[18] Phenomenology's attempt to get at the 'things themselves', the 'essences', called *eidos*, the 'form' or

'structure' or 'shape' of things. The Greek word *Eidos* seeks to describe the structure of 'things themselves' which are intuited by consciousness. The 'things themselves' are what could be given in a person's consciousness, what was perceptible in consciousness, by every body's consciousness.[19]

Further, essence is that which, in the intimate self – being of an individual, reveals to us what it is. In itself, essence is the sum total of existing ties, relations and internal law determining the main features and trends in development of a material system.[20] One example will make this point clear. We see something, for example, a red pen. We can imagine this 'red pen' to be different. It can be 'blue' or 'green', and can have a different shape and size and so on. To Husserl, we have the ability to imagine 'how the various objects could be changed' along with how the objects are without imagination. This very ability to imagine is called 'intuiting'. Thus, our intuition not only reveals about how an object is, but also it tells us how it could be otherwise. To Husserl it is the very 'understanding of how an object could be' is nothing but the 'essence' of an object. Husserlian phenomenology is thus, based upon the fact that all the objects of the world have 'essences'. Phenomenology provides us direct access to the essences of an object, rather than the objects itself.[21] What Husserl attempts to show is that one should consider not only the actual situation, but also all the possibility of variations that the actual situation could be. Husserl wishes to make it clear that our basic mathematical intuition comes from our experience of everyday objects and is impossible without it. But our intuition should not only simply limit it with the everyday objects and go on to have experience of it. Rather our intuition should be accessed into the abstract structure, the essence of the everyday objects.[22]

For Husserl, philosophy should always rely upon intuition. Intuition is that which is given in our experience of an object. The slogan of phenomenology, “back to the things themselves”, was first announced in Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* which showed his dependence on intuition.[23] Indeed, this emphasis on the importance of ‘intuition’ in philosophy was one with the philosophers of that time, namely, Wilhelm Dilthey, Henri Bergson, and William James. Ofcourse, they differed in their accounts of it. Intuitions are the highest stage of knowledge and as such are hard-won insights, akin to mathematical discoveries. When I see that ‘2 + 2 = 4’, I have as clear an intuition as I can have. He thought that similar intuitive fulfillments occurred in many types of experience, and were not just restricted to the truths of mathematics. When I see a blackbird in the tree outside my window under normal conditions, I also have an intuition which is fulfilled by the certainty of the bodily presence of the blackbird presenting itself to me.

There are a wide variety of different kinds of intuitive experience. Husserl reflected on these varieties of experiences in order to consider their essential natures and intuitive fulfillment. Later on, while taking a transcendental turn in his *Ideas*, he called these intuitions ‘originary giving’ or ‘presentive’ intuitions. While considering its primacy, he announces his *principle of all principles* in *Ideas I*, which runs as follows. “Enough now of absurd theories. No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the *principle of all principles*: that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak in its “personal” actuality) offered to us in “intuition” is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there.” [24] This is how every act of knowledge is to be legitimized by “originary presentive intuition” (*originar gebende Anschauung*). Further, in his notion of “Givenness” (*Gegebenheit*), he says that all experience is experience to someone. In all experience, there is a ‘to whom’ of experience. Intuition occurs in all

experiences of understanding. In the case of genuine certain knowledge, one has the intuition with the highest kind of fulfillment or evidence.

Method of Description

Right form the beginning, Husserl emphasized upon phenomenology as a pure *presupositionlessness* science of consciousness (*Prinzip der Voraussetzunglosigkeit*).[25] By this, he wanted to keep aside all philosophical theorizing about phenomena and wanted to describe it carefully what was *given* in intuition. In other words, Husserl believed that we should not assume any philosophical or sciencfic *theory* furthermore, must avoid *deductive* reasoning and mathematics as well as any other empirical science or speculative theory of psychology and philosophy, any mediate knowledge of any kind, in order to concentrate on describing what is given directly in *intuition* (*Anschauung*). He wanted to explore experience in a pure manner, unsullied by assumption. Thus, *Cartesian Meditation* says, "The phenomenologist must begin 'in absolute poverty, with an absolute lack of knowledge'".[26] Nothing must be taken for granted or assumed external to the lived experiences themselves as they are lived. In this context, Merleau Ponty says that the task of phenomenology is a matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing. Husserl's first directive to phenomenology, in its early stages, to be a 'descriptive psychology', or to return to the 'things themselves'. Further he says that this description is absolutely distinct from the idealist's return to consciousness, as the demand for pure description excludes equally the procedure of analytical reflection on the one hand, and that of scientific explanation on the other. [27]

Method of Reduction or *Epoché*

In order to fulfill the needs of the above method of 'description' and 'presuppositionlessness' in phenomenology, Husserl felt the necessity of introducing a

set of procedures, especially the procedure of 'reduction' (from the Latin *reducere,* 'to lead back') or the *phenomenological epoché*, or *suspension of the natural attitude* or *Bracketing*. By this, he meant that all scientific, philosophical, cultural, and everyday assumptions, has to be put aside. This does not mean to negate all; rather it is just like the case of a member of a jury who is asked to suspend judgements and the normal kinds of association and drawing of inferences in order to focus exclusively in the evidence that has been presented to the court. In other words, in considering the nature of our conscious acts, Husserl opines, we should not simply assume by way of our 'natural attitude' towards things that the mind is some kind of a container, that memories are like picture images, and so on. Nor should we assume any scientific or philosophical hypothesis, for example, that conscious events are just brain events. In fact, in genuine phenomenological viewing, we are not permitted any scientific or philosophical hypotheses. We should attend only to the phenomena in the manner of their being given to us, in their *modes of givenness,* in order to lead back to the unprejudiced source of experience, that is, to the pure essences of consciousness.

Husserl compared this method with Descartes Methodical doubt in the *Meditations.* The aim of both is to expose the transcendental structures of consciousness itself.[28] Husserl, however, always stressed that his greatest discovery was this method of reduction. Because, on the one hand, it led him in a Neo-Kantian and Cartesian direction towards the transcendental ego (which must be kept apart from the psychological domain of the empirical self) as the formal structure of all self- experience; while on the other hand, it led him towards the manner in which consciousness is always found in its intentional correlate, completely caught up in the world. To him, the 'transcendental' ego constitutes the world which cannot be grasped by ordinary reflection. This very intuition of the

worldiness of consciousness led to Husserl's investigation of the environment and of the life-world.

The Objectives

For Husserl, reduction or bracketing would deactivate certain fundamental structures in order to allow more basic deeper layers of consciousness to become visible in themselves. Husserl used various mathematical analogies to articulate his sense of the *epoché*. It is like putting brackets round an expression in an equation (e.g., 2+2 = (8/4) +2) which allows one to employ an expression without subjecting what is inside the brackets to the operations going on outside the brackets. Husserl offers another analogy of 'changing the value' on a mathematical expression (e.g., we can think of 27 as 3^3). In one sense this does not change anything, but in another sense an essential feature of the number 27 has been exhibited as 3 to the power 3. This is what Husserl thinks will happen with all conscious acts when their world-positing character is bracketed. We can never stop this world-positing character of our acts but by a free act of will, we can refuse to be drawn in the direction of positing, focusing more on the structure of the act and its intentional correlate, not thinking of it in terms of the existent world. This reveals, to Husserl, what precisely it *means* to perceive something, remember something, imagine something, and so on.

Under the natural standpoint or attitude, we believe that things are genuinely present in space and we are aware of time passing and of ourselves as in some sort of continuity with the world and that mental acts of cognition are pure form, like an empty box into which we put contents. When we effect the phenomenological bracketing, all that disappears and, according to Husserl, we are left with a *residuum* of pure consciousness**,** consciousness as absolute existence, whose objects are always correlates of consciousness. Consciousness consists here of the acts of the ego, what

Husserl calls *cogitationes,* and the correlates of those acts, the unities that are thought, the *cogitata*. Furthermore, this world of correlated meanings is the one world for all possible beings. Whatever is a possible intuition for me is also a possible intuition for everyone else (*Ideas I, section- 48*). Thus, Husserl holds that consciousness survived as pure, absolute being. The existence of objects is revealed as contingent, whereas consciousness is shown as absolute. The aim of the suspension of the natural attitude is to uncover the inner core of our subjectivity. The reduction leads directly to transcendental subjectivity. Elsewhere he says: "Subjectivity, and this universally and exclusively, is my theme. It is a purely self-enclosed and independent theme. To show that this is possible and how it is possible is the task of the description of the method of phenomenological reduction". [29] During his later phase of philosophical development, Husserl emphasized more on the reduction as the move from the ordinary empirical ego toward the transcendental ego. In *Cartesian Meditations*, he explains the function of reduction as follows: "By phenomenological *epoché* I reduce my natural human Ego and psychic life – the realms of my psychological *self-experience* – to my transcendental phenomenological Ego, the realm of transcendental-phenomenological *self-experience* (*Selbsterfahrung*)". [30]

Application of Reduction in Perception

Phenomenology is to proceed by careful attention to the dimensions of the experience itself. In *Ideas I*, *section 35*, Husserl gives a famous example of looking at and touching a sheet of white paper. He is trying to articulate how the application of the *epoché* uncovers aspects of an experience not obvious in naturalistic viewpoint. Husserl is trying to give a very careful account of just what his perception is actually like, avoiding importing any assumptions. When I hold a sheet of paper in my hands and I specifically focus on it, I am directed towards it, I single it out, and seize it in a special manner. I see it surrounded by a more marginal field of vaguer experiences, for example, surrounded

by books, pencils, and so on. Each perception of the white sheet has “a halo of background intuitions” of the entities and also of other conscious acts. Moreover, I grasp it as a visual perception and not as a hallucination, and I am aware that I can vary the modality of my grasp of the object, I can remember it, and so on. We know that, even if the sheet of paper doesn’t exist, it is still referred to; something of the very essence of a mental process is being grasped. This example shows how Husserl moves from a concrete factual experience to try to uncover something essential about the structure of an act of consciousness or a series of acts and the peculiar consciousness that accompanies them. In the case of perception, Husserl believes, we are distinctly aware of the object perceived than that of an object imagined. We just intuitively attend to the object in a structurally different manner (and this is not a matter of the meanings of the words we use but a feature of the mental acts themselves). In grasping the white sheet of the paper, I am aware of being directed towards the object (the paper) in a fundamentally different way than that in which I am aware of the whiteness. My sensation of white forms part of the experience, but is not the object of my experience as the paper is. From this kind of example, we learn how Husserl intended the phenomenological method to be applied.[31]

Doctrine of Intentionality

Phenomenology’s aim is of greater clarity in consciousness and in explaining its meaning and scope. The notion of consciousness, as says Merleau Ponty, is the main discovery of phenomenology. Consciousness has been defined here as “All consciousness is consciousness of something”. Every act of loving is a loving of something, every act of seeing is a seeing of something. The point, for Husserl, is that, disregarding whether or not the object of the act exists, it has meaning and a mode of being for consciousness, it is a meaningful correlate of the conscious act. This allowed

Husserl to explore a whole new domain – the domain of the meaning – correlates of consciousness acts and their interconnections and binding laws before one had to face ontological questions concerning actual existence, and so on. While phenomenology turns to consciousness, it is nevertheless a science of consciousness based on elucidating the intentional structures of acts and their correlative objects, what Husserl called the *noetic-noema*tic structure of consciousness. Husserl saw intentionality as a way of reviving the central discovery of Descartes's *cogito ergo sum.* Instead of proceeding to an ontological account of the *res cogitans* as a thinking substance as Descartes himself did, one can focus on the intentional structure which Husserl describes as *ego-cogitatio-cogitatum,* the self, its acts of consciousness, and its objective correlate.

The Doctrine of Life-world

After examining the importance of intuition in experience, Husserl was led to write *Experience and Judgment* (1938) where he emphsised upon "prepredicative experience" (*die vorpradikative Erfahrung*). He considered the predicative experience as an experience expressed in outward language, which is then as Husserl puts it, "all cognitive activity presupposes a domain that is passively pregiven, the existent world as I find it. Returning to examine this pregiven world is a return to the life-world (*Lebenswelt*), the world in which we are always already living and which furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination".[32] Accordingly our ordinary world of experience is a world where scientific laws operate, but 'life-world' is that world which prepares the foundation for this world. His slogan was 'to return back to this sort of a 'life-world''. Husserl claims that the world of our ordinary experience is a world of formed objects obeying universal laws as discovered by science, but the foundational experiences which give us such a world is rather different: "This experience

in its immediacy knows neither exact space nor objective time and causality".[33] Returning to the life-world is to return to experience before such objectifications and idealisations.[34]

The task of science is 'objectification' and 'idealisation' which is a traditional ideal of knowledge. To Husserl, this task of scientific worldview is merely a theoretical construction that resumes quite far away form ordinary experience in space and time. 'Life-world' (*Lebenswelt*) made its first appearance in *Ideas I* under the title of 'world of experience' (*Erfohrungswelt*). Here it meant that our ordinary natural concept of the world as the correlate of all our possible experiences. He gave more emphasis on this concept in his *The crisis of European Sciences.* The concept of world was arrived at by Husserl through his application of the reduction. The life-world is a world as phenomenon, as correlative of our intentional experiences. In his *Ideas II* he began to see the life-world as a layer to be inserted between the world of nature and the world of culture (or spirit). The life-world is the world of pre-theoretical experience which is also that which allows us to interact with nature and to develop our own cultural forms.

In the *Crisis*, Husserl focused on the life-world exploring the "how of the world's pregivenness". (*Crisis*, sec-43, *Husserliana VI* 157). In this manner, after reduction, the ego did not remain an empty of contents, as in the Cartesian way, but an ego which was already intimately tied to the world in many ways. In the *Crisis*, Husserl saw the life-world as the universal framework of human endeavour- including our scientific endeavors, it is also the ultimate horizon of all human achievements. As conscious beings, we always inhabit the life-world as it is pregiven in advance and experienced as a unity. There is not one single life-world, but a set of intersecting or overlapping worlds, beginning from the world which is the 'home world' (*Heimwelt*), and extending to other worlds which are

farther away, ‘foreign’ or ‘alien worlds’, the worlds of other cultures etc. Husserl nevertheless explicitly denied that this notion of the life-world came from Heidegger. Indeed, Husserl had operated with several conceptions of ‘world’ in his own philosophy.[35] Although, in the *Crisis*, Husserl was particularly interested in one important aspect of the life-world, namely, the way in which scientific consciousness with its guiding norm of rationality emerges out of ordinary non-theoretical forms of everyday lived consciousness and its practices, he gradually emphasizes more upon the scientific world ‘belongs’ (*gehort*) to the life-world. (*Crisis*, Appendix VII, 380; *Husserliana VI Beilage XVII* 460). He always admired the extraordinary achievement of the sciences but he was very interested in how this theoretical outlook was achieved and on what it was grounded. [36]

Finally, he retained his faith in absolutely secure first knowledge, knowledge which is based on evidence, true rationality is taking note of the act that construed as true insight. (*wirkliche Einsicht*, *Crisis*, 296; *Husserliana VI* 343). His entire life project, as he himself emphasized over and over, was to live the philosophical life, understood in the Socratic sense as a life of self-critical understanding and rational self-responsibility. The life-world is not immediately accessible to our conceptual scheme, although everyone is under the influence of the culture of the ‘world’ in which he is living, but of knowing the Western man is somehow charmed by the scientific interpretation of the world. So a particular reduction, a temporary suspension of culture and science, is necessary for uncovering the life-world and its essential structures. After performing this reduction we are in a position to study the life-world and ontology of the life-world which is a kind of phenomenology.

Husserlian reduction of the life-world to the transcendental subjectivity is not a withdrawal into the regions of the inaccessible ego, but such reduction leads to the universal ego-structures common to every ego or human being. These structures are shared by all human beings and prepare the intersubjective basis of the world. The world is the common world given to humanity in the life-experience which grows gradually in and through the reciprocities of the togetherness of human beings. It is the 'Being-in-the-world', as Heidegger would say, of human beings in their living struggles and interactions. This life-together given in the course of man's existential relations is the life-world from which the world of everyday life and the world of science emerge.[37]

Transcendental Phenomenology

Husserl called his phenomenology 'transcendental phenomenology'. His use of the term 'transcendental' has clearly Kantian voice. What he meant is that everything in the world, and the world itself, derives its meaning from consciousness and intentionality. The purpose of this programme is to demonstrate that all things are constituted in consciousness and in this sense consciousness is said to be transcendental. But consciousness is not only intentional, it is also temporal as the process of constitution is a temporal one giving rise to the historicity of the transcendental consciousness and the world which it constitutes. It explains how 'I' as a transcendental ego comes to share a common world with other co-constituting transcendental egos. 'Constitution' (*Konstitution*) is a central notion in Husserl. The term 'constitution' itself has a pre-history in Kantian philosophy. In the Kantian sense, the term refers to the manner in which objects are 'built up' for consciousness out of a synthesis of sensory intuitions and various categories which are applied according to certain rules. In his early work *Philosophy of Arithmetic,* Husserl used the term to mean a study in the constitution of mathematical entities. In the *Logical Investigations*, 'constitution' referred to the manner in which non-intentional sensations are interpreted and brought into objectifying

intentions so as to produce objects for consciousness. The performance of the *epoché* and reduction reveals with the intentional structures which show how objectivity is constituted out of subjectivity. Husserl's notion of constitution perhaps means a kind of setting out or 'positing' (*Setzung*), as a giving of sense, 'sense-bestowing' (*Sinngebung*).[38] It is life 'manifesting' and 'exhibiting' as equivalent to 'constituting'. Further, it is spoken of as a kind of 'producing', 'making', or even 'creating'. Thus, in *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl speaks of new objects being constituted for consciousness as 'products' (*Erzeugnisse, Leistungen*).[39]

Consciousness and Constitution

R. Sokolowski has argued that constitution should not be read as that the entire *being* of the world is produced from consciousness. Husserl would have regarded this view as subjective idealism, which he associated with Berkeley and dismissed as naïve. On the other hand, Husserl does actually speak of transcendental consciousness giving both meaning and being to the world. 'Being' here means the manner in which beings appear to consciousness, being-for-us as opposed to being-in-itself. For Husserl, after the performance of the reduction, the correlation of consciousness to world remains unattached as there is no question of escaping from the world. The world remains as a horizon in all our mental processes, it is always 'pregiven'. In the *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929), Husserl asserts that the relation of consciousness to the world is not a haphazard event produced either by God or by the evolution of the world itself. Rather the world is always the product of a constituting ego.

Heidegger says that 'constituting' does not mean 'producing' in the sense of making and fabricating; it means letting the entity be seen in its objectivity. It is misleading to thing of constitution as the mind's imposition of form upon sensuous material elements given by

the world. (Heidegger's lecture on *History of the Concept of Time*, 1925). The kind of objectivity which entities have is bestowed by consciousness and the object is unthinkable apart from consciousness. However, the being of entities is experienced in consciousness as *other than* consciousness. In this sense, Husserl always emphasises the transcendence of being with regard to consciousness, being is other than consciousness. Nevertheless, Husserl stresses that the constitution does not rule out the recognition of the facticity of the world, and the manner in which contents appear in consciousness over which it has no control. Constitution includes a kind of passive construction of all the meanings found in consciousness. The whole object as such is experienced as *given from the world*. Constitution is a universal feature of conscious life. All meanings are constituted in and by consciousness. Everything experiencable in both the natural and cultural world is constituted, as Husserl argues in *Ideas II*. Here, he is interested in the constitution of natural, physical things, or sense objects. In *Ideas II*, he asks, how does it come about that physical things of nature present themselves to us as being in space and time and having the kind of properties they do? He makes a sketch of how physical things appear to consciousness in terms of a sensory grasping to a discussion of animate nature, which includes features like mobility, alterability, and, at the higher levels, personhood. He also talks of the constitution of social and cultural entities which gives rise to the twentieth century 'socially constructed' nature of social entities such as families, institutions, banks, money, and so on.[40]

Static and Genetic Constitution

In the *Ideas* Husserl distinguished between different forms of 'constitution' within phenomenology, namely, 'static' and 'genetic'. Static constitution considers the noetic and *noema*tic structures which make it possible for objects to be intuited in consciousness, whereas genetic constitution examines the manner in which objects

appear within the temporal flow of our experience. Husserl asks, is there anything which is not constituted? For him, all objects experienced in consciousness, all meanings, and the very nature of consciousness itself are always constituted. Thus, the ego, too, is self-constituted. To him, all constitution has its source in what he calls 'the absolute ego'.[41] On the other hand, there are elements in the ego, its self-presence, its self-givenness in the present, which are for Husserl absolutely originally given and hence not constituted.[42] The application of the *epoché* led Husserl to locate the source of all meaning in the transcendental subjectivity, which in its turn led to a form of *transcendental idealism*. He understood phenomenology essentially as 'egology', the study of the ego and its 'self experience' (*Selbsterfahrung*). The true focus of philosophy too is the region of self-experience, the transcendental ego. Nevertheless, the transcendental ego was not a feature of Husserl's early writings. In the *Logical Investigations*, while following Brentano and Hume, he formulated the ego as a bundle of acts, a collection of *Erlebnisse.*[43] To him, the 'phenomenological ego' was given to the stream of consciousness as such.[44] The ego itself was an empirical object which transcends consciousness. This view of Husserl made Sartre to write his 1936 essay *The Transcendence of the Ego.*

Empirical and Transcendental Ego

At times, Husserl spoke of the empirical ego which may come and go, but that the transcendental ego is a necessary condition not just for the possibility of experience, but for the possibility of a world at all. The transcendental ego survives the destruction of the world. Alfred Schutz[45] said that Husserl, in his last conversations with Husserl, especially when Husserl was about to pass away, talked about the fact that Husserl would die but his transcendental ego would live on. Thus, in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl says the transcendental ego is responsible, not just for meaning or sense, but for the being of

the world.[46] Further, the transcendental ego constitutes the world as a world of meaning and as world of objects. To Husserl, the move towards the transcendental ego is not a move from the world, rather it is the condition for the possibility of understanding the world at all.

Even then, the empirical ego is intentionally constituted out of the phenomenological ego.[47] Husserl has originally held a Kantian position that the "I think" which can accompany all experiences plays a purely formal role. But by the time of the *Second Edition of Logical Investigations*, he maintained that the reduction has to leave behind a *residuum* which was the pure ego itself.[48] Paul Natorp, in this connection says that all psychology needed to postulate a pure ego which was the subject but never object to itself. Having performed the reduction, Husserl believed that one could actually intuitively grasp the pure ego as distinct from the empirical, natural ego. Nevertheless, he continued to do a kind of 'ego-less' phenomenology. The reduction brackets the empirical ego; "the ego as a person, as a thing in the world" is treated as transcendent. What one is left with is the experience as my experience but no reduced ego is in sight. Opposing to Descartes, he concedes that 'I am not a part of the world, and neither is the world a part of me.' After the performance of the reduction, 'I discover the nature of consciousness in general, consciousness in its essence, in its pure possibility. That is, we enter into the domain of meaning, not the consciousness of an individual human, but the essence of all meaning-making. We don't discover an empirical ego in our reflections; rather we encounter something like the 'subject pole' of a set of acts. The subject pole is similar to a magnetic pole that draws things towards it.

By the time of *Ideas I*, Husserl wanted strictly to separate the natural, worldly psychic life of the ego and its psychological experiences from the spectator-like pure ego which is

uncovered as absolute source of all meaning. This consciousness is a 'residuum' which resists all reduction,[49] this is that pure ego which reveals through each *cogito*. It is not part of any mental process but is a necessary condition of these processes.[50] Husserl quotes Kant: "The 'I think' must be capable of accompanying all my presentations".[51] Husserl often talks of this ego in Kantian language as providing a formal condition for the unity of inner experiences. This pure ego is essentially "empty of content"; it is certainly not any conception of a person. This pure ego is having a transcendence of a peculiar kind – a "transcendency within immanency". Thus in *Ideas I,* Husserl dealt with the essence of consciousness as such, something which is by definition ownerless**.** However, Husserl wrote *Ideas II* just after the *Ideas I* where he says: "The ego is the identical subject functioning in all acts of the same stream of consciousness; it is the center whence all conscious life emits rays and receives them, it is the center of all affects and actions, of all attention, grasping, relating, connecting." [52]

For Husserl, the self is a 'zero point' (*Nullpunkt*), a centre of reference and orientation, from which distances, times, etc., radiate outwards. Something is over there, to the left, on top, far away, near, all as mapped out taking myself as the centre of space. Later on in *Ideas II*, of course, Husserl speaks of such an ego which requires a bodily orientation and spatial location. The transcendental ego becomes embodied in a living body. Towards the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation,* Husserl felt that the constitution of the ego is deeply related to the source of time consciousness. Here the ego is thought in terms of the flow of time as "a connectedness that makes the unity of one consciousness". (*Cartesian Meditations*, *sec-18, 41*; *Husserliana I* 79). It is given in temporal profiles." Time is the universal form of all egological genesis". (*4th Cartesian Meditation. sec-37*) He began to articulate the notion of the ego in terms of the Leibnizian notion of the 'monad', a term which appears in *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science* (1910-1911), and in

Ideas II, sec-27, 264, and *Cartesian Meditations* also. The 'monad' is Husserl's name for the whole concrete conscious life of an ego taken as the full set of all its intentional experiences, both actual and possible (*Cartesian Meditations*, *sec-33, 68*; *Husserliana I 102*). It is the complete draft of a life as it were. Husserl speaks of 'monadisation' of the transcendental ego and of the self as a 'monad with windows'. Thus, Husserl's later works make a sharp contrast between the naïve everyday ego and the transcendental ego. The naive everyday ego can be explored by psychology and anthropology; the transcendental domain requires the *epoché* and the reduction, and hence is purely phenomenological. Husserl stressed the absolute parallelism between the two domains.

A Brief Review of 'Husserl on Consciousness'

One of the principal tasks for Husserl was to account for an idea of consciousness and its relation to the phenomena as well as the objects of the world is important. The notion of consciousness, thus, plays an important role in Husserl's phenomenology. Indeed, Husserl himself has acknowledged this by saying that the "all-embracing problem of phenomenology is consciousness."[53] Here an attempt has been made to provide a clear understanding of 'consciousness' in Husserl's phenomenology. We can grasp Husserl's philosophical thoughts on 'consciousness' better if we begin with an analysis of the influences of the philosophical traditions which might have contributed a great deal in the formation of Husserl's phenomenological thoughts on 'consciousness'. As we are aware of the fact that Husserl's philosophical interests developed through his preoccupation with mathematics and the part played by psychology in the understanding of numbers. His inquiry in to the foundations of mathematics led him to the field of logic, through which he reached the area of epistemology and finally, to philosophy proper. So it is possible that Husserl was attracted by the Cartesian ideal of certainty and wanted to ground philosophy on the model of mathematical knowledge. It seems, however, that he desired, like Rene Descartes, to make a radical beginning in philosophy and thought of

establishing philosophy as a rigorous science on the basis of his well-founded doctrine of 'Pure-consciousness', the wonder of all wonders. This is my justification for making an attempt at understanding the nature of consciousness in some of his predecessors before discussing Husserl's notion of consciousness.

The central motive of Husserl's philosophical endeavour is the search for certainty, sharing common zeal with Descartes as to what should be the model of philosophy is that should imbibe the spirit of a rigorous science developed on the basis of absolute evidence. There are some striking similarities between Husserl and Descartes as we can presume that Husserl accepted the principle of Cartesian doubt, though he applied it in a different way. Descartes spoke of denying the reality of the world provisionally, but Husserl understood in a 'theoretic sense' which would produce a suspension (*epoché*) of the beliefs in the reality of the world. Descartes began with the indubitable 'thinking' (*cogito*) from which he deduces the existence of the 'consciousness' (*ego*). This 'consciousness-thinking' (*ego cogito*) unity is the source of all our knowledge of the world, including the existence of God. Descartes understands 'consciousness' to be the source of all validity, but is not able to differentiate its very psychological and empirical nature from the *a priori* dimension of consciousness as the source of all meaning giving acts. To Husserl, the Cartesian consciousness does not have the purity of the transcendental and the formal consciousness, although Husserl wants to have a transcendental consciousness or ego, which is different from the psychological and empirical consciousness.

What Descartes wanted to know was how consciousness (ego) can establish the reality of the world which was sought to be resolved through the intervention of God. Husserl speaks of the constitution of the world by the transcendental consciousness which has to

be constituted first taking note of the fact that the world as constituted by the transcendental consciousness does not establish the objectivity of the world. Husserl tries to show how transcendental consciousness constitutes other egos as equal partners in an inter-subjective community, which in turn constitutes the foundation for the intersubjective world. But how does subjectivity constitutes objectivity? Husserl, like Descartes, does not introduce God as the ground of objectivity of the world; he introduces the conception of the intersubjective community of intersubjective egos, of transcendental intersubjectivity. It is thought to be the very presupposition of the objective world for everybody. Although Husserl differed from Descartes in many areas, it must be admitted that the latter exercised a profound influence on the philosophical development of Husserl. Husserl pointed out that after the belief in the reality of the world is suspended, what remains as pure residuum contains *ego cogito cogitata.* In his later writings, Husserl speaks of a transcendental subject as the underlying ground of all our experiences. Husserl believes that Descartes could not reach this pure consciousness and remained confined to the level of psychological consciousness, although he was following the right track. The cogitations would include different acts of experience, such as, willing, feeling, imagining etc. The *cogitatio* refers to the objects experienced by consciousness, that is, the intentional objects or the referents of our cogitations and finally the cogitata are also indubitable, for the phenomena of the objects given to me have an absolute indubitable being. Thus, Husserl introduced a more radical method in philosophy than Descartes. The following is a summary of the points mentioned here:

1. Both Descartes and Husserl try to arrive at the certainty or indubitability or certainty of the self-consciousness by the method of suspension in beliefs.
2. For Descartes, consciousness is empirical, for Husserl it is transcendental.

3. Descartes's consciousness is a private and egoistic, for Husserl it is universal and intersubjective. Descartes's privacy of consciousness leads to Leibnitz's Monadology, where monads are considered as windowless.

4. In Descartes, consciousness and Matter are fundamentally separate from each other (which sounds like the *Purusa-Prakrti* dualism of the Sāmkhya system), whereas in Husserl, consciousness and matter are not separate. Husserl reformulated Descartes's dualism and presented the *noesis-noema* correlation. Ultimately, in Husserl the pure consciousness remains with its correlate meanings.

Kant and Husserl on Consciousness

Empirical and Pure consciousness

For Kant, there is a distinction between empirical and pure consciousness. Empirical consciousness is consciousness in which sensation is a component. There is a possibility of gradual transition from empirical consciousness to pure consciousness. Empirical consciousness changes and differs from subject to subject. It, further, appears in various degrees down to purely unconscious.[54] Pure consciousness appears in various degrees and always belongs to an 'I' and is unified in one single self-consciousness. It is called the transcendental consciousness and is the ultimate condition of the possibility of knowledge of objects. For Kant, consciousness as such is intrinsically transcendental, containing sensation as one of its components, both empirical and transcendental at the same time. To quote him, "The consciousness of presenting an experience or of thinking in general is a transcendental consciousness, not an experience".[55] Further, he says that 'consciousness' that 'I think' is transcendental, and precedes all empirical consciousness which occurs in 'inner sense'. The pure transcendental consciousness is intellectual, where as the 'inner sense' is psychological. Now a question may arise pertaining to – whether this intellectual, pure

consciousness is intentional? It's indeed very difficult to answer it in the Kantian terms.[56] Kant says only this much that sensation, as such, is not a content of pure consciousness and also is not intentional.[57] As consciousness does not merely accompany all representations, but also unifies those representations into the unity of an object, Kant comes to a conclusion that consciousness is neither a representation nor contains representations, but is a function or activity of unifying itself while unifying representations into the unity of an object. In other words, there are no contents of consciousness. Consciousness is always a function, an act of bringing together a unity.[58]

Unlike Kant's, Husserl's theory of consciousness does not restrict it to the intellectual function of synthesis; rather its synthesis is both possible and active, perception, imagination and thinking all beings are modes of consciousness. Husserl understands consciousness not as an act of thinking (as in Kant), it includes all intentional acts and its correlates, the *noesis-noema*. Husserl could safeguard the transcendental consciousness as parallel to the empirical consciousness. It is the same consciousness which becomes empirical while belonging to the world and transcendental while constituting the world.[59] In this manner, Husserl's transcendental consciousness differs from the intrinsic transcendental consciousness of Kant. Husserl's transcendental consciousness or pure consciousness constitutes the world, whereas in Kant, the intellectual consciousness synthesises the raw materials of sense experience with the categories of understanding.

Husserl's notion of the active synthesis of empirical data does not involve the Kantian notion of "*apriori* forms to be imposed" upon the sense manifold. Husserl also does not admit the Kantian dualism of phenomena and *noumena*.[60] Husserl maintains that Kant has made a significant contribution towards establishing the transcendental subjectivity

or pure consciousness as the ground of all our knowledge. Still he points out that Kantian doctrine of *apriori* knowledge involves 'anthropologism' and 'relativism'. Moreover, Kant's statement about the universal and necessary character of *apriori* knowledge may be true, but the universality and necessity have to be understood in terms of the universal constitution of human nature. This is because Kant identified, like Descartes, transcendental subjectivity with the universal human nature which is supposed to be a factual reality. Conclusively, Husserl admits that in showing how syntheses are made in the region of consciousness, Kant has produced a new way of developing the method of phenomenology.[61]

Hegelianism was the dominant philosophical trend of the Nineteenth Century but Husserl was not much altruistic to Hegel's philosophy of the Absolute Spirit. In Hegel's work "The phenomenology of Spirit", phenomenology was understood to be an ascent of consciousness from the sensuous stage to 'Absolute Knowledge' through various forms of self-consciousness. His 'Phenomenology of Spirit' is a story of the development of consciousness. As 'phenomenology' etymologically means 'science of phenomena or appearances', Hegel's phenomenological approach was a study of phenomena or appearances in relation to the real. Hegel understood them to be the appearances of the 'Absolute Mind' which constitute the different stages of the universal consciousness as his was mainly ontological approach to consciousness (Spirit) study.

Husserl was principally interested in the epistemological problems understanding 'phenomena' as 'appearances' through which a thing is presented to our consciousness, for example, in perception. These appearances are fundamentally different from the Hegelian appearances, as Hegel does not understand those to be transparent through which a thing appears. Husserl understands 'phenomenology' as the study of

phenomena or appearances in a systematic way to explain the possibility of our valid knowledge in different fields such as science, mathematics, and philosophy. Husserl understands phenomenology not as a metaphysical study of consciousness, rather it is a philosophical method which helps in going to the foundation of sciences and other branches of knowledge so that it will be possible for us to have apodictic certainty in those areas.[62]

Among the immediate predecessors of Husserl, the name Franz Brentano can be mentioned, who has the most considerable influence on the phenomenological thought of Husserl. As I have already discussed the relation between Brentano and Husserl in the previous chapter, here I will mention it very briefly. What I have said earlier is that psychology for Husserl could be identical as phenomenological psychology which attempts to lay bare the structures of pure consciousness or transcendental subjectivity. So he makes a distinction between *apriori* psychology and the psychology of 'intentionality', as founded by Brentano. Husserl expresses great respect for Brentano whom he remembers as the teacher who has produced a conversion of the scholastic concept of intentionaltiy. He confesses that without this concept phenomenology could not have been possible. Still, there is an essential difference between Husserlian psychology and Brentanian psychology. Brentanian psychology remains chained to a naturalism which can be traced back to the earlier empiricism. It has not been freed itself from the naturalistic tendency, in spite of its having introduced in psychology the concept of intentionality, which is 'descriptive in type and universal in scope'.

Phenomenology, for Husserl, is a discipline which is a science of consciousness, but not a science of psychology. It is a 'phenomenology' of consciousness as opposed to a natural science about consciousness. What Husserl means is that psychology is

concerned with 'empirical consciousness', with consciousness from the physiological or neurological or biological standpoint. For example, it deals with the questions like 'how consciousness functions in the brain, in various parts of the body?' and considers consciousness as an empirical being in the order of nature. But phenomenology is interested in 'pure consciousness', that is, consciousness from the phenomenological point of view, in which the belief in the natural reality of the world is suspended. It wants to unearth consciousness and looks at it as it "appears" in ordinary experience. Husserl's notion of consciousness may be said to have developed in several stages and it is very difficult to draw a strict line of demarcation amongst these. I have restricted my discussion on the nature of 'consciousness' in Husserl's phenomenology under three heads: (A) Consciousness in *Logical Investigations*, (B) Consciousness in *Ideas* and (C) Consciousness in *Cartesian Meditations* and later works. It is to be noted here that the levels of description of consciousness, followed by a careful study of the ego or consciousness, is achieved by an employment of a methodological device called 'reduction' (which is already being discussed above). The theory of ego or consciousness unfolds itself through such notions as the 'empirical ego', the ' phenomenological ego', the 'pure or polar ego' and the 'monad or the transcendental ego'.

Consciousness in *Logical Investigations*

Consciousness understood by Husserl in the *Logical Investigations* as 'intentional'. It is this 'openness to' that is the foundational structure of consciousness. It is a relation between a 'meaning act' and 'that which is meant', its object, which is meant as its object, which is defined as it's meaning. In his search for a philosophical explanation of mathematical and logical concepts, Husserl formulated the thesis that the being of these concepts is exclusively to be the objects of consciousness. It means, in other words, that the logical and mathematical beings are, in the most fundamental sense, meanings-for-

me and consciousness is to be thought of as a relation *sui generis* to an apprehended object. Thus, After the publication of *Logical Investigations* Husserl came to realize gradually that intentionality is not only a characteristic feature of the acts of consciousness, but is the very essence of consciousness.

Husserl understands the ego or consciousness as the conscious unity or the contemporary bundle of experiences, the continuous thing-like unity constituted in the unity of consciousness which functions as the personal subject of our experience. The description of an experience refers the relation to the ego, but the experience itself doesn't have the ego as its part. The description takes place after the experience is over, in which the ego appears as itself related to the object of its act. Thus, 'the ego judges about the object' means that 'such and such experience of judging is present in the ego'. Husserl's understanding of the 'empirical ego' is in terms of the 'person' in ordinary discourse. Agency here is not understood as something in consciousness but simply as the person undergoing experiences. This ego, as he puts it, is a 'thing-like object and can be perceived' just as we perceive an external thing.[63] It is this ego that performs the *epoché*. Husserl then arrives at the notion of a 'phenomenological ego' in his *Logical Investigations* by an application of the method of reduction centrally focusing on consciousness and its experiences by turning away, by not attending to, the various external objects with which consciousness is ordinarily occupied. The ego that is now encountered is nothing unfamiliar; it is the psychologically functioning ego. Even if it's focus is on inner experiences, phenomenological psychology is not at this point very remote from the empirical psychology operating with naturalistic assumptions about the ego. Thus, the 'phenomenologically reduced ego', to quote Husserl's own words, 'is nothing peculiar, floating above many experiences; it is simply identical with their interconnected unity'.[64]

Husserl's position at this point, as has been noticed by many, 'is not dissimilar to that of David Hume. Husserl, however, explicitly states that he was unable to find any pure consciousness or pure ego as a 'primitive centre of relations' or as a transcendental subject. It is possible that in his understanding of the 'interconnectedness', which accounts for the unity of consciousness, Husserl was influenced by Brentano's idea of 'primordial association'. He found it unnecessary to postulate a transcendental ego above or behind the conscious processes since the contents of consciousness have 'their law-bound ways of coming together, of losing themselves in comprehensive unities'.[65] This itself constitutes the phenomenological ego or the unity of consciousness without need for any additional ego. In any case, what needs to be noted is that, at this stage, Husserl rejected the notion of an ego-principle 'which supports all contents and unities'.

Consciousness in *Ideas*

In the *Ideas*, Husserl frankly admitted a 'pure consciousness or pure ego' as 'necessary and plainly indubitable'. To quote from Husserl, "On the one hand 'Consciousness, considered in its "purity", must be reckoned as a self-contained system of Being, as a system of Absolute Being, into which nothing can penetrate, and from which nothing can escape which has no spatio-temporal exterior, and can be inside no spatio-temporal system, which cannot experience causality from anything nor exert causality upon anything …. On the other side, the whole spatio-temporal world, to which man and the human Ego claim to belong as singular subordinate realities is according to its own meaning mere intentional Being, a Being therefore which has the merely secondary, relative sense of a Being for a Consciousness. It is a being, which consciousness in its own experience posits, and is, in principle, intuitable and determinable only as the element common to the motivated appearance-manifolds, but over and beyond this, is just nothing at all."[66]

Here, a clear distinction emerges between the empirical and the transcendental ego. The empirical and the pure ego are now seen as themselves intentional objects, as unities which are results of intentional constitution and 'over and beyond this nothing at all'. The pure ego is 'neither experience nor a process', but 'the active and affected subject of consciousness'. Husserl describes it in his *Cartesian Meditations* as that which 'lives in all processes of consciousness and is related, through them, to all object poles'.[67] This is a description of the ego in its transcendental aspect, which does not involve any ontological commitment. It is outlined that the transcendental features of the pure ego and it's acts are universal and necessary. It includes (a) the mere subject pole of all intentional acts, (b) the genesis of an ego, that is, an account of how an ego's life unfolds, and (c) the general form of time in which all experiences of an ego come together as one compossible world.

In *Ideas* Husserl says that in principle every *cogitatio* can change, can come and go, but in contrast the pure Ego appears to be necessary in principle. It remains absolutely self-identical in all real and possible changes of experience; it cannot be considered as a real part or phase of the experiences themselves. The ego lives its life in a special sense in every actual *cogito* and all experiences also within the mental background belong to it, it to them, and all of them, as belonging to one single stream of experience. It is like, in the words of Kant, 'The "I think" must be able to accompany all my potentialities'. On the basis of these considerations Husserl speaks of the relation which every experience has to the pure ego. It is said by Husserl that being-directed-toward-an-object, being-occupied-with–it, adopting-an-attitude, undergoing-something, all these imply the essential characteristic that they are 'something from the ego'. 'This ego is the pure ego, which no reduction can ever remove. Husserl thinks that the essential nature of the sphere of experience contains a two-sided fact of great importance: (1) Every *cogito*, as

cogito is directed to an object or *cogitatum*; (2) it is also and of necessity a *cogito* of this ego. It is in every wakeful *cogito* that a regard of the pure ego is directed to the object of the correlate of consciousness considered at that time and the ego possesses consciousness of this object in one of its typical variations.

But the phenomenological background shows that this directedness towards the correlate object cannot be found in every experience, as intentionality may remain concealed in it. The objective background from which the perceived object of the *cogitation* emerges when it is selected by 'the glance of the ego' is an objective background in a sense that can really be experienced. When our consciousness is turned towards the pure object in the manner of the *cogito*, various objects appear. We become intuitively aware of them. The objects blend into the unity of a single intuition, which is the unity of a consciously grasped field of objects. It is a case of potential field of perception in the sense that a special perception can be directed towards everything that in this way appears. The variations of the sensory perspective as present in a single visual field cannot be objectively grasped until they take the shape of intuitive appearances of objects.

The *Noesis-noema* Structure of Consciousness

The phenomenological analysis of consciousness reveals the *noesis-noema* structure of experience. *Noesis* is the objectifying act and *noema* is the intended object. In other words, *noesis* and *noema* correspond to the subject and object poles of experience respectively. Every *noesis* has its corresponding *noema*. However, the same object can be apprehended differently. That is to say, many intended objects may refer to the same object grasped in various intending acts. This implies that there is an underlying unity or identity of different '*noema*ta' of varying acts. Without this unity we cannot support any claim to objectivity.[68] Perception has its own *noema* and the 'perceived as such'

constitutes the perceptual meaning. The *noema*tic correlate is referred to as 'meaning', only to the extent that it is immanent in the experience of perception, judgement, etc. We can have an idea of the 'perceived as such' by grasping fully what is essentially given. This makes the faithful description of 'that which appears as such' is indissolubly bound up with the essence of perception. We obtain then the 'material thing', 'plant', 'tree', which are given in perception. Husserl thinks that the 'tree' as it exits in nature, is completely different from this perceived tree as such. The real tree can be destroyed or burned, but the meaning of this perception cannot be destroyed, neither can it be separated from it's essence.

As Husserl's phenomenological approach is an exploration of 'meaning' of consciousness, phenomenological analysis tends to show that both *noesis* and *noema* are the two poles of the same consciousness though the relation between *noesis* and *noema* is not one of equality. Helmut Kuhn points out that *noesis* has primacy over *noema*. To quote him, "The very objectivity of object is to be defined in terms of objectivating activity".[69]

Consciousness in *Cartesian Meditations*

A clearer picture of Husserlian description of consciousness appears as one further considers the *Cartesian Meditations*. In the *Fourth Meditation*, the problem of the self-constitution of the consciousness is dealt with. Under the section 'The ego as the identical pole of subjective processes',[70] it is observed that consciousness not only experiences itself as flow of mental life but also as 'I', The 'I' who lives that mental life and the 'I' whom 'I' experience as myself, are the same 'I'. The mental acts are unified not merely objectively, that is, as directed to one and the same object, but also as belonging to an identical ego. The ego is the active and passive subject of

consciousness. The section entitled ‘The ego as the substrate of habitualities’, however, states that the ego is not merely an empty pole of identity. Every intentional act which I perform generates in me a new property which lasts until it is cancelled. Every decision that I take, every belief that I acquire leaves in me a corresponding property. Such a property itself however is not a temporal process. In this manner consciousness continuously constitutes itself as a personal ego with a relatively abiding style known as its personal character. Husserl distinguishes between the ego taken in its full concreteness from both the above conceptions of the ego and calls it the monad. As a monad the ego includes not only its flowing intentional life, but also the objects meant in that life. Thus the consciousness sets up its surrounding world consisting first of those object with which I am acquainted and then of those which I anticipate as possible objects of acquaintance.

To conclude from the above discussion on ‘ego’ or ‘consciousness’, one can arrive at the thesis that the empirical and the transcendental consciousness are not two, numerically distinct entities, but rather one and the same entity regarded from two standpoints. Aron Gurwitsch (in *Phenomenology and Theory of Science*, North Western Press.) says that consciousness is not taken as part to the real world and as one reality among others. We have a right to characterize consciousness as absolute only to the extent that we conceive of its exclusively as a medium and, so to speak, as the theatre in which the constitution of all sorts of objects – including psychical and human realities, such as the soul, the mind, the ego, the personality, our social and historical being etc. – takes place.

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Chapter-7

Investigation of Parallel Notions of Consciousness in Śamkara and Husserl

Introduction

The philosophical investigation of consciousness has a long history in both Indian and Western thought. Some of the conceptual models and analyses that have emerged in one cultural framework may be profitably reviewed in the light of another. In this context, a study of the notion of consciousness in the Transcendental Phenomenology of Husserl is important not only as a remarkable achievement in the context of Western thought but is also useful for an appreciation of the philosophical concern for this question in the Indian philosophical tradition, notably in the tradition of Advaita Vedānta. This chapter is an attempt at an investigation of the very possibility of parallel notion of consciousness in the Transcendental Phenomenology of Husserl and in Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara with special emphasis on the notion of 'Transcendental I' of Husserl and the 'Witness Consciousness (*Sāksi Caitanya*) of Śamkara. It further opens up some other parallel notions in between these two philosophies, such as, *Neti..neti* and *Epoché*, Life-world and *Jivan Mukti* and Intentionality and *Dharma-bhuta-jnāna*.

Investigation of Close Parallels in Śamkara and Husserl

Husserl happens to be one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century. His philosophy seems to be quite fascinating partly because of many apparent parallels that can be founded between his philosophy and Indian philosophy. One such central parallel in both Indian philosophy and for Husserl is the nature of consciousness. The present discussion is an attempt to investigate such parallel notions in Husserlian

transcendental phenomenology and Śamkara's philosophy of consciousness. As we discussed in the previous chapter, the philosophy of Husserl is based on certain central themes, such as, the doctrine of essence, the method of description, *Epoché*, the doctrine of intentionality, the concept of Life-world and the doctrine of transcendental phenomenology. Husserl called his phenomenology 'transcendental phenomenology'. His use of the word 'transcendental' clearly has Kantian overtones, what he meant by the word was that everything in the world, and the world itself, derives its meaning from consciousness and its intentionality. The purpose of this programme is to demonstrate that all things are constituted in consciousness and in this sense consciousness is said to be transcendental. But consciousness is not only intentional, time and temporality is one of its important characterizations, so that the process of constitution is exclusively a temporal process that gives rise to the historicity of the transcendental consciousness and to the world which it constitutes. We are also confronted with the question of how I as a transcendental ego come to share a common world with other co-constituting transcendental egos.

The Indian philosophical tradition has witnessed lively discussion on the nature of consciousness identifying some of its essential features as *aparoksatva*, *pratyaksatva* and *abadhitatva*, immediacy, inner nature of consciousness and infallibility. Although the Western tradition, specially the Cartesian tradition of Descartes, accepts immediacy, infallibility, etc., of consciousness, there is no difference between the 'mind' and 'spirit' in the Cartesian scheme, the point which differentiates Śamkara's Vedantic interpretations from Descartes. But the spiritual dimension as pure subjectivity or as '*Cit*' has much in common with Transcendental Ego of Edmund Husserl and his Phenomenology. Then one can come across the discussion on :

(i) Nature of consciousness.

(ii) Empirical and Transcendental Ego.

(iii) Constitution of Consciousness and other relevant issues.

We have already discussed some of these issues in the context of Husserlian phenomenology. Here we can provide a brief outline of the Indian philosophical discussion on some of these issues.

The Nyāya-Vaisesika system of Indian philosophy treats consciousness to be intrinsically intentional. Yogācara Buddhism denies the external world and puts forward a distinction of subject and object within consciousness, which sounds like the "*noesis-noema* structure" of Husserl. Śamkara seems to deny intentionality of consciousness and rejects any attempt to describe consciousness logically. Ofcourse, for common understanding of the concept (*lokavyavahāra*), he attempts to define it as self-shining or self-manifesting (*Svayam-Prakāsa*), though by its very nature it is indefinable. The very reason why he seems to deny the intentional nature of consciousness is the fact that he considers the "object directedness" of consciousness to be the result of ignorance (*avidyā*). Consciousness by its very nature is non-intentional (*asanga*). The only philosopher who combines both 'self-shining' and 'object-directedness' of consciousness is Rāmānuja, the exponent of Visistādvaita philosophy (Qualified Non-dualism). Rāmānuja takes these two features to be mutually dependent. For Rāmānuja, consciousness reveals itself to its locus (Owner or Ego) only when it manifests its object.[1]

Regarding the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental, there are some differences in these two traditions. In the Husserlian tradition, consciousness is transcendental in the sense that it constitutes the world, while in the Indian tradition, especially in Advaita Vedānta, consciousness is transcendental in as much as it

detaches itself or dissociates itself from the world and enjoys its freedom within itself. This is how K.C.Bhattacharyya[2] relates transcendental dimension of consciousness in the Indian perspective. It is only in Sāmkhya that the empirical world is taken to be the product of *prakrti*, it is also in this dimension of reality of the world that the philosophy of Sāmkhya keeps room for the relationship between each Purusa and its own world and the one common world that would emerge from shared experience of all Purusas. It appears that in the schools of theism, specially in one system of philosophy, that is the Kashmir Saivism, which is a modified form of Advaita Vedānta, the pure consciousness itself is construed as temporal, or better still, as time itself.

Husserl' s Pure Consciousness Versus Śamkara's Pure Consciousness

I would now confine my comparative study to the notion of pure consciousness in the philosophy of Śamkara as well as in Husserl. Phenomenology, as we saw, centers around a specific understanding of the nature of consciousness, the intentionality of consciousness. The thesis of intentionality has two parts, its object directedness, that consciousness is always directed towards an object, irrespective of the fact that the intentional object may or may not exist. Secondly, every conscious state has a co-relative sense or meaning or a *noema*. Husserl also talks of pure consciousness as the transcendental subjectivity, as *Sāksi Caitanya* of Śamkara, that is the foundational and the constitutive consciousness which is arrived at by the performance of the transcendental *Epoché*. Husserl considers this pure consciousness as world constituting as only through consciousness this world could be presented as meaningful. It is only in this sense that all world-related meanings, including the meaning the term "world", have their origin in appropriate structures of consciousness. This constitutive consciousness alone provides the ultimate evidence for all cognitive claims and is the absolute foundational consciousness.

At first sight, this thesis of a world-constituting, evidencing, absolute foundational and pure consciousness of Husserl seems very close, in spirit, to the pure consciousness of Śamkara's Advaita Vedānta. As for Śamkara, the most fundamental principle, the foundational reality that underlies and makes possible all cognitive activity, is consciousness (*cit*, and also called *Ātman* or *Brahman*). This consciousness, in Śamkara is self-showing (*Svayam-Prakāsa*), and it is that light that illumines all objects including itself, but it is not intentional in its ultimate stage. The state of its intentionality, being-of-this-or-that-object, is only a "superimposed" property arising out of the wrong association of consciousness and *avidyā*. Consciousness is basically non-intentional, freed from the empirical constraints of body and world, is one, not many, not differentiated into mental states and with no intentional directedness toward the world. The possibility of empirical experience requires, besides consciousness, a principle of 'ignorance' or 'limitation' that projects the world of names and forms on the one consciousness. It emerges from this brief discussion that there is one point that is common for both Śamkara and Husserl that pure consciousness is the foundational, evidencing and absolute. But there are some differences if this ultimate consciousness is also active and constitutes at the same time, though it is absolute and foundational, Husserl would deviate from Śamkara where the former says that consciousness constitutes itself first and then the world. For Husserl, the pure or transcendental consciousness is intrinsically temporal and that by virtue of its intrinsic time, it constitutes itself as a flux. It constitutes its unity as an enduring ego, as unities of immanent acts and temporal entities. All these constitutive accomplishments, including the temporal dimensions of past, present, and future, have their origin in the "living present" which is for Husserl the absolute pure consciousness.

Śamkara's pure consciousness does nothing. It simply manifests, reveals, illuminates or evidences, as non-intentional, non-temporal, non-actional consciousness it is non-constitutive. It is still the foundation of the world-appearance, but it does not constitute the world in any sense. Husserlian constitution is a constitution of sense, not constitution of the thing itself. J.N. Mohanty,[3] one of the pioneers in the study of 'Indian philosophy and Phenomenology', is of the opinion that one reason why, inspite of a metaphysics of transcendental consciousness and a rich descriptive psychology of the inner life, Indian thought does not yield to a transcendental constitutive phenomenology is that the Indian theories did not quite come to subscribe to the sort of theory of meaning or sense – as distinguished from reference – that seems to have led Husserl to a theory of constitution (primarily of *sense*). And only secondarily, constitution of things, inasmuch as a *thing* can be shown to be a *noematic* structure, we have to look for similar doctrines not in Vedānta but in Buddhism (e.g., the Buddhist *apoha*-theory, where the concept of reference is called into question) and in some versions of the *sphota* theory, where the belief in eternity of 'word' led to posit eternal meanings. However, the Hindu theories of meaning were referential.[4]

From the perspective of Western phenomenology, Buddhism offers greater affinity in connection with the theory of meaning. In its theory of meaning, Buddhism, in all its forms, tended to deny direct reference, and tended to regard the thing to which language claims to refer to be rather a conceptual construct (*vikalpa*). In a more developed form, the theory of meaning became "differential "; the word "man", for example, means what it does inasmuch as it serves to *exclude* nonhumans but does not positively denote all men. Along with this theory of meaning and consequent disavowal of reference, Buddhism, as contrasted with the Hindu philosophies, understood consciousness to be a stream of events (of conscious*ing*) rather than as states of a substance, and also as

having a form or content (*akara*) of its own, as opposed to the generally accepted Hindu view that consciousness is formless or contentless (*nirakara*), what appears to be a content being really an object out there. Given these two conceptual resources - Buddhism could arrive at the view that both the ego and the object are but constructs – shall we say constituted in the ongoing stream of consciousness. This emphasis on 'absence' over 'presence' brings '*apoha*' theory closer to Derrida and his emphasis on 'differenz'.

The *Sāksin* and the Transcendetnal Ego

At this stage it seems to me that Witness Consciousness (*Sāksin Caitanya*) of Śamkara is much similar to what is understood by the Transcendental Ego in Husserl's Phenomenology. This is further strengthened by the fact that Husserl himself admitted of a witness or spectator like ego or consciousness. In order to understand the parallels between the *Sāksin* and the transcendental Ego, one has to keep in mind the nature and role of *Sāksin* on the one hand and the notion of the Transcendental Ego or I and the intentionality of consciousness, on the other. This would enable me to make a brief review of the notion of *Sāksin* which we have already discussed in the previous chapters on Gaudapāda and Śamkara. Etymologically speaking, consciousness as 'Witness" (*Sāksin*) is contrasted with consciousness as the enjoyer or sufferer (*bhokta*) which means consciousness is involved in action and its consequences. The outward-looking consciousness is involved in actions which it performs because of desires and aversions, and hence enjoys or suffers pleasure or pain. The witnessing consciousness is a disinterested on-looker, not a performer of actions, and hence not an enjoyer or suffer. Ordinarily an individual passes through three different types of states of consciousness – waking, dreaming and deep, dreamless sleep. Witnessing consciousness witnesses not merely what the individual does in his waking state, but

also the dream state and also the dreamless sleep. Consciousness that is aware of the 'blank' of dreamless sleep, cannot be ordinary experience of objects. Witnessing consciousness, which cannot go to sleep, is there to 'know' the state of sleep.

Gaudapāda too speaks of the witness consciousness as the 'all seer' always (*sarvadrk sada*).[5] The term '*Sāksin'* indicates that which directly or immediately perceives is the sole agent of this intimate and immediate perception. Accordingly, the term '*Sāksi*' stands for a witness. It refers to a witness in the sense of the phenomenologically pure observer, the observer who observes without the mediation of any process. It signifies the self, which though not itself involved in the cognitive process, functions as a disinterested, uninvolved onlooker. A phenomenological exploration leads to the recovery of this principle as a necessary ingredient in any epistemological process. In simple terms it represents an attempt to understand experience and its implications. The object as such is not the focus of attention. Rather, the focus for attention, *vis-à-vis* the object, is consciousness which functions in the medium for the manifestation of the object. *Sāksin*, in other words, is a form of apprehension, direct, non-relational, non-propositional, and non-evaluative in both cognitive and practical affairs. In the absence of this notion, no knowledge at all would be possible.

The Transcendental Ego

The transcendental ego, argues Husserl, is 'purified consciousness' or 'transcendental consciousness'. It is reached by a conscious reflective methodological move called *Epoché*. Husserl describes *Epoché* as follows: "By phenomenological *Epoché* I reduce my natural human ego and my psychic life…to my transcendental-phenomenological Ego, the realm of *transcendental-phenomenological self-experience*. The objective world, the world that exists for me, that always has and always will exist for me – this

world with all its objects, I said, derives its whole sense and its existential status, which it has for me, from me myself, *from me as the transcendental Ego*, the Ego who comes to the fore only with transcendental-phenomenological *epoché*."[6] It involves complete suspension of all presuppositions, a 'bracketing', that is, a setting aside of all beliefs about the world by the knowing mind. Husserl seeks to establish phenomenological truths about consciousness with the help of the *Epoché*. In fact, Husserl even goes a step further and asserts that a certain type of intentional act corresponds to each type of object. J.N. Mohanty explains this aspect of Husserl's position in the following words : "On the one hand, there is, for Husserl, a correlation between types of objects and types of intentional reference in the sense that to each type of object there corresponds a certain mode of giveness. In fact, the mode of giveness characteristic of a certain type of object may be used to bring out the phenomenological distinctiveness of that type. In the second place, to each particular object there corresponds a whole series of factual and possible intentional acts which have precisely that object as their intentional object. Two typically Husserlian notions arise out of this latter situation: the notion of *noesis-noema* correlation and that of the constitution of objects in the acts." [7]

What follows from this is that if we succeed in setting aside all presuppositions of our conception of the world as well as of consciousness as a part of the world, then there would result an experience of one's own consciousness which does not belong to this body or person, and the consciousness so experienced as the ' transcendental I ', which sounds very much like the witness-consciousness of the Advaita Vedānta of Śamkara. If we go through the writings of Eugen Fink, an assistant and a close co-worker of Husserl during the last years of his life, it can be founded that Fink talks about three types of Ego. Out of the three types of ego, one seems to sound like the *Sāksi Caitanya*, the Witness Consciousness. And, the most fascinating factor here is that Husserl himself

has acknowledged Fink's understanding of the three egos. Fink's understanding of the three egos has been reflected in his portrayal of *Epoché* or transcendental reduction. Fink holds, it "….. is not a 'direct' refraining from belief paralleling the believing life of the thematic experience of the world which directly enacts its beliefs, but – and this can not be overemphasized – is a structural moment of transcendental reflection. The *Epoché* is a reflective *Epoché*, it is a refraining from belief on the part of the reflective observer, who looks on the belief in the world I the actuality of its live *performance without taking part in it.*[8] Fink's point is that in the natural reflective attitude a human ego reflects upon herself within the confines of the natural attitude. Bracketing the world establishes a reflective ego which is outside human apperception. He adds, "This ego knowingly directs itself toward the universal world apperception as its theme. The disconnection of the world, however, not only makes possible the formation of a nonworldly reflecting-self, but …. also makes possible the discovery of the true subject of the belief in the world: the transcendental subjectivity which accepts the world."[9] So, Fink argues that there are three egos in Husserl's thinking. He outlines the egos thus: "1. The ego which is preoccupied with the world (I, the human being as a unity of acceptance, together with my intramundane life of experience); 2. the transcendental ego for whom the world is pregiven in the flow of the universal apperception and who accepts it; 3. the 'onlooker' who performs the *Epoché*." [10]

It appears from this that there are three egos, namely, (1) the empirical ego which is engaged in the world, (2) the transcendental ego, which is involved in the constitution of the world and so is not in the world, and (3) the transcendental ego as the 'on-looker' for whom this distinction between the first two egos holds good. In other words, it is possible to distinguish between two I's, the empirical 'I' and the transcendental 'I'. The former belongs to the natural order, the latter, however, is the same 'I' but purified of all natural

presuppositions. The observer who apprehends this distinction must be a pure disinterested spectator, an 'on-looker'. Such a concept of phenomenological 'onlooker' who does not participate in the world perhaps comes closest to the Advaitic notion of *Sāksin* or the witness consciousness, the disinterested witness. Finally, it is worth nothing that in the *Preface* to the article in which Fink introduces the notion of disinterested spectator, Husserl himself acknowledges that he agrees with Fink's interpretation of his philosophy. Husserl writes, "I am happy to be able to state that it contains no sentence which I could not completely accept [as] my own or openly acknowledge as my own conviction."[11]

The above analysis, however, should not be taken to imply that there is a complete agreement between Husserl's disinterested 'on-looker' and the Advaita notion of 'disinterested witness'. In the Advaita account, in very cognition, of whatever sort and of whatever object, besides the cognitive process appropriate to that kind of cognition and to that object, there must necessarily be an accompanying witness-consciousness. The witness-consciousness, for the Advaitins, is the presupposition of all knowing; it illuminates all that is known as well as the process of knowing, there by making knowledge possible. Husserl's transcendental 'I', unlike the Advaitin's disinterested witness, is not merely a spectator; it is also a constitutive ego. This on-looker, argues Husserl, is revealed in reflection. The existence of this on-looker, however, is not for Husserl, a necessary condition for the occurrence of any cognition. Nonetheless, the fact still remains that what Husserl calls the 'disinterested on-looker' very closely captures the concept of the 'witness-consciousness'.

My Observations

Now I would like to present some of my observations after investigating the nature of consciousness in Husserl and Śamkara. In Śamkara, the Self or consciousness is

different from the ego, just as it is different from the senses, the body, and the external objects. The Western Phenomenologists don't generally draw a distinction between the concepts, 'self', 'consciousness' and 'ego', and the entities they refer to. At one stage, Husserl draws the conceptual distinction between consciousness and the ego; but he doesn't stick to this distinction all through in his phenomenology. The Husserlian phenomenology which has gone through descriptive, transcendental, and egological stages in its development is aware of the distinction between the Self and the ego when it speaks of 'the transcendental I' and 'the empirical I', 'the pure ego' and 'the psychological ego'. However, this distinction is not strictly adhered to; and so scholars are of the view that the tension between the two 'I's, between the two egos, has not been resolved in the Husserlian phenomenology.[12] The usage of the words, 'I', 'ego', 'self' and 'mind', seems to be ambiguous and thus confusing.

The critics of Husserl, like Sartre who have been inspired by the programme and method initiated by Husserl, are of the view that Husserl went back to the Cartesian ego in the final stage of his phenomenology notwithstanding his insight into the pure consciousness as the 'phenomenological residuum', that which stands on its own providing meaning and validity to every aspect of our experience, outer as well as inner, i.e., our experience of the life-world as well as our experience of the cogitations of the ego. However, these ambiguities of meaning of the self, ego, consciousness, etc., that one finds in the writings of the Western phenomenology do not arise in the phenomenology of Advaita of Śamkara. The Advaita of Śamkara very clearly differentiates consciousness from the ego. There is absolutely no mixing up of these two terms. The term used for consciousness is *cit* or *caitanya*. Sometimes the word '*Purusa*' is also used to suggest that the Self or consciousness dwells in the body, or pervades the entire body. Since Atman, which is translated in English as Self, is consciousness through and through, the

terms, 'consciousness' and 'Self', or *Cit* or *Ātman*, signify one and the same entity. The other entity called the ego or the mind is the internal organ (*antah-karana*). As stated earlier, the internal organ is designated in four different ways as mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddh*i), ego (*ahamkara*) and memory-stuff (*citta*) depending upon the function it does. Since everything other than consciousness is material, the internal organ too, which is different from consciousness, is material. Carrying the reflection or semblance (*abhasa*) of consciousness, it performs the manifold operations of cogitations, becomes the first entity to be the object of consciousness, and also serves as the medium for all other entities to be related to consciousness as its objects.

Intentionality

Consciousness becomes intentional only because of internal organ's presence and functioning. When it functions giving rise to a doubtful cognition of an object, then it is called mind. If it produces definite knowledge of an object, then it is called intellect. When there arises the sense of 'I' from its functioning, it is called ego. It goes by the name of memory-stuff when it recollects the past. The functional modifications of the internal organ are called *vrttis*; and each of these *vrttis*, when illumined by consciousness, is called *vrtti-jnāna* – what the Western phenomenologists call the cogitations of the ego, which appear and disappear. The Husserlian tripartite formula, '*ego cogito cogitata*', applies respectively to the internal organ, its intentional performances – doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, feeling, willing, and so on – and its intended objects. While consciousness has neither structure or function, it is the internal organ which has both structure and function. Since consciousness is present as a witness to the absence of objects in sleep, it is not intentional; whereas it is intentional in the other two states revealing the objects which it is conscious of. Thus Husserl's intentionality comes quite closer to Śamkara's intentionality only upto the extent of the

waking and dreaming states. Only Śamkara goes a step further to say that consciousness is non-intentional essentially as far as it witnesses the three states without fail. It appears to be intentional (*samsrsta*) in the three states. Its intentionality however is contingent and not necessary. Here, Husserl's transcendental ego (unlike the empirical ego which may come and go), which no reduction can ever bracket and which is the presupposition of all experience and also the residuum of Pure consciousness, seems to come closer to the witness consciousness (*Sāksin*) of Śamkara. In Rāmānuja, one can find the intentionality more clearly than in Śamkara. For Rāmānuja, although consciousness is the essence of the self, it is not equivalent to the self. Consciousness is an attribute of the self (*Dharmabhutajnāna*). Consciousness is always consciousness of something. Though consciousness here is self-luminous, it is absolutely intentional and not a pure consciousness or a transcendental ego.

I will discuss this issue more distinctly in the following discourse. From this the following points emerge:

1. The concept of consciousness as set forth in the Advaita is totally different from the one that is available in the West. In Advaita tradition, there is no mixing up of consciousness and mind or ego.
2. Husserl who indicated toward some distinction between these two entities at one stage in his phenomenology initially does not hold on to it.
3. The term 'consciousness' (*cit* or *caitanya*) means the self-luminous light or shining principle whereas 'mind', which is but *antah-karana*, means the instrument which, being located in the body, serves as the means for knowing, feeling, and willing. So the two terms are not synonyms.
4. In Śamkara, consciousness reveals objects on its own; it also reveals them through the ego or the mind.[13] It is with reference with this ego or mind that Advaita speaks of

the intentionality of consciousness. The intentional performance is not ascribed to the pure Self or consciousness, but only to consciousness associated with the ego or 'I' which is transcendent to consciousness.

5. The distinction which Advaita makes between the pure consciousness and the ego-consciousness (mind-consciousness), which is very subtle, but profound and crucial, is comparable to the distinction between the pure or the transcendental ego and the *epoch*-performing ego accepted by Husserl.
6. Consciousness is immutable and inactive; but the mind is active and mutable, and plays its role as the knower, agent, and enjoyer in the day to day life with the help of consciousness. Thus, they are essentially different in Advaita.
7. While consciousness is sentient, mind is insentient; and so they can never be identical in Advaita. Consciousness or *Cit* is beginningless, and it has no end as it is changeless.
8. Mind, in Advaita, which has been active in the waking and dream states becomes quiescent in sleep for the reason that it being the product of ***avidyā*** gets resolved in the latter in the same way as a clay-pot, losing its identity as clay-pot, gets merged in clay which is its material cause.
9. The earlier Husserl of Logical Investigations didn't believe in the existence of the absolute, pure consciousness, but the later Husserl frankly admitted in his *Ideen* that his earlier skepticism with regard to the ego, an identical subject, was untenable. The later Husserl held the view that there is a transcendental ego, 'standing behind' or 'presiding over' the intentional consciousness. Consciousness further is not empty consciousness, but as ego-endowed consciousness. Consciousness in Śamkara is not egological, the 'ego' is a mundane object of consciousness. This transcendental ego of Husserl is comparable to the Self

(*Ātman*/*Brahman*) which stands behind the internal modified consciousness (*antahkarana*).

10. For Husserl, the intentional act of consciousness is something 'directed towards an object' outside it. Consciousness, therefore, is always consciousness of something. This view of Husserl is comparable to the 'internal organ' or modified consciousness (*antahkarana*) whose sole function is to intend to, to deal with some object in the world.

11. Here one question can be raised in the context of Husserl as he accepts the distinction between 'the pure I' and 'the empirical I'. The question is: Is the pure consciousness, 'the phenomenological residuum', that is intentional ? Or, is it the Epoché-performing ego that is intentional? It seems to me that Husserl replies positively to the second question, as a result of which 'the *Epoché* performing ego' comes closer to 'the internal organ or *antahkarana*' of Śamkara's Advaita.

12. On the basis of the distinction between consciousness and the ego, Advaita may hold that not only the intentional act, but also the function of objectivation, identification, fulfillment, and constitution mentioned by Husserl belong to the ego or the mind, which is transcendent to consciousness. It justifies this position on the ground that these cogitations are known in the same way as the eternal objects and their qualities are known, and that what is known must be transcendent to the knower. In other words, since consciousness is aware of these cogitations as they occur from time to time, as they appear and disappear in the mental horizon, they cannot belong to, or be part of, consciousness. For example, when someone sees an object, the object seen is transcendent to the seer.

13. Like the Husserlian phenomenology, Advaita phenomenology holds that whatever presented to consciousness is 'transcendent' to it and therefore an object of consciousness. Śamkara puts it as the distinction between '*asmad*' and '*yusmad*'

(subject and object). The phenomenological description of consciousness which Aron Gurwitsch expresses in the following words, based on the writings of Husserl himself, seems to come closer to the Advaitic thought. Aron Gurwitsch writes that consciousness is not taken as part of the real world and as one reality among others. We have a right to characterize consciousness as absolute only to the extent that we conceive of it exclusively as a medium and, so to speak, as the theatre in which the constitution of all sorts of objects – including psychical and human realities, such as, the soul, the mind, the ego, the personality, our social and historical being, etc. – takes place. Consciousness is a common subject-matter for both psychology and phenomenology, yet there is a difference in so far as consciousness in psychology is accepted as one reality among others and is studied in its dependence on extra-conscious data.

14. To the question, 'can the consciousness, considered in its purity, as a self-contained system of Being, as a system of Absolute Being, into which nothing can penetrate, and from which nothing can escape, be regarded as human consciousness?' Husserl seems to reply that 'being human' is an interpretation, a meaning constituted by transcendental consciousness. In other words, 'I am human' is also a meaning and so is a constituted *noema*. For Advaita, transcendental consciousness *appears* as human (*jiva*) owing to ***avidyā*** or nescience.

Husserl's *Noesis-noema* (Subject Pole-Object Pole) structure of experience can be compared with the *asmad-yusmad* (Subject-Object) structure of Śamkara. Śamkara's *asmad-yusmad* structure of experience asserts that the subject and object are opposed to each other like light and darkness. The object is superimposed (*Adhyasa*) on the Subject. On the contrary, in Husserl's *noesis-*

noema structure of experience, although the subject pole and the object pole are not opposed to each other, they are the two poles of the same consciousness. However, so far as Śamkara says that consciousness is neither the subject nor the object, the Husserlian notion of consciousness of which the subject and object are two poles seems to come closer to each other at this particular point.

15. The Advaita understanding, not unlike that of Transcendental Phenomenology, abandons the traditional conception of consciousness in the sense that the absolute character of consciousness is disclosed not in relation to mundane realities of which the empirical ego is an example. It is in this sense that the Advaita attitude, like the phenomenological, may be said to stand in contrast to all the natural attitudes presupposed by traditional ontologies. The Advaita analysis is a radical departure from other traditional systems in its understanding of the foundational and absolute character of consciousness. Consciousness in Advaita is not temporal, it is not in time. Consciousness is empty of all contents but for Husserl consciousness is content – full.

16. The notion of constitution is to be located in between the idea of mere manifestation (*prakasa*) and the idea of creation (*srsti*), so that the constituted (in this case, the empirical world) is neither an independently existing generality that is merely manifested by consciousness nor a subjective production. The following three discussions on *epoché*, life-world and Rāmānuja's intentionality happen to be the most crucial part of my investigations and seem to add a unique dimension to my thesis.

***Epoché* Vs. *Neti.. neti*.**

The notion of phenomenological reduction (Bracketing), which consists in suspending our 'natural attitude', is comparable with the Advaitic notion of the negative formula

(*Neti..neti*), the method of suspending everything while describing the nature of 'reality' which is by definition indescribable. As we discussed earlier, the 'method of reduction or *Epoché*' aims at leading back one to the unprejudiced source of experience, that is, to pure essences of consciousness. It consists in purifying consciousness of all presuppositions and presumptions, from living in the naïve world-belief, and thereby to be able to achieve, to intuitively experience, transcendental subjectivity. Further, *Epoché* consists in running towards the Transcendental Ego, the pure consciousness which is quite different from the psychological ego or empirical self that performs the *Epoché*, as the formal structure of all experience. However, the Transcendental Ego constitutes the world which cannot be grasped by ordinary reflection. When the phenomenological bracketing of the natural attitude is effected, one is left with a residuum of pure consciousness, consciousness as absolute existence, whose objects are always intentional correlates of consciousness. Here, consciousness consists of the acts of the ego called *cogitationes* and the coorelates of those acts, the *cogitata.* Ultimately, consciousness survives as pure, absolute being. Nevertheless, the existence of objects of the world are contingent, whereas pure consciousness is absolute. The aim of suspension is to uncover the inner core of our subjectivity. Reduction is the move from the ordinary empirical ego to the transcendental ego. Phenomenology moves from a concrete factual experience to uncover something essentially about the structure of an act of consciousness or a series of acts and the peculiar consciousness that accompanies them.

I will now try to explore a similar *epoché* as of Husserl, in the light of Śamkara's Advaita. The phenomenological reduction has two basic functions, viz., (1) reduction of objectivity to its subjective sources and (2) the phenomenological clarification of subjectivity. Thus, in the reduction the subjectivity clarifies or distinguishes itself and thereby freely posits

the object. As the aim of Husserl's programme of reduction is to delineate a self-complete realm of subjectivity by withdrawing itself from the objectivity, in the same vein, Śamkara urges that the realm of subjectivity is to be discovered by means of bracketing all adjuncts of body, mind, senses, etc., which come under the category of not-self (*yusmad*). For this, he prescribes certain methods like *darśana*, *sravana* , *manana* and *nididhyāsana*,[*] for meditating on the realm of the transcendental subjectivity, the self (*asmad*), the pure consciousness. This method is a method of meditating or reflecting on the process of attempting to know, that is, to realize the nature of the reality of the world as a whole.

The method begins by bracketing the body, for the body is not the transcendental subjectivity; then it brackets the senses, the internal organ (*antah karana*), and so on. And finally it discovers the realm of transcendental subjectivity by distinguishing itself from the perceived objects. Thus, the *epoché* helps in fulfilling or objectifying the intended object, that is, the transcendental subjectivity called *Ātman* or *Brahman* by way of dissociation or detachment of the subjectivity or consciousness from the various presentations to it, such as, the body, the senses, the mind the ego, etc. It is the 'suspension' from the 'natural attitude' that " 'I am blind', 'I am lame', 'I am white', 'I am black', ' I am going' [+] and so on. Thus, Śamkara's method of reduction as '*neti..neti'* which yields to the intended fulfillment 'I am neither the body, nor any of the presentations to me, but the transcendental subjectivity', the pure consciousness, is comparable to Husserl's method of reduction as *Epoché* which discovers the region of pure consciousness or transcendental subjectivity with the meaning correlates of the intended objects.

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[*] *Atam va are drstavyah srotovyah mantavyah nididhyasitavyah.*

[+] *Kanaham, Krsaham,Gauraham,Krsnaham,Gachati.*

Life-World Vs. *Jivan Mukti*

The discussion on 'Life-world' is an extension of the topic of '*Epoché*' or 'suspension of natural attitude'. It is a discussion of the post-*epoché* situation. As we found in Husserl that his *Epoché* led to the transcendental subjectivity which further gave rise to the 'life-world'. Life-world is a world already pre-given, a pre-scientific life which is lived by the transcendental Ego with its meaning correlates, with other egos in the community. As we discussed earlier, life-world, for Husserl, is an existent world which is pregiven to us. All experience and cognitive activity presuppose this world. This is a world in which we are always living and which prepares the ground for all cognitive and scientific performance. This life-world is quite different from the ordinary world of experience. The ordinary world is a world of scientific laws, whereas 'life-world' is a pregiven world that furnishes the foundation and makes possible such a world of science. However, this life-world is arrived at the performance of *Epoché* (bracketing). It is a world where the correlates of our intentional experiences inhere. It is further a world that can interact with the world of 'other culture.' Life-world is a live experience of the pure consciousness with its intentional correlative meanings. Pure consciousness or transcendental subjectivity is what is discovered here which is the source of all meanings and experience. In other words, it is not empty of contents. There is for Husserl, not a single 'life-world', but a set of intersecting or overlapping worlds.

'Life-world' is a 'home world' and extends to 'other-worlds', to the 'foreign-worlds' or 'alien worlds', in short, to the "life-worlds of other cultures". The 'life-world' is not ordinarily and immediately accessible as long as everybody is under the influence of the culture of the 'world' in which he is living. In order to access it, an *Epoché*, a suspension or bracketing of culture is necessary to uncover the life-world and its essential structure. Lastly, the life-world, which is a result of *Epoché*, is a return to the transcendental

subjectivity which further leads to universal transcendental subjectivities or egos as a common structure to every ego or transcendental subjectivity or human being. This common structure of the life-world is shared by all human beings and prepare the intersubjective basis of the world. The transcendental consciousness or subjectivity or ego constitutes other egos as equal partners in an inter-subjective community, which in turn constitutes the foundation for the objective, that is, the intersubjective world. Thus life-world gives rise to the intersubjective community of intersubjective egos, of transcendental intersubjectivity.

In this connection, I will introduce that Śamkara's bracketing or *Epoché* of '*neti..neti*' consisted in suspending all the beliefs of our natural attitude that "'I am the body',' I have senses', 'I am lame', etc". After performing this *Epoché*, that 'I am not the body',' nor the mind', 'nor the senses', one discovers the true self, the transcendental subjectivity, the pure consciousness. The very state of "discovering" the true self is known as the state of *JIvan mukti*, the state of freedom while living embodied. Thereby one attains the certain indubitable knowledge of all objects, since one finds this self to be the core of all things and identify 'oneself' within 'other selves' in the society. This state of knowing the true self can be compared to the life-world of consciousness for the reason that it is in this state only that one interacts with others selflessly. Here one has the "live experience of one self with other intersubjective selves in the intersubjective community. The source of all this is the self, the transcendental subjectivity. From it only that all derive their meaning. Irrespective of culture, caste and creed, the *jivan mukta*, pure consciousness, who was at once bound up with the empirical ego, sees other egos as himself. However, Husserl's life-world is not ordinarily and immediately accessible, *jivan mukti* is not accessible as long as everybody is under the influence of ignorance (*māyā*) of the appropriate methods to get back to it. Further, this state of '*jivan mukti*' is 'pregiven' in

the sense that consciousness by its very nature is '*mukta*', free from the world. It is found entangled in the world because of ignorance and because of an erroneous way of interpreting the world in terms of subject-object duality. This is akin to abstracting and isolation for the original state of knowledge as spontaneity.

However, this state of consciousness is not the '*jivan*', the life of an ordinary man in bondage in the world there. The "life-world of *Jivan mukta*" is quite different from the "life of a ordinary individual in the world". The state of *jivan mukti* can be compared to regaining or re-discovering one's own identity as pure consciousness or pure spirit which is the true mode for embodied and engaged ego to interact. This minimizes one's dependence on body, mind or other adjuncts and thus it is a joy of regaining spirit which is also regaining spontaneous access to the world and to others. This is the original knowledge which like light is self -luminous. In this state, the liberated person acts as if he is a spirit personified, his body is attached to him but it cannot bind the spirit any more as no fresh *karma* will be possible to save a mechanical repetition of the *prarabdha karmas* the fruit of which will be automatically taking place as the potter's wheel keeps moving for some time even after no fresh cause for its fresh movement is attached therewith. This is also a state of selflessness and the liberated self acts from a larger domain which could have some similarity with Husserl's interpretation of transcendental consciousness which is above the limitations of 'I' consciousness accommodating 'we' or intersubjectivity in its fold.

Although there are many differences between the two doctrines, that is, 'Life-world' and '*Jivan mukti*', a phenomenological understanding of it, discloses up certain comparable dimensions between the two concepts. In the case of Husserl, the pure consciousness is found, after the *Epoché*, with its meaning correlates of objects which further finds

intersubjectivity of egos and of other cultural egos, whereas in the case of Śamkara, the pure consciousness *jivan mukta*, is found as correlated with others, who are in essence his own self, in the world. Thus, to the extent of 'Intersubjectivity of egos or consciousness in the intersubjective community', Husserl's 'life-world' and Śamkara's '*Jivan mukti*' seems to be parallel. In Husserl, the life world is indicative of that prereflective state of consciousness which is the foundation for the world that is construed by science and understanding.

I also find another discussion in Śamkara which is absent in Husserl. Śamkara undertook his study of consciousness more for soteriological reasons than a pure theoretical or epistemic quest. Although *pramānas* are equally important and one has to proceed by *Jnāna marga*, the goal of Vedānta is still *moksa* or liberation, the *Brahman* is also 'wonderfully beheld', is the ground of peace and bliss. I feel before coming to any definite conclusion regarding commonalities between Śamkara and Husserl, there is need for further analysis of these perspectives of Śamkara and of Vedānta which is an important dimension of Vedānta's *ātma* quest. In Husserl it was not related to salvation quest. Inspite of some such subtle points of difference between the two, there are some other common concerns which would keep room for a meaningful dialogue between the two. Transcendental consciousness is disclosed after the mundane world is bracketed, it is then shown as that which is not in time but the source of temporality, it is both streaming and standing, a point that would take it closer to the *Sāksi Caitanya* of Śamkara. I have already mentioned, constitution in Vedānta is accorded not to consciousness as such but to the power of *avidyā* or *māyā*, the *adhyāsa* or superimposition of *māyā* in this sense has its projection and ā*varana*, that it is constitutive and dynamic and can account for the constitution of the *samsāra* and its meanings and ignorances.

Here, I would like to submit that there is another theory of consciousness in the Vedantic traditions which comes closer to the Husserlian notion of intentionality of consciousness. It appears to me that it is the Visistadvaita theory of consciousness of Rāmānuja known as *dharmabhutajnāna*, which states that consciousness is an attribute of the self and is always intentional towards some object, that can be comparable with Husserl's intentionality. For Rāmānuja, consciousness, knowledge, intellect, cognition, apprehension, etc., are all synonymous terms[14] as knowledge or consciousness is both a substance and an attribute. Substances are generally classified into spiritual (*cetana*) and material (*jada*). But Rāmānuja regards consciousness as neither of these and gives an intermediate position to it. To him, consciousness is *ajada* (immaterial) and is distinguished both from matter (*jada*) and spirit (*cetana*)[15] According to Rāmānuja, consciousness is always of a qualified character and is also invariably related to a knower or the self and the self is the substrate of knowledge.[16] Rāmānuja agrees with Advaitins in holding that knowledge or consciousness is the essence of the self (*ātman*), but he differs from Advaitins when he asserts that consciousness is also an attribute of the self. To make this point very clear, he cites the similes of sun light and the sun, the light of the lamps and the lamps, etc. The light here constitutes the essence of the lamp and of the sun and the light is also a quality inhering in the lamp. Like light, consciousness is also both a substance and a quality at the same time.

It is a substance as it constitutes the essence of the selves and God; and hence, it is called *svarupa-bhuta-jnana* (substantive consciousness) and, it is also an attribute as it exists as an attribute of both God and the selves (*atman*), and when it so exists, it is called *dharma-bhuta-jnana* (attributive knowledge).[17] To quote Dr. C. D. Sharma, "Knowledge is like light; the self is like the lamp; the *dharma-bhuta-jnana* is like the rays. The light constitutes the essence of the lamp and cannot be separated from it. The rays

(*dharma-bhuta-jnana*) belongs to and proceed from the light and are subject to contraction and expansion".[18]

Rāmānuja defines consciousness in terms of its two essential features: its reflexivity and its intentionality or *objectdirectedness*. For him, consciousness is the illumination through its own being of some object to its subject. There is no such thing as consciousness without an object, for it is never encountered. These two defining features do not vanish when one's consciousness becomes the object of that of another person. For Rāmānuja, reflexive and intentional consciousness has the real properties of eternity and unity (total presence in past, present and future). In this context, Mohanty observes: "Rāmānuja impresses me by his clear perception that consciousness is both self-illuminating and intentional. I think, however, that he ties these two features too closely: only when consciousness is intentional, he seems to be saying, does it reveal itself. This, to my mind, is unnecessarily strict, and would rule out the very possibility of pure consciousness, which I do not want to rule out by definition."[19]

Further, for Rāmānuja, consciousness is in a state of flux: if it were identical with the self, it would be impossible to recognize a thing seen today as the one seen the day before. What has been perceived by one cannot be recognized by another. The subject of the experience of recognition cannot be identical with simple awareness (*anubhuti-matra*) if this is *per se* empty. Thus, for Rāmānuja, it is the true self lies at the core of our everyday individuality. One's self-consciousness is indeed consciousness of a self that will persist in the state of release, understood as a condition which will involve no loss of personal identity. The individual cogniser is not dependent upon anything extrinsic for its manifestation since it is self-illuminated by virtue of having the nature or essence of consciousness.

Rāmānuja further holds that consciousness is not material, it can show itself as well as the other material objects but it cannot know itself, as it is not *cetana* (spiritual). Whereas the self (*atman*) can know itself and can show itself but cannot show other material objects.[20] Rāmānuja makes it very clear that consciousness always belongs to and exists for the self. So it is called *dharma-bhuta-jnana* (attributive knowledge). It is always qualified and possesses specific attributes. It always belongs to a subject and points to an object. Rāmānuja, thus, says that all knowledge or consciousness involves distinctions and there is no undifferentiated pure-consciousness. For Rāmānuja, the self is distinct from consciousness and is recognized as an eternal self-conscious subject, as a self-luminous substance possessing *dharma-bhuta-janna* as its essential attribute.[21] To quote *Sri Bhasya* , "the essential nature of the individual self is mere consciousness and, therefore, the self manifests through that form or nature"[22] Again, to quote *Brhadaranyaka* Upanishad, "Just as a mass of salt has neither inside nor outside, but entirely is a mass of taste, so verily, the self has neither inside nor outside, but it is entirely a mass of consciousness"[23] Hence, the self is not pure-consciousness, but only the eternal substratum of consciousness. Consciousness not only belongs to a subject, but also points to an object that exists really and outside of it which are real, a point mentioned by Rāmānuja in his arguments against Advaitins justifying the reality of dream objects as long as they last. For Rāmānuja, Advaitins are also wrong in saying that the pure subject or pure-knowledge can never become an object, because it is not necessary that an object should, by that very fact be a material (*jada*) object. Even God, souls and knowledge are presented as objects – the first two being spiritual (*cetana*) and the last one non-material (*ajada*). Thus, all objects, spiritual as well as material, are absolutely real.[24]

Thus, this is because if anything is consciousness, then its being, as qualified at least by consciousness, must be supposed to exist. Consciousness is the property (*dharma*) and

the being itself is the substratum (*dharmin*); and these two necessarily stand in the substance – attribute relation. Hence, a conscious being is always a qualified being, – qualified at least by one quality, i.e., consciousness. For Rāmānuja, consciousness is by its very nature is such that it reveals an object to a knower. It is connected with the self on the one hand and the object on the other hand. Therefore, consciousness always involves the cognition of difference. He contends that even our various states of consciousness[25] cannot prove the non-differenceness or pureness of consciousness. Firstly, in the waking state, there is consciousness which is of external objects. So consciousness is intentional here. Similarly, in the dreaming state, consciousness is also intentional of the internal objects of our mind that arise from memory. Lastly, considering the deep dreamless sleep, Rāmānuja argues, unlike the Advaitins, that there's no experience of any object in the deep sleep. Nor can it be said that there exists only consciousness without any object, as this will contradict the view that one expresses after waking up from deep sleep in the form: 'I was not aware of anything all this time'. This shows that consciousness was not present during deep sleep. What was present was only the 'I', the 'ego'. To him, consciousness which is an attribute of the self does not function during deep sleep, but is present in a quiet form.[26] For example, as the virile power or semen, which is one of the essential constituents or ingredients of the human body, does not manifest itself in the childhood, that is, in the infantine body though it is present there; similarly consciousness though present in the deep sleep, does not manifest itself in the same.[27] Thus, consciousness which is a quality of the self is always intentional, that is, always runs toward some object. Object-directed acts of consciousness belong to an agent of experience. Intrinsic intentionality and reflexivity are the marks of the mental acts. This is where Husserl's notion of intentionality comes bit closer with the Visisthadvaita philosophy of Rāmānuja with his equal emphasis on both attributive (*dharma-bhuta-jnāna*) and essential (*svarupa-bhuta-jnāna*) nature of

consciousness and thereby keeping room for both reflexivity and intentionality of consciousness.

So far, my observation have revealed the fact that there are some differences in the perspectives between Vedānta and the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl that keeps some room for both similarities and differences and in some respects there are closer affinities between some other sects of Vedānta, like the *Bhakti* Vedānta of Rāmānuja and the *Apoha* theory of Buddhism while in certain other areas there is possibility of meaningful interaction between Śamkara and Husserl. Attempts have been made to present the modified position of Advaita Vedānta that would pave way for more meaningful interaction. Some such attempts are made in the philosophy of K. C. Bhattacharyya and also in the philosophy of J. N. Mohanty. My initial starting point to this comparative study was influenced by J.N. Mohanty's critical estimate on Phenomenology and Vedānta, a point which is crucial in understanding Mohanty's approach to a possible interaction between the two. I will briefly mention one or two points in this connection.

Mohanty interprets Husserlian concept of reflexivity of consciousness, its essential characteristic of turning back to itself, in the light of Vedantic notion of *Svaprakasatva* (self-illumination). Thus reflection of consciousness in Husserl could be understood in terms of self-luminosity, as that which has 'the fitness of being immediately known without being an object of any cognition' (*avedyatve sati aparoksa vyavahara yogyatvam svayamprakasa laksanam*). This reveals the fact that consciousness need not be an object to itself, it is instantly or immediately experienced, it is related to one's being 'immediately aware' of it, which is different from one's 'having knowledge' about it. To quote Bina Gupta, "Mohanty suggests that the reflexivity of consciousness cannot be a

second order intentionality, it must be another, further irreducible dimension of consciousness. In so doing, he succeeds in keeping together the two dimension of consciousness: the intentionality or object-directedness and its reflexivity or self-manifestation. In view of this, Mohanty proposes that we recognize both degrees of intentionality and degrees of reflexivity. With this proposal, Mohanty not only wishes to make room for a great variety of consciousness that we all experience as well as for the Freudian unconscious, but also to expand the scope of consciousness to include affective state such as pleasure and pain and volitional states such as wanting and willing."[28] This again is a point that reflexivity to intentionality is connected more in a Ramanujite perspective than pure Advaitic perspective of Śamkara. Mohanty does accommodate different states of consciousness in terms of more or less reflexitivity or luminosity. Another significant approach is made in this direction by Mohanty toward a more meaningful interaction between Sankarite Vedantic approach with that of Husserl in terms of the relation between *Avidyā*, the world constitution objectivity process of *māyā*, and the pure and non-conscious *Sāksi caitanya*, or witness consciousness, as the mundane, world consciousness *māyā* has its support in that very pure and transcendental dimension of *suddha caitanya*. This shows that Mohanty has succeeded in bridging the gap between the continental philosophy of Edmund Husserl and the Vedantic philosophy of Śamkara with his creative understanding of both the tradition, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the Advaita Vedānta tradition of Śamkara.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid. pp. 115-16.

[11] 'Preface' to Fink's 'Husserl's Philosophy and Contemporary Criticism', p. 74.

[12] Sinha, Debabrata. (1974) Phenomenology and Existentialism: An Introduction, Progressive Publishers, Kolkata, p.72.

[13] Advaita holds the view that any 'object', whether known or unknown, must fall within the scope of consciousness. An often-quoted statement conveys this basic standpoint as follows : "*sarvam vastu jnātatayā vā ajnātatayā vā sāksicaitanyasya visaya eva*".

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[20] Gupta, A.S. op. cit., p.26.

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Chapter- 8

The Epilogue

Like all human activities, philosophical activity is marked by an irremediable element of creativity. This creativity is rooted in the freedom of consciousness. From this realm of freedom even the human body is not excluded. Whether one philosophizes in the Indian tradition or in the European tradition, one never ceases to be free. This mark of freedom and the resulting creativity are evident from endless diversity of modes of thought and of conclusions available within each tradition. It is always worthwhile to try to understand one tradition from the standpoint of another and *vice versa*. In fact, Indians have been studying their thought both from their own, internal, multiple points of view and, particularly in the last two hundred years or so, also from external multiple points of view. The same way may be said of the European thought. Both Europeans and non-Europeans have been studying and inter-acting in their thought forms down the centuries.[1]

In fact, R. Balasubhramanian [2], a great scholar of Advaita Vedānta, himself sees Advaita Vedānta as 'transcendental phenomenology' and metaphysics of experience'. Through these characterizations, he proposes to show that, like the phenomenologist, the Advaita Vedāntin (a) spells out his basic problem of enworlded subjectivity, (b) a method of explicating the problem, (c) a transcendental principle for ensuring the definite character of evidence, and (d) a metaphysical theory to which it is committed. By following rigorously the method of transcendental phenomenology, it is claimed that the Advaita Vedāntin reaches the 'end' of non-dualistic metaphysics, *Brahman*. Even coming to the recent past, the same thesis, of course in a different way, is reiterated by K.K. Bagchi [3]

in his new interpretation of the philosophy of K.C. Bhattacharyya. Quoting from Bhattacharyya's monograph, *Subject as Freedom*, he tries to show how the Advaita Vedānta mode of philosophizing 'can interact with Husserl's phenomenology and how, on the basis of his understanding of the Advaita Vedānta, Bhattacharyya makes a genuine contribution to the general philosophical issue of the relationship between phenomenology and ontology'. Also like Balasubhramanian, he finds a methodological affinity between Husserl (1859-1938) and Bhattacharyya (1875-1948), who, it may be recalled, were contemporaries. This shows, among other things, how thinkers may independently arrive at strikingly similar conclusions, without any contact with each other. And this discloses the native cognitive similarity of the human minds though separated by time and space. In this connection, Karl Schuhmann [4] has brought to our notice a largely unknown fact that Husserl had some familiarity with Indian thought, particularly with Buddhism. In spite of his exposure to Buddhism, it does not, however, appear that he gave up his Eurocentic orientation. However, it is noteworthy at this juncture that in the process of formulating his universal view of philosophy as a science he has taken due note of the Indian thought.[5] In the light of the above discussion, a comparative study has been undertaken in the present thesis. This concluding chapter presents a detailed review of the nature of consciousness as discussed in the preceding chapters. Here, it is worth mentioning in brief the main issues centering round which the present thesis on the investigation on consciousness in Śamkara and Husserl is based.

I

In Chapter-II, it is observed that *Māndukya Upanisad* discusses the various states of consciousness. It reveals consciousness as intentional, that is, related to the outer objects in the waking state. Consciousness is intentional and is related to inner objects

in the dream state as well. Consciousness is a mass consciousness, that is, a unified consciousness, consciousness *per se,* unrelated to any objects, outer or inner in the deep steep state. Thus, in the *Māndukya Upanisad*, the three states of consciousness exist within the Self which is neither consciousness, nor unconsciousness, nor even both, not mass consciousness also. It reveals the nature of consciousness in the basic realms of human experience following Guadapāda *Kārika*. Here consciousness unfolds itself as outward or objective, inward or subjective and unconsciousness, that is, not consciousness of subjectivity or objectivity, in the waking, dream and deep sleep states, respectively. The Self called *Turya*, the fourth, is the *onlooker*, the invariable witness (*sarvdrk*) of all the states of consciousness. It is the background, the substratum, the observer of all that is there from the perspective of the three states of consciousness, it is called the 'Fourth'. Consciousness is that which is real and has neither beginning nor end. The words '*manas*', '*citta*' and '*vijnana*' are used synonymously in Gaudapada. These words refer to mind and consciousness. Guadapāda distinguishes between "mind", which may mean 'empirical mind' or 'empirical consciousness', and "consciousness" which means the "higher mind" or 'higher consciousness' or "Transcendental Consciousness".

The empirical self or Individual Self (*jiva*) is responsible for empirical knowledge which arises when the mind (*manas*) the subtle internal sense organ, and the external sense-organs function. The empirical ego acts as an instrument between the higher self, the transcendental ego and the world. However, from the point of view of the transcendental ego, the empirical ego and the world are mere illusions. Transcendental Ego or consciousness, on the other hand, is the foundation and presupposition of all knowledge. It is one only. It is eternal and unproduced. It is different from anything else. Because of the empirical ego, the transcendental ego appears as the world. It is

concluded that the ultimate reality is transcendental ego or *Turiya*, not the empirical ego or *jive*, the individual self. The *Turiya* is detached and unborn.

II

In Chapter – III, I have made an attempt at understanding of Śamkara's epistemology, the nature and analysis of knowledge. It is observed that Śamkara focuses upon the self-luminosity of consciousness, the absolute consciousness, which is stated as the way consciousness reveals itself. Further, pure consciousness is identical to *Brahman*, the first metaphysical principle. It is unqualified by nature. The real is of the nature of consciousness. *Brahman* in the sense of pure consciousness is not an agent of cognition or knower. Consciousness, being essentially intelligent, must be different from, and independent of, the material elements and the human body. Knowledge or consciousness is the very nature of the self. There is a distinction between consciousness or self and consciousness due to the mode of the mind. The self is 'consciousness-as' whereas the 'mental mode' leads to 'consciousness-of'.

The mind and its modes are unconscious or inert as they are the products of *Prakrti*. Since mind is made of the *sattvika* quality of *Prakrti,* it has the ability to reflect consciousness which is the '*Atman*' or the self. As a result, the mind appears as if it is the very consciousness or the self. The mind is dependent upon consciousness's reflection for its functioning. Knowledge becomes possible by the combination of a mental mode and the 'witness consciousness' (transcendental). Sometimes the witness consciousness, without the mental mode, revels in absence of objects, e.g., in the deep sleep state. The self or consciousness is the source of cogniser, the act of cognition and the object of cognition. There are two levels of consciousness, viz., the absolute consciousness and modified consciousness. Absolute consciousness is the

transcendental self, the *saksi caitanya,* while the modified consciousness (*vrtii caitanya*) is the phenomenal self, the *jiva*. Modified consciousness is the source of all mental activities and phenomenal experiences. The modified consciousness (*antahkarana*) consists of four aspects, namely, mind, intellect, ego and memory. The mind enables the self or consciousness to make contact with external objects. Intellect is the judging, reasoning and understanding capacity of the self. Ego enables the pure self to entangle itself in the 'I-sense'. Finally, the memory or recollection makes the self aware of past experiences and makes it feel the present mental activity.

It is observed that the absolute consciousness does not reveal the whole world directly. The intellect, being the subtlest of all things, receives the light of consciousness. Then, the mind is in contact with the intellect and, further, the senses are in contact with the mind. The body furthermore is in contact with the sense. Thus, the absolute consciousness through the medium of the above series of the modified consciousness, revels the world. The self is caught up in experience when it is associated with the modified consciousness. The modified consciousness (internal organ or *antahkarana*) is the result of the association of the self with ignorance (*avidyā* or *māyā*).

III

In Chapter-IV, it is discussed that the Ultimate Reality, *Brahman*, is of the nature of consciousness or knowledge. *Brahman* is unqualified and Pure-consciousness. *Brahman* is that consciousness which shines as self through the objects of the world. Further, it is held that the absolute consciousness is all–pervading, immutable and eternally present. The transcendental (absolute) consciousness is unlike any other object in the world. Consciousness is an independent reality, without any distinctions,

inactive, pure knowledge, pure light, unaffected by anything and the foundation of all experience. It can be viewed from both transcendental (*paramarthika*) and phenomenal (*vyavaharika*) perspectives. From the former perspective, it is called *Brahman* and from the latter, it is called *Jiva*, the enjoyer. Consciousness and objects are quite different from each other, like light and darkness. It is the thread 'that holds the pearls but is different from the pearls. There is no distinction between consciousness-self-reality. They are synonymous to each other. Consciousness is immanence in the world. Since there is no 'distinguishing mark', the only way to describe it is in the negative formula. It is self-proved (*svayam siddha*), self-luminous (*Svayam-prakasa*), transcendental (*paramarthika*), eternal (*nitya*), uncaused (*karanahina* or *ajah*), unaffected (*avadhita*) and undifferentiated (*abheda*). The modified consciousness is a mere reflection (*pratibimva*) of the pure consciousness *Atman*. It is because of limitation (*avaccheda*) of pure-consciousness by ignorance (*avidyā*) that the modified consciousness arises. Ultimately, there is no difference between the two consciousnesses. The pure consciousness appears to be the modified consciousness, and hence arises the 'reality' – 'appearance' difference. The distinction between 'reality' and 'appearance' disappears at the dawn of realization. It is the transcendental – 'I' which is by nature non-dual and non-intentional consciousness. However, intentionality is not a necessary condition of consciousness. It is contingent, its true nature being non-intentionality. This non-intentional consciousness is not to be attained by logic; but by direct intentional experience.

Finally, the chapter concludes with the notion of *jivan mukti'* (Liberation while Leaving). It is contended here that *Jivan mukti* is a state where consciousness realizes itself as non-intentional, which was at once intentional by way of ignorance. It was bound up by the modified consciousness (*antahkarana*) and was tied up with the world affairs. Further, a *jivan mukta*, a liberated being while living, consciousness bereft of intentions towards the

world, leads the life of a liberated self rising above the empirical realm as at this state acts are performed selflessly and for '*Sarvajana hitāyah sarvajana sukhāyah'* (for the welfare of all), without any selfish motive that would bind one to fresh '*karma'*. However, he is not affected by the pros and cons of the society. He comes to realize the 'intersubjective identity' of the 'other' with 'itself'. Perception of equality thus remains one of the central characteristics of the *jivan mukta* (pure consciousness). He finds its 'Pure consciousness' state to be the core within all beings in the intersubjective community. Furthermore, he serves in the society, for the well-being of it, without anticipating any interest or expectation out of the service he dedicates to 'other'.

IV

In Chapter-V, Brentano's Influence on Husserl is sought to be understood with special reference made to the philosophical ideas of Franz Brentano. This chapter discusses Brentano's crucial concepts that initially had impact on Edmund Husserl on which he had later modified to some extent in propounding his philosophy of Phenomenology.

This is an attempt to understand Husserl through his teacher Brentano, the way Śamkara's special impact on the Vedāntic tradition was sought to be understood through Gaudapāda. This is also necessary in order to understand the impact of a movement that started for scientific rigour and the irreducible dimension of human subjectivity that started with Brentano. For Brentano, intentionality of consciousness unfolds a sort of self-evidence of mental acts giving rise to apodictic truth. Being a student of Brentano, Husserl takes the privilege to borrow this concept of intentionality from Brentano and applies it in his formulation of transcendental phenomenology, despite the significant differences between himself and Brentano. Brentano defines intentionality from two perspectives. For him, intentionality is both object directed (transcendence centric) and

relational (immanence centric). Husserl develops the relational aspect of intentionality which is act oriented rather than object directed. Husserl modifies Brentano's theory in his own way in the light of a new interpretation of some terms like 'inner', 'outer', etc., thereby safeguarding both 'essence' and 'existence' which was not properly safeguarded in Brentano's claim that intentional object is an immanent object and is entirely mind dependent and existence independent.

V

Chapter-VI discussed the nature of consciousness according to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. It is observed that phenomenology aims at an *apriori* transcendental science of 'pure consciousness'. It attempts to arrive at a new land of transcendental subjectivity. It studies the nature of consciousness as it actually experienced, not as is pictured by common sense or by the philosophical tradition. Experiences in consciousness are not like objects in a box. Phenomenology describes things as they appear to consciousness. It is also believed that the source of all knowledge and experience is the ego or self. It is the foundation or ground of all experience. There is a relation between consciousness, thinking, the things thought and intentionality which 'creates' the phenomena of experience. The constitution of the world which is obtained by experience is traced back to the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity. It is obtained by what Husserl called *Epoché. Epoché* resulted in running towards the Transcendental Ego, quite different from the psychological ego or empirical self, as the formal structure of all experience. Consciousness is always found in its intentional correlate, completely caught up in the world. The Transcendental Ego constitutes the world which cannot be grasped by ordinary reflection. The existence of objects is contingent, whereas consciousness is absolute.

Phenomenology aims at clarifying the concept of consciousness and all consciousness is consciousness of something, is intentional. Phenomenology focuses on the self, its acts of consciousness, and its object correlate. Intentionality of consciousness is the foundational structure of consciousness. Intentionality is not only characteristic of acts of consciousness, but also is the very essence of consciousness. Phenomenology disregards whether or not the object of the act exists; it has meaning or sense and a mode of being for consciousness. It is outlined that our ordinary world of experience is a world where scientific laws operate, but 'life-world' is that world which prepares the foundation and makes possible such a world. 'Life-world' is a world as phenomenon, as correlative of our intentional experiences. There is not a single 'life-world', but a 'set of intersecting or overlapping worlds, beginning from the world which is the "home world". This 'home-world' extends to 'other worlds' which are farther away, 'foreign', the world of other culture (Intersubjectivity). As things are constituted in consciousness, consciousness is called transcendental. Consciousness is not only intentional but also temporal. 'I' as the 'Transcendental Ego' shares a common world with other transcendental egos. The transcendental consciousness constitutes both meaning and being to the world. Constitution is a giving of sense, 'sense-bestowing'.

A distinction is made between 'empirical ego and transcendental ego. It is pointed out that the empirical consciousness, the personal subject of our experience, may come and go, but the Transcendental Ego, which is necessary and indubitable, survives the destruction of the world. It remains self-identical in possible changes of experiences. One can intuitively grasp the pure ego as distinct from the empirical ego. The reduction brackets the empirical ego, the ego as a person, as a thing in the world. It is treated as transcendent. The former is explored by psychology and anthropology, while the later by *Epoché* and reduction. There is absolute parallelism between the two domains. It is the

same consciousness which becomes empirical while belonging to the world and transcendental while constituting the world. Phenomenology thus is not a metaphysical study of consciousness; rather it is a philosophical method to gain certainty (apodicticity) in knowledge. Nevertheless, it is observed that phenomenology is a science of consciousness, not a science of psychology of consciousness. Consciousness in 'Phenomenology' differs from the consciousness in 'Natural sciences'. Psychology and natural sciences concern with 'empirical consciousness', consciousness from physiological, neurological and biological perspectives, Phenomenology concerns with pure consciousness, with unearthing consciousness and looks at it as it "appears" in ordinary experience. The chapter concludes by upholding that experience consists of the *Noesis-Noema* structure, the subject – object poles of experience. The *noesis-noema* are the two poles of the same consciousness. The empirical and the transcendental consciousness are not two, but one and the same entity regarded from two perspectives. The 'I' who lives the mental life and the 'I' who experiences as myself are the same 'I'.

VI

Lastly, Chapter-VII proposed to discuss the parallel notions of Advaitic notion of consciousness with the Husserl's Phenomenological notion of consciousness in the light of J.N. Mohanty. Observations made by some scholars including J.N.Mohanty, Bina Gupta, R. Balasubhramanian and others are also taken into account. I have made an attempt to find out a possibility of intra-philosophical dialogue between the Indian thinking of consciousness and the phenomenological thinking of consciousness of the West. The main comparisons that have been made are: Śamkara ' s concept of pure consciousness versus Husserl's pure consciousness, consciousness and Ego in Husserl versus that of Śamkara, and intentionality of Husserl versus that of Śamkara. It is found

that in Śamkara' s theory of knowledge, it is difficult to find consciousness which is constitutive of sense or meaning to the world, like Husserl's constitutive pure consciousness. In Śamkara, *Māyā* has the power to conceal (*āvarana*) and to project (*viksepa*), which may have some resemblance to the pure subjectivity in Husserl. In Husserl it is the Transcendental ego that is constitutive while in Śamkara it is the energy of Pure Consciousness, its *Māyā,* that produces the world appearance on Pure consciousness, but it does not constitute. Śamkara takes help of the instrumentality of *Māyā* for the constitution of the world appearance.

With these basic observations on my part I have taken recourse to Mohanty's scholarly presentations of some basic ideas on consciousness in both Śamkara and Husserl which could show some way out of the problem I have faced in any comparative approach to these two great thinkers. These centered round basically two questions: (a) to what extent Śamkara could modify the reference centric Vedāntic epistemology to 'meaning' centric theory of knowledge, and to what extent there was interaction between Buddhism and Vedānta under the influence of Gaudapada and of Śamkara, and (b) how close is the comparison between Śamkara and Husserl despite the fact that consciousness in the one is primarily intentional while it is non-intentional and non-constitutive in the other. I will sum up my observations here with the following guidelines from Mohanty's understanding of 'Śamkara and Husserl' on some basic issues of consciousness and 'the concept of intentionality'.

For Mohanty, the two basic frameworks that added distinctiveness to Śamkara and to Husserl which are also the distinctiveness of the Indian and the Western approaches toward consciousness study are understandings in terms of reflexitivity or in terms of intentionality. The self-manifesting foundational consciousness of Vedānta and of

Śamkara is taking recourse of *avidyā* or *māyā* to explain object-directedness of consciousness which is what would differentiate Husserl from Śamkara. What is distinctively Mohanty's stand here is opting for a creative interpretation of Vedāntic notion of 'reflexitivity', a limitation which would keep the gap between Śamkara and Husserl unbridgeable, or, by adopting a 'flexible stand' on intentionality of consciousness which Mohanty subsequently did in his later writings on 'consciousness'. This is how Bina Gupta offers her interpretation of Mohanty's approach to a meaningful dialogue between Husserl and Śamkara. "Thus, it is not surprising that in his early writings, Mohanty refused to admit any such non-intentional consciousness and attributed to the belief that intentionality may gradually faith disappear while consciousness will remain." [6] In response to the above challenges, Mohanty gives a twist to the concept of reflexivity, which he had appropriated from Brentano and Husserl. All consciousness is reflexivity, that is to say, it always turns back on itself. Whereas Brentano and Husserl tend to construe this as another act, objectifying the primary act of consciousness, Mohanty uses the Advaita Vedāntic thesis of '*svaprakasatva*', especially the definition of '*svaprakasatva*' as that which has the fitness of being immediately known without being an object of any cognition to resolve the above alleged incompatibility." [7]

This is an insight that would strengthen my claim that more than Śamkara, Rāmānuja, the exponent of '*Bhakti* Vedānta' would come close to Husserlian concept of intentionality and the object directedness of consciousness. From Mohanty's analysis one can come to the conclusion that the 'reflexitivity' (rather than intentionality) as it is found in Śamkarite Vedānta interpretation, has to be modified in order to widen the scope of consciousness by incorporating 'degrees of intentionality' and 'degrees of reflexitivity'. In Śamkara there is incompatibility between reflexitivity (*svayamprakasatva*) and intentionality (*savisayakatva*). Along with the his introduction of degrees of

intentionality and degrees of reflexitivity; Mohanty also brought the Rāmānujite dimension of meaning that consciousness is self-manifesting only in so far as it is intentional, that consciousness manifests itself to its subject at the time in its manifesting a subject, that consciousness which is not intentional is of self-manifesting.[8] Mohanty argues that while consciousness is reflexive, this has degrees, so there are low degrees of intentionality, the more fully a state is reflective, the more intentional it is.

It is also interesting that in so doing Mohanty leans hearing Buddhists who regarded cognitive states as modes of consciousness rather than taking recourse to Nyāya-Vaisesika and Vedānta views which would regard these states as possible objects of consciousness, more on sense than on reference centric theories. He also shares with the Buddhists that the transcendental consciousness is also corporeal. That is how Mohanty has interpreted Śamkara and Husserl with creative assimilation that could widen the scope of Vedānta incorporating elements that were there in other schools of Vedānta as well as in some non-Vedantic schools like Buddhism. To quote Bina Gupta, " In his reading of Indian philosophy, Mohanty holds, in kinship with the Buddhist view that even transcendental consciousness is corporeal and may have a sensuous of hyletic component. It is nevertheless transcendental in as much as while it constitutes the objects, it is not a mere abstract substratum of manifestation but rather the concrete life of consciousness from which all interpretations have been removed. He holds that consciousness that is transcendental in this sense is identical with the empirical consciousness, with one difference: whereas the latter is subject to what Husserl called 'mundanizing apperception', the former is the same entity freed from such interpretation. This is Mohanty's understanding of Śamkara's thesis that the *Jiva* is identical with the *Brahman*. However, in order to sustain this reading he had to locate the so-called

'mundanizing apperception' in the very heart of transcendental consciousness, which is precisely what Advaita does where it makes *avidyā* rest upon consciousness". [9]

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List of Publications

Papers published

1. "*Husserl's Phenomenology: An Advaita Vedanta Perspective",* The Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, No. 3-4, October 2002.

2 "*Kundalini Yoga*: *An Exploration for its possible relevance to day-to-day life".* (In the form of "abstract")

3. "*Self and its Other: A Mandukya Upanisad Perspective*" by the Australasian Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, National University of Singapore, Singapore, October 2003. (In the form of "abstract")

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1. "*Kundalini Yoga*: *An Exploration for its possible relevance to day to day life*".

2. "*Self and its Other: A Mandukya Upanisad Perspective*.

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